THE IMAGE OF FAITH
IN THE THOUGHT OF JAMES FOWLER

by

Michael William Hryniuk

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ABBREVIATIONS

TSTK

<u>To See the Kingdom: The Theological Vision of H. Richard Niebuhr</u>. Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 1974. Reissued by University Press of America, 1985.

LM

<u>Life Maps: Conversations on the Journey of Faith</u>.(with Sam Keen) Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1978. (2nd, expanded edition issued by Word Books in 1985).

SOF

<u>Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning</u>. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1981.

BABC

<u>Becoming Adult, Becoming Christian: Adult Development and Christian Faith</u>. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1984.

INTRODUCTION

Inquiry into the nature of faith has been one of the enduring concerns of both theology and religious studies in our time. It is, of course, an age-old inquiry undertaken by some of the most venerable figures in the history of Western thought. When the subject of faith is investigated anew, two questions naturally arise. The first is a matter of authority and legitimacy: Who is the individual that would seek to add to the legacy of such as Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, Tillich and the Niebuhrs in their investigation of faith? The second and perhaps more important question is a matter of substance: What is being added to the cumulative understanding of faith that is original?

James Fowler is a relative newcomer to the historic inquiry into faith, but as pioneer of the entirely new field of faith development research, his contribution to that inquiry is generally acknowledged as indisputable. The seeds of this research were sown in 1968 when Fowler served as Associate Director of Interpreter's House, a centre for the continuing education of clergy and for lay retreats. There, he listened to over two hundred stories of people's journeys of faith. Fowler found the work of Erik Erikson helpful in making sense of the many life histories that he was hearing. With the aid of Erikson's theoretical framework, Fowler began to detect certain

recurring patterns in these stories, describing them as "a typical sequence of transformations, which despite enormous variety of detail, showed certain formal similarities from person to person."[1]

Later, while teaching at Harvard Divinity School, Fowler became familiar with Lawrence Kohlberg and his research in the area of moral development. His ongoing interest in the formation and transformation of faith over the human life cycle led him into collaboration with Kohlberg resulting in his formulation of a structural stage theory of faith development. In 1977, after a short stay at Boston College as Professor of Theology and Human Development, Fowler founded the Centre for Faith Development at Candler School of Theology, Emory University. Since that time, he and his research associates have conducted hundreds of semi-clinical interviews with the aim of enhancing the empirical basis of the faith development model. The publication in 1981 of Stages of Faith, Fowler's comprehensive statement of faith development theory, was regarded as a major advance in the psychological study of religious development and remains one of the most widely read books in the field today. His wide readership reflects not only the interest which his research has generated in scholarly circles, but also the broad applicability of his work to fields such as

religious education, theological training, and pastoral care.

Fowler's interpretation of the life data gathered in faith development interviews continues to draw upon two principal families of developmental psychology. The first is the psycho-social theories of Erik Erikson, Daniel Levinson, Carol Gilligan and others. Behind these life-cycle theorists lie the psycho-sexual constructions of Freud, and to a lesser extent, C. G. Jung's concept of the individuation process. The second group of theorists that Fowler has relied upon are the structural-developmental psychologists, mainly among whom Jean Piaget, in the cognitive domain, and Lawrence Kohlberg in the area of moral reasoning, have been most influential.

Fowler, however, is first and foremost a pastor and theologian and his inquiry into the mysteries of faith has been most decisively shaped by the theology of H. Richard Niebuhr. Fowler wrote his doctoral dissertation on the theological vision of Richard Niebuhr, paying special attention to Niebuhr's comprehensive and powerful description of the human life of faith. Fowler's analysis of a then unpublished manuscript of Niebuhr's entitled Faith on Earth revealed his conception of faith as extending well beyond the domain of religion.[2] Niebuhr saw faith as penetrating deep into the fabric of all personal relationships in which trust and loyalty are

grounded in shared commitments to centres of transcendent value and power. Although others, such as Paul Tillich and Wilfred Cantwell Smith have influenced Fowler, it is Niebuhr's vision of faith as a human universal and his central conviction of God's priority in being, value and power that have played the central role in Fowler's efforts to illuminate the nature of faith.

Building on this foundation of Christian theology and developmental psychology, Fowler has made a contribution to the study of faith that is significant in at least three respects. First of all, his approach to faith is carried out from a broad interdisciplinary base. Fowler has brought to bear the insights of cognitive, developmental, and depth psychology to an understanding of a phenomenon that had previously been the exclusive province of philosophy and religion. Second, Fowler has sought to ground his insights and reflections on the nature of faith with unprecedented empirical, social scientific research. His efforts to clarify the lines of intersection between theology and psychology are based on rigorously tested hypotheses and not merely creative speculation. In the final analysis, however, Fowler's greatest contribution has been to bring the term "faith" and the reality it signifies back into the mainstream of contemporary consciousness in a language that is both theologically informed and completely intelligible to the

modern mind. This "re-imaging" of faith is an especially
significant achievement in a secular and science-dominated
age.

The focal concern of this study is Fowler's image of
faith. I have used the term "image" because it conveys
more precisely the power and centrality of faith in
Fowler's thought. An image is never abstract. As Fowler
himself indicates, it unites both information and
feeling.[3] More than merely an idea or concept, Fowler's
image of faith conditions every aspect of his thought and
bears a surplus of meaning that manifests itself in a
passionate concern to both clarify and renew the reality
to which it points. Fowler has a keen awareness that our
images of faith are of crucial importance not just in the
realm of academic theology or religious life, but for the
life of society as a whole. The difficulty with some of
the past images of faith is that they can easily be
relegated to what the philosopher William Lynch has called
"the fringe-land of piety and evangelism."[4] Fowler
expresses the same concern and attempts to provide an
image of faith that speaks to the universal human
necessity of constructing a meaningful existence.

There is also another reason for using the word
"image" in reference to faith in Fowler's thought. An
image is a representation of a state of affairs that
admits to other representations. It is never absolute or

monolithic. Moreover, a single image can evolve and change. It has a certain elasticity or fluidity that concepts do not always have. That is important when exploring a multi-dimensional phenomenon such as faith, which, both theoretically and historically, has been approached from many different perspectives. As Lynch has pointed out as well, the way we imagine anything determines the questions that we ask about it, and the questions we ask determine our methodology in seeking answers. He proposes that many of our problems with faith and many of its problems and crises in modern theology are caused by the way we imagine faith, and that we should therefore re-imagine it.[5] Fowler's faith development enterprise can be understood as part of the "re-imagining" process that Lynch is advocating.

The questions that James Fowler brings to the study of faith are not all entirely new however. Many of them are the perennial questions concerning the relationship between faith and reason, the nature of conversion, and the role of revelation and grace in the life of faith. Fowler raises two new questions, however, that both reflect and require a radical re-imaging of faith. The first is whether and in what sense faith can be understood as a universal human quality? The second is how faith actually "develops" structurally. The approach that Fowler brings to these issues and the image of faith that

results is unique and well worth examining. It is also an image that has been the object of much scholarly criticism and debate.[6]

That debate has focused largely on the integrity of a concept of faith that has obvious theological origins but which has been "operationalized" for the purposes of empirical psychological research. The main concern of theologians has been whether the image of faith that informs Fowler's research fully appropriates all the dimensions of the religious life of human beings, particularly as that life has been experienced in the Judao-Christian tradition. Because faith is such a fundamental religious experience, there is understandable suspicion of any theologian who appeals to social scientific research for theoretical validation of his faith-image. The real possibility exists that faith could be "watered down" into a manageable psychological concept capable of measurement, prediction, and control.

These are valid concerns that constitute very important issues for faith development research. However, the conviction that guides the present study is that a real understanding and fair evaluation of Fowler's image of faith is possible only after careful consideration of the philosophical theology that underlies and informs it. There are obvious disparities between the descriptions of faith in the New Testament that moves mountains and heals

the sick, and faith in the present day world that Fowler claims to be composing meaningful images of an "ultimate environment." But that is not to say that both cannot be faith, or even that both cannot be theologically understood as faith. Moreover, it is of crucial importance to see the link between these two dimensions of faith and not to fall into a facile dichotomy that would assign one to the realm of psychology and the other to systematic theology.

The main objective of this study is to offer an interpretive analysis of Fowler's image of faith and to demonstrate how Fowler, inspired by Niebuhr and others, has sought to articulate that image in categories that are both theologically grounded and universal in their applicability. I hope to illustrate how Fowler's and Niebuhr's common search for the structure of "human faith" has relied ultimately on biblically derived metaphors for divine being and activity as well as human being and response. Fowler's understanding of human faith is theistic insofar as it sees trust in and loyalty to centres of value and power as an expression of the universal human impulse to give "deity-value" to that which is ultimately valuable and which bestows ultimate value. In traditional biblical language, these centres of value and power are referred to as "gods." One of Fowler's unique contributions has been to clarify how faith as a

"valuing apprehension" provides unity and coherence in the lives of all persons in different ways according to their system or style of faith-knowing.

Fowler's formal and functional approach to faith does not attempt to be entirely objective in the sense of being "value-free." That would be inherently self-contradictory. His image of faith has both descriptive and normative dimensions that must be seen together in order to obtain a balanced perception of his work. Although he speaks theoretically about the various centres of value and power that organize personal life, he openly criticizes the dogmatic relativism that masquerades as "tolerance," and incorporates Niebuhr's powerful analysis of idolatry into his own theoretical framework. But, like Niebuhr, Tillich, Smith, and Lynch, Fowler acknowleges that faith in the gods is still faith and, for both descriptive and normative purposes, ought to be understood as such.

This study is divided into two parts accordingly. In the first part, I propose to deal in depth with the descriptive dimensions of Fowler's image of faith. The first chapter focuses on Fowler's understanding of faith as a human universal, giving particular attention to the distinctions that he draws between faith, religion and belief. In the second chapter, I examine his interactionist description of faith. Here, Fowler draws heavily on the insights of H. Richard Niebuhr and Erik

Erikson in his attempt to delineate the structure of faith as fundamentally relational. The third chapter is devoted to Fowler's description of faith as a mode of knowing that composes an "ultimate environment" giving coherence and unity to one's sense of self, others, and world. The fourth and final chapter in this section is concerned with Fowler's distinctive model of the developmental dynamics of faith. In this chapter, the aspects and stages of faith that Fowler describes are explored with a view to understanding what exactly he claims to be developing.

The second part of the study is devoted to an examination of the normative theological dimensions of Fowler's image of faith. This second section might well be understood as a "low altitude" penetrating search for the deep metaphors and presuppositions that are operating beneath Fowler's descriptions of faith. The fifth chapter begins with an analysis of the theological presuppositions that underlie Fowler's image of the object and cause of faith. I have given special attention to Fowler's own understanding of the normativity inherent in his description of highest stage of faith. In the sixth chapter, the focus is on the theological presuppositions operating in Fowler's image of the subject of faith. This entails an examination of the theological anthropology informing Fowler's image of faith.

My study concludes with a critical assessment of the adequacy of Fowler's image of faith made from the point of view of its descriptive accuracy and its normative theological integrity. I also discuss recent developments in Fowler's thought and their implications for the future viability of his image of faith as a human universal. Fowler's recent work in the area of practical theology puts much greater emphasis on the processes of metanoia and conversion within the Christian faith community in particular. While this shift in his orientation bears great promise in the field of Christian theology, I am convinced of the necessity to continue what Niebuhr called "inquiry into the structure of human faith." In the spirit of that inquiry, I offer a tentative proposal for tapping more deeply into Niebuhr's value theory with a view to fortifying and clarifying Fowler's image of human faith as as a heuristic device in the articulation of a "fundamental theology of faith." Such an image is of vital importance not only because of its analytic power, but essentially for the reason that it is inclusive and intelligible to a pluralistic culture desperately in search of both meaning and transcendence.

CHAPTER ONE

FAITH AS A HUMAN UNIVERSAL

The term "faith" is ordinarily associated with religion and religious activity. Although it has many meanings and associations within this realm, it customarily designates an attitude of trust or belief in objects and persons of divine significance. In Western culture, "faith" is a term which derives from the language of a particular religious community whose language of discourse and self-understanding is shaped by Jewish and Christian theological categories. As Gerhard Ebeling demonstrates, "faith" is a word that originates from Old Testament and later Judaism which passed it into the Christian scriptures where it attained its "unusual intensity" and centrality.[1]

In the thought of James Fowler, the term "faith" carries the same degree of intensity and centrality but it designates a human phenomenon that is not necessarily "religious" or "theological" in its orientation. Faith, claims Fowler is

> a person's or group's way of moving into the force field of life. It is our way of finding coherence in and giving meaning to the multiple forces and relations that make up our lives. Faith is a person's way of seeing him- or herself in relation to others against a backround of shared meaning and purpose.[2]

In this first chapter, my intent is to explore this and other foundational statements James Fowler makes about faith as a human universal. These statements are foundational in the sense that they always serve as the starting point in any of Fowler's descriptions of faith. They are also somewhat controversial inasmuch as they suggest that faith, a phenomenon that has traditionally been the exclusive province of religion and theology, has now been "translated" and perhaps reduced into psychological categories. Fowler is, of course, not the first to speak of faith as a universal human quality and his perspective is influenced by important figures in the fields of theology, comparative religion and developmental psychology. The task here is to situate him among those thinkers who have articulated the meaning of faith as a universal human quality or attitude and to identify more precisely what is distinctive about Fowler's approach to faith.

"Human" Faith: A Theological Perspective

In Stages of Faith, Fowler's most comprehensive statement of his faith development theory, he makes reference at the very outset to the work of both Paul Tillich and H. Richard Niebuhr.[3] These two theologians use a language to speak about the phenomenonology of faith that Fowler appropriates allowing him to widen his scope

of inquiry well beyond the specific domains of religion and belief. Niebuhr and Tillich represent a whole tradition in Protestant theological inquiry that approaches faith from a personal and existential point of view. In contrast to the more speculative approach to faith which begins with the question "Does God exist?", the dominant form in which the problem of faith is raised existentially and experientially might be phrased, "How is faith in God possible?"

The subjective and personal tone of this latter question should not be associated strictly with the concerns of "existentialism" as such although this current of thought has done much to clarify the problem. The personal, "I-Thou" approach to faith has strong biblical roots. The early church Fathers taught it, as did the early medieval theologians. Many Protestant theologians from Luther on down to the Pietists, Schleiermacher, Kierkegaard, Barth, Bonhoeffer and Bultmann have opposed the abstract, noetic faith of the scholastics with the personal and experiential.[4] In American theology, Jonathan Edwards and others among the Great Evangelicals carried forward the historic inquiry into the nature of faith as a personal act. Among the strongest proponents of this approach in twentieth century American theology have been Paul Tillich and H. Richard Niebuhr. A closer examination

of their perspectives sheds light on Fowler's image of

faith as well.

The broad view of faith as a human universal is

expressed succinctly in Tillich's classic work <u>Dynamics of</u>

<u>Faith</u>. In his introductory remarks he observed that the

word faith

> belongs to those terms which need healing
> before they can be used for the healing of men.
> Today the term "faith" is more productive of
> disease than of health. It confuses, misleads,
> creates alternately skepticism and fanaticism,
> intellectual resistance and emotional
> surrender, rejection of genuine religion and
> subjection to substitutes.[5]

Tillich's analysis of faith as "ultimate concern"

encompassed far more than claimed belief in a creed or a

set of doctrinal propositions. For him, the values that

have centring power in human life may or may not find

their expression in institutional or cultic religious

forms. One's faith or ultimate concern may be invested in

family, career, or nation. It may be focused on any number

of values that claim ultimacy and which demand the total

surrender of those who adopt them, while promising total

fulfillment.[6] Although Fowler does not use Tillich's

definition of faith as "ultimate concern" explicitly in

his own formulations, he does adopt the spirit of

Tillich's search for descriptive categories that are both

biblically grounded and publically accessible.

In his descriptions of "human faith", Fowler also makes frequent reference to the work of H. Richard Niebuhr. No figure has had more influence on Fowler's image of faith than Niebuhr and no adequate understanding of that image is possible without attending carefully to Niebuhr's thought. Like Tillich, Richard Niebuhr explored faith as a phenomenon extending beyond the sphere of organized religion. He worked, as did Tillich, on the boundary of theology and philosophy, employing a method of reflection that sought to uncover the nature of the act of faith within the human subject. This "human faith" consisted in every individual's search for an overarching, integrating and grounding trust in a centre of value and power sufficiently worthy to give life unity and meaning.[7]

His concern for the human subject did not imply subjectivism or individualism. Deeply influenced by the religious thought of G. H. Mead, Josaiah Royce and especially Martin Buber, Niebuhr sought to disclose the social nature of selfhood and the relational dimensions of faith as well.[8] The root metaphor of "covenant" informed Niebuhr's analysis of the universal human experience of trust and fidelity - and of mistrust and betrayal. He discerned the presence of faith in the shared visions and values that form, shape, and hold together human groups of all kinds. He attempted to demonstrate that a tacit covenantal structure of faith in common life implied or

pointed towards a universal covenantal structure in
reality.

Perhaps the dimension of Niebuhr's approach to faith
most influential on Fowler's thought was his integration
of profound theological conviction with radical freedom
and openness to the "relativity" of all perspectives on
ultimate reality. In his own critical assessment of
Niebuhr's legacy, Fowler remarks:

> Working always within the framework of the
> monistic confidence in the oneness, greatness,
> and goodness of God, Niebuhr could convert the
> dilemma posed by relativism into theological
> advantage as theocentric relativism. To be
> sure, all our concepts and symbols for the
> sovereign God-in-relation-to-man are time
> bound, partial and distorting. God is
> transcendent - epistemologically as well as
> actually. But, Niebuhr claimed, relative
> perceptions of the Absolute are still
> perceptions of an Absolute; and inadequate
> metaphors for the relation of sovereignty
> between God and man are nonetheless metaphors
> for the fundamental reality with which we have
> to do.[9]

Theocentric relativism, or perhaps better "relativity",
are words that serve well in characterizing Fowler's own
approach to faith as a human universal. Fowler, like
Niebuhr, is convicted of the sovereignty of God, and for
that very reason is able to incorporate a variety of
traditions and perspectives into his analysis of faith.
That analysis, like Niebuhr's, focuses on the structure of
"human" faith but similarily presumes that such faith
finds its origins and its ultimate fulfillment in
relatedness to the One God, however He is perceived.

The contribution that both Niebuhr and Tillich have made to Fowler's notion of faith as a human universal was their approach to faith in a phenomenological rather than doctrinal way. Tillich put more emphasis on the individual's experience of faith as existentially determining while Niebuhr focused on its social and covenantal dimensions. Both were consistent in their identification of faith with one's total orientation and disposition towards life. More than the content of a particular static belief system, faith was viewed as the act of a total personality[10], a way of seeing and being in the world. Faith, for them, was a kind of knowing, a constructing of the world in light of certain disclosures of the character of reality that are taken as decisive. Different faith stances were newly perceived as alternative modes of being in the world that arise out of contrasting ways of composing the ultimate conditions of existence.[11] Fowler expresses this insight in these words:

> Prior to our being religious or irreligious, before we come to think of ourselves as Catholics, Protestants, Jews or Muslims, we are engaged with issues of faith. Whether we become nonbelievers, agnostics or atheists, we are concerned with how to put our lives together and with what will make life worth living. Moreover, we look for something to love that loves us, something to value that gives us value, something to honor and respect that has the power to sustain our being.[12]

It is important to recognize as well that Tillich and Niebuhr's efforts to objectify and in a sense "relativize" faith were not intended to diminish the meaning of the term nor to endorse a simplistic relativism. Rather they were inspired by the recognition that faith was above all a personal, existential reality operative in a pluralistic and increasingly secular culture in which many "god-values" claimed ultimacy. The attempts by both Niebuhr and Tillich to salvage the word faith and cleanse it of its narrowly religious associations were motivated by a concern to recover its original meaning in and for a new era that, in many respects, had lost touch with the reality to which it pointed. That reality was the basic human need for transcendent meaning, value and purpose.

James Fowler's elaboration of faith as a human universal proceeds from a similar impulse and motivation. Far from reducing the term "faith" to a manageable psychological or philosophical abstraction, Fowler strives to restore its meaning. The contributions of Fowler's predecessors, Tillich and Niebuhr, were of decisive importance not only in providing the philosophical and theological frame of reference for his own inquiry, but also in their supplying basic analytical categories.

"Human" Faith from a Religio-Historical Perspective

In Fowler's efforts to clarify the meaning of faith in relation to religion and belief, he relies extensively on the religio-historical and linguistic research of Wilfred Cantwell Smith. He also shares Smith's passionate concern for a "re-cognition" or "re-imaging" of faith that is adequate for the needs of a global village.[13] There are three elements that Smith brings to Fowler's "philosophy" of faith. First is his understanding of religions and their relationship to faith. Second is his historical and linguistic analysis of the evolution of the terms "faith" and "belief". And third is his stress on faith as a planetary human characteristic, described best as a verb rather than as a noun. We will examine each briefly in turn.

Following Smith, Fowler speaks of religions as "cumulative traditions" which comprise the expressions of the faith of people in the past. These traditions can include scriptures, symbols, moral teaching, rites, music, dances, prayers, art and architecture. They can also include various myths, narratives, catechetical materials, theologies, creeds, doctrines, sacraments, and a host of other elements. A cumulative tradition is a vehicle of faith. It is "constituted by all the media that have evolved to conserve, celebrate, and communicate a people's experiences with the sacred, and to form people in

appropriate relationship to it and to each other."[14] Thus "religions" and "religion" are expressive of faith but not to be identified with it. They are like dynamic galleries of art which engage persons and become what Smith calls the "mundane cause" that awakens present faith.[15]

Religion and faith, in this view are seen as reciprocal. Each is dynamic; each grows or is renewed through its interaction with the other.[16] The personal faith of an individual, that is, his or her way of responding to transcendent value and power, is awakened and ideally, renewed through sustained contact with the elements of a given cumulative tradition. As these elements are adapted in turn as expressions of the personal faith of new adherents, the tradition as a whole is extended, modified and renewed.

Both Fowler and Smith seek to avoid the reification of faith and religion into individual or collective "belief-systems". They both stress their dynamic, evolving and radically personal nature. Faith is seen as the nascent response of every human being to the necessity of some transcendent value. Faith is also one's personal appropriation of and relationship to a centre of transcendent value. The key insight that Smith brings to the analysis of faith is that it is never elicited or experienced in a vacuum but rather within the context of some cumulative tradition, religious or secular.

Historically, the great world religions have supplied the traditional symbols, myths, and rituals in which faith is awakened and nurtured. In fact, Smith acknowledges that "faith is meant to be religious".[17] The reality of modern life, however, is that the search for and response to transcendent value struggles to be formed and maintained in many persons who feel no connection whatsoever to any religious tradition. It is these individuals that constitute a large part of the public that the language of faith development theory is intended to address.

The second distinction that Smith draws and Fowler adopts is that between faith and belief. For Fowler, this distinction is of crucial importance because the linguistic and historical research upon which it is based underscores the universal dimensions of faith across cultural and religious boundaries. If religious traditions are examined in the light of contemporary religio-historical knowledge, Smith says, we recognize that the variety of religious belief and practice is far greater than we ever imagined. But in like manner we find that the similarities in religious faith also turn out to be greater than we might have expected.[18] Smith's characterization of faith in contrast to belief is of central importance in understanding Fowler's position. Faith, says Smith,

> is deeper, richer, more personal. It is
> engendered by a religious tradition, in some

cases and to some degree by its doctrines; but it is a quality of the person not of the system. It is an orientation of the personality, to oneself, to one's neighbour, to the universe; a total response; a way of seeing whatever one sees and handling whatever one handles; a capacity to live at more than a mundane level; to see, to act in terms of, a transcendent dimension.[19]

For Smith, "belief" is merely "the holding of certain ideas." Belief, in religious contexts at least, arises out of the effort to translate experiences of and relation to trancendence into concepts or propositions. Belief may be one of the ways faith expresses itself. But, and here is the crux of the matter, one does not have faith in a proposition or concept. Faith, again, is the relation of trust in and loyalty to the transcendent about which concepts or proposition - beliefs - are fashioned.[20] Smith argues that the language dealing with faith in the classical writings of the major world religious traditions never speaks of it in ways that can be translated by the modern meanings of belief or believing. Faith is almost always understood to mean an alignment of the heart or will, a relational commitment of loyalty and trust, not the holding of certain ideas about the transcendent.[21]

In the English language, the term "belief" did carry at one time much the same range of meaning as the term "faith" understood as "to set the heart upon," or "to commit oneself to another in trust and loyalty" "Belief" corresponded closely to cognate terms in the languages of

other cumulative traditions such as the Hebrew "emunah", the Hindu "sraddha", and the Islamic "iman".[22] With the coming of the Enlightenment and the early modern period (sixteenth century on) the connotation of the phrase "I believe" changed dramatically.

Smith discerns three broad movements in this transition in the cultural meaning of "belief" and "believing." First, the object referred to almost always was understood as personal when the word "believe" was first used to translate "credo" and "pisteuo," but in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries it far more frequently has a proposition as its object: "I believe that..." Second, in the early usage, the subject of the verb "to believe" was almost always in the first person singular or plural. "I believe, we believe," In the present era, statistically it is far more likely to be found with third person subjects: "He or she believes, they believe." Third, there has been a shift in reporting from what is believed as true, to what is believed as of neutral or non-commital import, to what is believed as likely to be erroneous or false.[23] Smith summarizes this momentous shift in the following words:

> There was a time when "I believe" as a ceremonial declaration of faith meant, and was heard as meaning: "Given the reality of God, as a fact of the universe, I hereby proclaim that I align my life accordingly, pledging love and loyalty." A statement about a person's believing has now come to mean, rather, something of this sort: "Given the uncertainty of God, as a fact

of modern life, so-and-so reports that the idea
of God is part of the furniture of his mind."[24]

Both Fowler and Smith view these linguistic shifts as
causally and symptomatically related to the cultural shift
in consciousness that accompanied the Enlightenment,
described variously as "secularization" or "modernism". So
persuasive was the impact of this secularizing
consciousness that even religious adherents have tended to
accept the culture's "mutation" of belief into assent to a
set of metaphysical propsitions or blind acceptance of a
doctrinal "belief-system". As Fowler observes:

> The failure to probe beneath this shallowing of
> faith, equating it with the modern
> understanding of belief, means to perpetuate and
> widen the modern divorce of belief and faith. If
> faith is reduced to belief in credal statements
> and doctrinal formulations, then sensitive and
> responsible persons are likely to judge that
> they must live "without faith". But if faith is
> understood as trust in another and as loyalty to
> a transcendent centre of value and power, then
> the issue of faith - and the possibility of
> religious faith - becomes lively and open
> again.[25]

In this paragraph from Stages of Faith, we are able
to glean some indication of the motive force behind
Fowler's investigations into and recovery of the term
"faith". He makes no effort to conceal the fact that his
underlying goal is the regeneration of religious faith in
a secularized culture.[26] In order to accomplish this, he
is concerned to demonstrate that faith is much more than
intellectual assent to religious propositions of dubious
verifiability. It constitutes, in his words, "practical

commitment that involves both conscious and unconscious aspects. It is a moral and existential orientation of the total self to that which has the value of the sacred for a person or group."[27]

Another consequence of this transition in the meaning and usage of term "faith" as somehow equivalent to the propositional meaning of "belief" was the gradual loss of the active and personal connotations that the term originally had. There was and is no verb form in English connected with "faith" as there is in other languages and traditions. Therefore, as Smith points out

> In the three and a half centuries since the King James Authorized Version (of the Bible), the word "faith" (as a noun) has not altogether lost its original spiritual meaning, but the words "belief" and "believe" have. One might therefore urge that "belief/believe" be dropped as religious terms since they now no longer refer directly to anything of human ultimacy...The modern world has to rediscover what "faith" means and then to talk about that; it must recover the verb, to rediscover what it means to have faith, to be faithful, to care, to trust, to cherish, to be loyal, to commit oneself: to rediscover what believe used to mean.[28]

Smith continues in a passage that could form almost a preface to Fowler's investigations of faith:

> This last has, at a linguistic level, been our task. To transpose this from the linguistic to the theological level, and to the personal, the institutional, the socio-cultural, will be a larger task, for coming generations: the rediscovery of living one's life, corporate and individual, in awareness of, quiet confidence in, pledged allegiance to, ardent love of, the transcendent reality in the participation in which the human life consists.[29]

It is not surprising, given Smith's acknowledged influence, that Fowler in his first article on faith development theory, gave his preliminary definition of faith as a verb. Echoing Smith, he asserted that there is no convenient English term for denoting the activity, the state of being, or the quality of participation that is faith.[30] Thereafter, Fowler has employed the term freely as a verb, talking about "faithing" as a human universal.

Psychology and Theology: Fowler's Distinctive Approach

What makes Fowler's approach to faith as a human universal distinctive? Building directly on the theological and religio-historical insights of Tillich, Niebuhr, and Smith, Fowler seeks to operationalize faith for purposes of psychological investigation. Although he is not explicitly engaged in "empirical theology" as such, there is a sense in which his theological vision has served to inspire his empirical psychological investigations. Fowler works at the intersection of these two disciplines guided by the conviction that theological insights can and ought to be open at certain levels to psychological verification. Fowler acknowledges that there are many dimensions of faith that remain beyond the scope of psychological inquiry. But, as he exclaims, "The fact that we deal with a complex subject matter, edged around

with mystery, provides no excuse for not being clear where we can be clear."[31]

Fowler appropriates the insights of two major bodies of psychological theory in his search for the structures of faith. The first and most obvious is that of the structural-developmental school led by Jean Piaget and Lawrence Kohlberg. He relies extensively on their work to clarify the structures of faith as a universal form of knowing. The second body of research that has influenced Fowler's approach to faith as a "human" quality is the psycho-social theory of Erik Erikson. Fowler asserts that Erikson's influence on him "has been both more pervasive and more subtle" than that of Piaget and Kohlberg and has touched him "at convictional depths that the structural developmentalists have not addressed."[32]

Perhaps Erikson's influence has been more pervasive because his focus parallels so closely Niebuhr's concern to illuminate the social nature of selfhood and faith. Erikson's psycho-social perspective on human development coupled with complementary theological perspectives on the dynamics and evolution of faith has provided many important elements in Fowler's articulation of faith as a human quality in two senses. First of all, as the foundational dynamic of trust and loyalty underlying selfhood and relationships. Secondly, as a holistic way of knowing and valuing in which persons shape their relations

with self, others and world in light of an apprehension of
and by transcendence.[33]

There is an obvious distinction between faith
considered as a human universal and faith considered as a
specifically "religious" phenomenon. To regard faith as
the "making and maintenance of meaning" is not exactly
synonomous with faith as gifted response to divine
revelation. Fowler himself acknowledges this when he
identifies two dimensions of faith that are "stressed" as
central in sub-groups of several major world religious
traditions. He describes the first of these dimensions as
"the unifying and life-directing response or persons,
mired helplessly in alienation or self-groundedness, to
the gift of divine grace." The second he describes as
"obedient assent to revealed truth."[34] Fowler does not
perceive these dimensions of faith to be universal, but he
does include them in his definition of faith. The further
implication is that there are universal dimensions of
"religious" faith that can be understood in psycho-social
and structural-developmental terms.

This distinction clarifies to some extent what Fowler
means by the term "human faith" in contrast to faith
understood as a theological virtue. "Human faith" is
essentially a psycho-social phenomenon, a generic quality
of all persons, that relates them to themselves, others
and shared centres of value and power which may or may not

bear ultimacy in any objective sense. Faith, understood theologically, is both a psycho-social phenomenon and a religious phenomenon insofar as it relates persons to themselves, others, and a shared centre or principle of value and power that reveals itself as ultimate and absolute in an objective sense.

Fowler himself does not always make the distinction between "human" and "religious" faith as clearly as this in his writings. This has led to ambiguity in terms of defining where the boundary lies between his descriptive and his normative statements. While distinct, Fowler perceives human and religious faith to be closely related inasmuch as both are understood "theocentrically." When "centres of value and power" are understood as "gods" that claim ultimacy in the ordering of personal and corporate life, they can be judged in terms of the degree to which they are actually capable of bearing such ultimacy. Fowler attempts to describe not only how such "gods" organize our lives in "faith" psychologically and socially, but also sets the stage for making normative claims about which of the "gods" is truly worthy in this regard. Psychological faith and theological faith are understood as distinct but related phenomena. The former has the potential but does not necessarily evolve into the latter.

CHAPTER TWO

FAITH AS RELATIONAL

My intention in this chapter is to elucidate in greater detail Fowler's description of faith as fundamentally a "way-of-being-in-relation." Fowler carries out his analysis of faith as relational at three distinct levels. These can be described as the psychological, the covenantal-triadic, and the existential levels. We will look at each of these levels of his analysis in turn.

The Psychological Dimensions of Faith as Relational

In his most recent descriptions of the nature and structure of faith, Fowler opens his analysis of its relational dimensions by building on Erik Erikson's insights into the formation of basic trust during human infancy.[1] Fowler sees such pervasive trust - and trustworthiness - as foundational for all other human strengths and virtues including that of faith. According to Fowler, primal trust "underlies a person's capacity to "be there" for others, for causes of import, and for one's own becoming."[2] Following Erikson, he sees that the struggle for basic trust, in the midst of ongoing and deep-seated tendencies toward basic mistrust, extends to one's sense of the character of the larger world and to the character of the "ultimate environment".[3]

In infancy, we are exposed to and become gradually more conscious of the environment that surrounds us. We enter rapidly into a process of discovering that which is "other-than" we are. The character of that environment can be experienced as both life-affirming and/or life negating. As Fowler describes it

> our first experiences of faith and faithfulness begin with birth. We are received and welcomed with some degree of fidelity by those who care for us. By their consistency in providing for our needs, by their making a valued place for us in their lives, those who welcome us provide an initial experience of loyalty and dependability. And before we can use language, form concepts or even be said to be conscious, we begin to form our first rudimentary intuitions of what the world is like, of how it regards us and of whether we can be at "home" there.[4]

Both Fowler and Erikson see the genesis of faith in relationship. There is always another in faith. "I am conscious of...", "I depend on...", "I trust in and am loyal to..." This "primal Other", usually the child's mother, becomes both the object and source of faith. She is the larger world or "ultimate environmment" of the infant, towards which it responds in trust and absolute dependence.

The larger world of the infant is, therefore, the world of touch, of sound, of taste and reassuring warmth provided in and through the relationship between parent and child. This world is more or less consistent in its provision of care and nurture and in its response to pain

and discomfort. In the interaction between mother and
child, not only does a bond of mutual trust and loyalty
evolve, but the infant begins to sense almost immediately
whether his or her "ultimate environment" is a
hospitable, welcoming space or an indifferent, perhaps
even cold and hostile space. This has a profound influence
on their experience of the character of the larger world
and their growth in faith thereafter. For this reason,
Fowler is paying increasingly close attention to the
formative impact of infantile experience on faith
development.[5]

The Covenantal-Triadic Dimensions of Faith as Relational

Faith involves more than the bonds of trust that we
develop with others. In Stages of Faith, Fowler reflects
on what the parent or parents bring with them to the care
and nurture of the developing child in order to clarify
the notion of the what he calls the "triadic" shape of
faith.[6] According to Fowler, the developing child not only
senses trustworthiness or the lack of it in their
surrounding environment, but very rapidly begins to
perceive the more subtle value orientations of his or her
care-givers. As Fowler himself puts it:

> Long before the child can sort out clearly the
> values and beliefs of the parents, he or she
> senses a structure of meaning and begins to form
> nascent images of the centres of value and power
> that animate the parental faith. As love,
> attachment, and dependence bind the new one into

the family, he or she begins to form a disposition of shared trust and loyalty to (or through) the family's faith ethos.[7]

Fowler's description of this process of socialization in the family depicts a structure not only of interpersonal trusts and loyalties, but also of the family's shared centres of value and power. This includes the family's "story," its recognized and unrecognized collection of formative myths, memories and hopes. Moreover, it discloses the interplay of faith and identity in the triadic pattern of faith.

When Fowler speaks of felt commitment to centres of value and power he uses a highly formal language to speak about a very subtle and intensely personal dynamic. In that process of osmosis by which the child absorbs the outlook of its parents and family, it is "resting its heart" on the centres of value that it senses will confer value upon it. In Fowler's words

> We value that which seems of transcendent worth and in relation to which our lives have worth. Further, in a world of powerful forces that have an impact on us, enlarging and diminishing us, forming and sometimes destroying us, we invest loyalty in and seek to align ourselves with powers that promise to sustain our lives and to undergird "more being."[8]

There is clearly then two respects in which Fowler describes the interplay of faith and identity. The first concerns the way in which we discover who we are in the context of what might be called interpersonal faithfulness. "Without the kind of commitment and regard

that are involved in faithful relationships, human beings cannot become and maintain themselves as "selves."[9] Here Fowler draws on the insights of H. Richard Niebuhr[10] and the American philosopher-psychologists George Herbert Mead[11], James Mark Baldwin[12], and John Dewey[13], in illustrating how others, by their consistency in caring and interacting with us, provide the feedback by which we can form reliable images of ourselves. We require a community of "Thou's" to form an "I". We require others to believe in us and to confirm our worth. Faith, in this sense, is the very foundation of selfhood.

However, faithfulness in these covenant relationships is neither given nor maintained in a vacuum. Fowler acknowledges the influence of Josaiah Royce on his conception of faith as the foundation of not only the psychological life of the human subject but its social life as well. Royce explored the ways in which persons live in relationships that are mediated by promises. Their ties to each other are mediated, formed, and deepened by shared or common trusts in and loyalties to what Fowler calls "centres of value and power."[14] It is not only the "other" who confirms my identity and self-worth, but the centre of value to which we are both committed in a community of valuers. At one time, Fowler made a distinction between the intrapersonal and the inter-personal as the inner structure and the outer structure of

faith. Although he no longer uses this terminology, it is well to heed his reminder that in the study of faith we must hold in view a dynamic, dialectical relationship between these two dimensions of faith.[15]

Fowler points to the use of language in oral or written communication as an example of the covenantal-triadic structure of faith as the basis of social life.[16] In the phenomenon of communication there is a bond between writer-speaker and hearer created not just by the sharing of information, but also by the implicit promise to use language truthfully and faithfully. The "third" or triadic pattern of faith is represented here by the transcendent "cause" of honesty and fidelity to truth. Should one party suspect the other of failing to adhere to the mutual but tacit commitment to truth, then the relationship is jeopardized by "bad faith".

Niebuhr, in his volume <u>Faith on Earth</u> carefully developed the notion of the covenantal structure of faith and its broad social, religious, and political implications.[17] The underlying principle which Fowler appropriates from Niebuhr is his observation that we are creatures who live, indeed, must live in society by faith, understood as the commitment and loyalty to centres of value that transcend us as individuals. In science, business, medicine, or the economy, as well as in political and international life, we live by many such

tacit "covenants" as well as by a number of very explicit ones. The triadic structure of faith in our lives is made visible as much by our disloyalties, our breaches of promise, as it is by our experience of relying upon the fidelity, the "good faith" of personal and collective others.[18] One only has to consider the impact of the Watergate scandal or, more recently, the Iran-Contra affair, to appreciate the prophetic value of the following lines from Faith on Earth written over thirty years ago:

> Questions about faith, faithfulness or fidelity, trust or confidence arise in an urgent and tragic form as we view the massive and petty betrayals and deceptions of our time - the propaganda of the "big lie," the cultivation of mutual distrust in society as measures of party and national policy, the use of pretended loyalty in conspiracies against state and civilization, the enlistment of men as faithful followers of causes that depend for success on practices of deception...The experiences of the twentieth century have brought into view the abyss of "faithlessness" into which men can fall. We see this possibility - that human history will come to its end neither in a brotherhood of man nor in a universal death under the blows of natural or man-made catastrophe, but in the gangrenous corruption of a social life in which every promise, contract, treaty and "word of honor" is given and accepted in deception and distrust. If men no longer have faith in each other, can they exist as men?[19]

This quotation illustrates the concern of both Fowler and Niebuhr to uncover the social structure of faith and the moral implications of its breakdown. Both also consider the covenantal nature of faith and its bearing on "world maintenance." This was a central concern

of Niebuhr and one addressed by Fowler in his earlier work that has been mysteriously absent from his most recent discussions of faith.[20] It is one that is still worth pursuing in this context because of the light it sheds on the foundations of Fowler's thought.

In Niebuhr's view we, as knowers, never relate immediately to an object of our knowing. It is true that we do have a direct relation to, and therefore personal experience of, any such object, but Niebuhr's point would be that we don't come to such a situation of perception and interpretation without the aid of language and concepts accepted from others. Nor do we engage in such knowing without being aware of, ac-knowledging, the presence of others - of co-knowers whose perceptions and interpretations must be put along side our own, and about whose trustworthiness and faithfulness, to us and to truth, judgements have to be made.[21]

It is as "co-knowers" in this sense that persons are involved in the process of world maintenance or "the holding together of a shared vision of reality and of "excellence of being" in human communities. Fowler suggests, along with Niebuhr, that "reality" itself is a shared construct which is covenantally maintained and argued that the maintenance of "reality" required the constant renewal and transformation of this construct. As he expresses it: "The trust and loyalty to each other -

and to each other in a shared vision of excellence of
being - must be consistently developing and
re-vivifying."[22] Failing this, solipsism sets in, both
epistemological solipsism, in which each person construes
the world and the ultimate conditions of existence after
his or her own fashion, and moral solipsism, in which each
person acts solely out of an ethic of self-interest.
Fowler originally saw the principal contribution of
institutional religions in cultures as their generation of
renewing power and passion in the mainly tacit covenants
which sustain a people's interpersonal trust and their
shared visions of excellence of being.[23]

It is important to recognize here that, while Fowler
no longer deals explicitly with the notion of world
maintenance as a "social construct," his understanding of
the covenantal and triadic structure of faith has not only
profound psychological meaning but also broad social,
moral and even ontological implications. The basis of his
later reflections on the developmental epistemology and
psychology of faith is to be found in his early
appropriation of Niebuhr's insights into the fiducial
structure of all known reality. Critics of Fowler's
thought who claim that he is reducing faith to a
psychological phenomenon invariably fail to recognize this
philosophical and theological basis of his approach.

The Existential Dimensions of Faith as Relational

In his description of faith as irreducibly relational Fowler extends his analysis one further step to what he calls the broadest and most inclusive relationship in faith. Stemming from the recognition that we are members of many different faith-relational triads in a society that demands loyalty to diverse and often conflicting values and causes, Fowler raises the question as to how our identity and our faith bring these diverse roles, contexts and meanings into an integrated workable unity. The answer that Fowler gives is that we need to construct a faith triad that includes all the others of which we are a part. "This is that most inclusive triangle in which the self relates to the canvas of meaning itself."[24]

Faith, in the thought of James Fowler, is essentially an activity of knowing and being in which the self makes a bid for relationship to a centre of value and power adequate to ground, unify, and order the whole force-field of life. It is a mode of being-in-relation to whatever one construes as the ultimate conditions of one's existence through the construction of a hierarchy of faith triads oriented, consciously or unconsciously, towards an ultimate centre of value and power. In theological language, faith is the knowing or construing by which persons apprehend themselves as related to the transcendent.[25] Fowler states it thus:

> As persons and communities, we live in the midst
> of powers, forces, and valences that break upon
> us from a variety of levels and directions. The
> triadic patterns of faith... are part of the way
> we give order, coherence, and meaning to this
> welter of forces and powers. But it is our tacit
> and explicit assumptions about the "grain" or
> character of the ultimate environment taken as
> whole that provide the larger framework of
> meaning in which we make and sustain our
> interpersonal, institutional, and vocational
> covenants. It is our operational images -
> conscious or unconscious - of the character,
> power, and disposition of that ultimate
> environment towards us and our causes which
> give direction and reason to our daily
> commitments.[26]

This quotation serves to illustrate what may be the most

important element of what might be called the

"theoretical prologemenon" to Fowler's faith development

model. Here, Fowler identifies the covenantal

relationship that every person must form with that which

is ultimate in their environment and which subsequently

gives shape to the faith triads that inform their everyday

lives. This is the existential core of Fowler's faith

model that actually grounds, contextualizes and qualifies

his constructivist analysis of faith development. As will

be seen, development in faith, according to Fowler, takes

place in this relationship towards and construal of one's

ultimate environment. For this reason, it is important to

explore a little further the philosophical and theological

roots of this central notion in Fowler's thought in order

to demonstrate how his image of faith as relational is

funded by a much deeper inquiry into basic

existential attitudes carried out by his theological
mentor H. Richard Niebuhr.[27]

As Fowler points out, there are many moments in which
persons do not feel themselves related to any value or
power adequate to unify and order their experience. For
some, the images they form to express a unity and order in
their ultimate environment are at best neutral toward
their lives and human events generally, or at worst they
are hostile and destructive. Nonetheless, Fowler asserts
that "even as negativity or void, a person's unconscious
assumptions or conscious convictions regarding power and
value in their ultimate environment have important
implications for the character and quality of the
relational commitments in the range of his or her other
triangular relationships."[28] Fowler himself does not spell
out these implications within the context of his own
description of faith, but he does allude to them in his
commentary on H. Richard Niebuhr's volume Faith on
Earth.[29]

One of Niebuhr's key insights in Faith on Earth, and
the one that Fowler builds on, is that there is an
ultimate covenantal structure to all of reality, and that
the ubiquitous presence of the triadic structure of trust
and loyalty implies the idea of an ultimate, transcendent
loyalty and cause. Reality for both Fowler and Niebuhr has
a fiduciary structure as a whole: "The familiar ground of

ordinary personal loyalties is continuous with a larger
network of trust and loyalty centring ultimately in One
who is supremely faithful."[30] Human beings bear the awful
burden of choosing not whether to relate to the ground of
their personal and collective being - for this relation is
a fact - but rather how it is they will relate to this
ultimate. That is to say that the self, whether it knows
it or not, whether it admits it or not, must assume a
disposition towards the transcendent, and will base that
fundamental disposition on its convictions or
interpretations concerning the transcendent's disposition
towards the self.

Fowler employs a typology that Niebuhr originally
developed to illumine the different ways in which the
human being or human community organizes its relation to
what it perceives as its ultimate environment. Fowler
describes these as "faith-identity patterns" because they
are different modes of integrating the many faith triads
to which persons belong into the larger comprehensive
meaning frame that shapes and sustains them.[31]

Fowler uses the term "polytheism" to characterize a
pattern of faith and identity that lacks any one centre of
value and power of sufficient transcendence to focus and
order one's life. Polytheistic faith has attachments to
many minor or subsiduary centres of value and power. It
manifests itself in a series of relatively intense or

total faith commitments which usually prove to be transient and shifting. Polytheists thus move from one faith relational triad to another, often with sharp discontinuities and abrupt changes of direction.[32]

The second faith-identity pattern that Fowler describes is "henotheism" (Greek, heno, "one" + theos, "god") suggesting trust in and loyalty to one single, overarching god-value which has the capacity to order and unify the hierarchy of lesser triads of trust and loyalty. Put into biblical language, the henotheistic god remains merely an idol. It is a value and cause elevated to central, life defining power that possesses only finite and limited significance. Though henotheism solves the faith-identity dilemma of internal value competition and conflict for the person or community, it is likely to involve its faithful in excesses of confidence in their own righteousness and the righteousness of their own cause, with potentially violent consequences for their neighbours.[33] Niebuhr identifies nationalism as a typical example of this form of faith.

The third faith-identity relational pattern that Fowler considers is what Niebuhr has called "radical monotheism.[34] Although inspired by an historical and theological analysis of biblical faith, the term "radical monotheism" refers to a form of faith not limited specifically to biblical, or even cultic religious

instances. Fowler defines it as "a type of faith-identity relation in which a person or group focuses its supreme trust and loyalty in a transcendent centre of value and power, that is neither a conscious or unconscious extension of personal or group ego nor a finite cause or institution."[35] For Fowler, this type of monotheism implies loyalty to the principle of being and to the source and centre of all value and power that relativizes and orders less universal or less transcendent centres of value and power. He maintains that this transcendent centre of value and power has been symbolized or conceptualized in both theistic and non-theistic ways in many of the major religious traditions of the world and is not limited to Western culture or predominantly Western religion.[36]

Fowler's use of this typology to illustrate formally his notion of faith-identity relational patterns implies definite value judgements concerning the normative direction and goal of faith development. It also makes implicit theological judgements concerning the existential necessity for constructing an "ultimate environment" that is truly adequate to ground and unify human life.[37] The centres of value and power around which persons choose to order and organize their life commitments has profound existential implications and influences greatly the possibility of their attaining integrated selfhood.

Polytheism and henotheism are not merely neutral descriptive categories but identify forms of faith-identity relations whose centres of value and power are seen to be not ultimately sufficient to sustain meaning and self-worth. Although Fowler uses inclusive philosophical language to convey the sense of these patterns, their derivation in Niebuhr's analysis of faith indicates a shared concern on Fowler's part to hold up radical monotheism as the ideal.

The central thrust of this section has been to explore the way in which Fowler has undertaken to describe faith as relational not only in interpersonal terms, but ultimately in existential terms. He refers to Ernest Becker's characterization of man as "homo poeta" and quotes him in an effort to convey in generic language the essence of his notion of faith as relational:

> The meanest man must have his canvas, and it must be one which reflects somehow his own sense of significance in a world that is significant. Above all it must be integral, unified, even if it should suffer from being pale.[38]

It is this notion of a "canvas of meaning" that is central in any attempt to unravel the complexities of Fowler's faith description. It is also wise to bear in mind the sub-title of Stages of Faith - "The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning" - for this represents Fowler's underlying focus: the making and maintenance of meaning in relation to one's ultimate

environment. Fowler sees this ultimate environment as being formed and sustained at the psychological, the interpersonal, and the existential levels and thus truly universal in nature and scope. The human being must live in some relation to the ultimate conditions of existence. The question remains, however, as to how the human being apprehends those conditions and forms them into a schema that is truly life sustaining. It is to this "inner structure" of faith that we now turn.

CHAPTER THREE

FAITH AS A MODE OF KNOWING

Fowler describes faith as a way of being-in-relation to an "ultimate environment". In this chapter my task will be to illuminate Fowler's understanding of faith as the mode of knowing by which this ultimate environment is apprehended. My approach will be to first examine the theoretical basis of the statements Fowler makes about faith as a "constructive" mode of knowing. I will then explore his understanding of faith as a "constitutive" mode of knowing. This will lead directly into a discussion of how Fowler conceives and describes the role of imagination in faith. Finally, I will attend to the delicate question of how knowing in faith functions together with valuing in the composition of a person's ultimate environment. Fowler's statements on this last topic contain the very essence of his "philosophy" of faith and serve to integrate his descriptions of its many diverse aspects.

Faith-Knowing as Constructive and Constitutive

Fowler indicates that his approach to faith as a mode of knowing has been shaped by the "structural-developmental" tradition pioneered by J. Mark Baldwin and John Dewey, and brought to heightened clarity through the

work of Jean Piaget, Lawrence Kohlberg, and Robert Selman.[1] This "constructivist" perspective on knowing views it generally as an acting upon, composing, or structuring of the object known. Knowing occurs "when an active knower interacts with an active world of persons and objects, meeting its unshaped or unorganized stimuli with the ordering, organizing power of the knower's mind."[2] The common basis of all structural-developmental theory is the positing of integrated patterns or operations of thought, formally describable, which characterize a sequence of increasingly more differentiated and therefore "adequate" systems of knowing. These are generally conceived of as "stages" which are hierarchically ordered, sequential, and invariant.[3]

Jean Piaget's applications of structural-developmental theory focused mainly on intellectual development and resulted in many original insights into the child's and adolescent's mode of composing the reality of the world of objects and relationships between objects.[4] Piaget's work in this area, which he described as "genetic epistemology," served as the foundation of all subsequent structural-developmental research and defined its two principal research foci. The first is the determination of which operations of mind can be scientifically demonstrated to underlie the achievement of

rationally certain knowledge. The second is the way in which these operations take form in the person over the human life cycle.[5]

Following the Piagetian approach, Lawrence Kohlberg and Robert Selman have investigated the structures of moral reasoning and social-perspective taking respectively.[6] The research of each of these theorists has been incorporated explicitly into Fowler's conception of faith which he regards as itself a "powerful expression of constructive knowing."[7] Fowler is well aware of the inherent limitations of the structural-developmental approach and has attempted to adapt it more specifically to the complex phenomenon of faith. When Fowler speaks of faith as a mode of knowing, he does not wish to imply that it is only a rational or intellectual structuring of reality. He emphasizes that faith

> is a knowing which includes loving, caring, and valuing, as well as awe, dread, and fear. Faith-knowing relates a person or community to the limiting boundaries and depths of experience; to the source, centre, and standard of valuing or responsibility in life...The self may be disposed negatively or hostily, distrustfully or rebelliously, or it may be disposed positively and with love, with trust and loyal responsibility. Faith, which often comes to expression in religion, may apprehend the Transcendent and ones relation to it in terms either of the Void, the Enemy, or the Companion. No one of these is purely cognitive or rational. Each is a valuing apprehension.[8]

To view faith holistically as a valuing apprehension necessitates addressing three decisive problems which

Fowler identifies in his effort to extend the Piagetian approach. The first problem is the bifurcation of cognition and affectivity in the structural-developmental approach. The second is the failure of structural-developmental theorists to make a distinction between the activity of knowing in which the identity or worth of the person is not directly at stake and the activity of knowing in which it is. The third problem is the failure to to give significant attention to the bihemispheric, bimodal forms of consciousness involved in modes of knowing which Fowler describes as "ecstatic" and "imaginative."[9]

The "constructivist" approach has been used by both Piaget and Kohlberg to illumine cognition (or what Fowler calls the "structural aspect of knowing"), quite intentionally bifurcating this from "affection" (the "energetics" or emotional dimension of knowing).[10] While both Piaget and Kohlberg have acknowledged the inextricable unity of cognition and affection in actual behavior and choice, neither has sought to deal explicitly with that unity in a theoretical way. Such a challenge cannot be avoided in the realm of faith where both reason and feeling operate so powerfully.

In his efforts to articulate the nature of faith as a "valuing apprehension" that integrates both cognition and affectivity, Fowler has more recently appropriated the

insights of Robert Kegan.[11] Kegan has extended the Piagetian paradigm into the realm of ego development and has argued that the issue is not one of how to theoretically integrate thought and feeling within this model but rather to recognize that meaning making, as a constructive movement, is "prior to and generative of both reason and emotion."[12] Kegan claims that the bifurcation of reason and emotion is artificial and obscures the broader nature of meaning making by paying selective attention to only one aspect of it.[13] The intellectual structures and operations involved in the making and maintenance of meaning reflect a more integral process of total ego development. This process involves a mode of knowing that is not only "constructive" but also "constitutive."

For Kegan, the ego is defined as "the total constitutive activity of knowing (with its evolving characteristic patterns) by which the self constitutes and, therefore, knows other persons and the self as related to others."[14] Important to note here is that constitutive knowing is not what the ego does but what the ego is. In the "knowing" or awareness that is ego, a person structures both the world around him and the "self-world" within him. By adopting Kegan's broad understanding of cognition as co-extensive with ego, Fowler is able to overcome the dichotomy between cognition

and affection and account for their integration in faith as a core process of the constitutive knowing that is ego.[15] The key to understanding how this is accomplished is to recognize the way in which the notion of cognition itself is radically redefined. This process of making meaning in an all-inclusive way is not the result of exercising some separate faculty of knowledge within the self, distinct from the reasoning and feeling functions, nor is it the exercise of reason and feeling together in some complex interaction. Fowler, following Kegan, views the self as the totality of constitutive knowing activity in which there is no thought without feeling and no feeling without thought.

From a structural-developmental standpoint, each of the levels of relationship that Fowler identifies in the life of faith involves "constitutive knowing." These levels were described in the previous chapter as the psychological level, the covenantal-triadic level of relationship between persons, groups, and shared centres of value and power, and the level of existential relatedness to an ultimate environment. It is when he conceptually addresses the last and crucial relational level of faith - that of relatedness to an ultimate environment that has the capacity to unify all personal experience within the force field of life - that Fowler

encounters a second problem with the structural-developmental paradigm.

Here Fowler identifies a crucial lack in all previous constructive-developmental approaches to "constitutive knowing": their failure to attend to "the differences between constitutive knowing in which the identity or worth of the person is not directly at stake and constitutive knowing in which it is.[16] While Fowler acknowledges that this issue was never a focal concern of Piaget or Kohlberg, he does take Kegan to task for his own lack of clarity about "how he makes the move from a theory of knowing which strives for objectivity and rational certainty in knowing to one in which the self's identity and worth and more - its very constitution - are at stake."[17]

Faith-knowing, like intellectual knowing and moral knowing, involves the structuring or "construing" of the world of physical objects. These operations are basic to all knowing. But in both faith-knowing and the kind of moral knowing which gives rise to choice and action, the constitution or modification of the self is always an issue.[18] This is because one is relating at this level to those centres of value and power that are not only of supreme worth, but which bestow worth and value upon the one who invests their trust and loyalty in them. Constitutive knowing at the level of relatedness to the

Transcendent is the focal point of Fowler's concern. Moving beyond the structural-developmental concern with the operations of thought, moral reasoning, social perspective-taking, and even ego development, Fowler seeks to understand faith as essentially an orientation towards the ultimate conditions of existence involving personal commitment and devotion.

In order to carry out his analysis of constitutive knowing in the domain of faith, Fowler introduces the distinction between two major kinds of structuring activity which interact with each other in the composition of one's ultimate environment. Fowler maintains that the introduction of freedom, risk, passion and subjectivity into the Piaget-Kohlberg epistemological paradigm requires the distinction between a "logic of rational certainty" (Piaget's major concern) and what Fowler calls a "logic of conviction."[19] The term "logic" denotes a form of structuring activity and is not to be confused with reasoning power only. Fowler indicates that the relationship between the two logics is not one of choice between alternatives, but rather of the logic of conviction grounding, contextualizing, qualifying, and anchoring the logic of rational certainty.[20] He stresses that "Recognition of a more comprehensive "logic of conviction" does lead us to see that the logic of rational

certainty is part of a larger epistemological structuring activity and is not to be confused with the whole."[21]

In his description of the logic of conviction and its relationship to the logic of rational certainty it is possible to gain a glimpse of Fowler's core understanding of the epistemology of faith. Fowler states that he is "trying to grasp the inner dialectic of rational logic in the dynamics of a larger, more comprehensive logic of convictional orientation."[22] A holistic structural analysis of faith-knowing must involve both.

Faith does involve reasoning, but not merely the reasoning that aims at objectivity understood as a knowing free from all particular or subjective involvement. The logic of rational certainty is itself insufficient in that its truths are impersonal, propositional, demonstrable, and replicable. Such criteria are adequate in the context of scientific inquiry or even common sense objective understanding, but the model of disinterestedness represented does not fit with the quality of knowing involved in faith's composition of an ultimate environment. Fowler expresses this most succinctly in his explanation of the fully constitutive nature of faith's constructions in contrast to those of the intellect alone:

> Piagetian formal operational logic does involve
> the construction of non-empirical, imaginative
> constructs some of which (say, in theoretical
> physics) operate with the same remoteness from
> the possibility of direct empirical validation
> as do faith constructions. But we must recognize

> a critical distinction between the "fictive" or
> "imaginative " constructions of theoretical
> physics and those of faith and theology. This
> distinction arises from... the degree to which
> the identity and value of a self or selves are
> at stake in our acts of constitutive knowing. I
> can live with curiosity and intrigue about the
> question of the nature of "black holes" in
> space. But in my unknowing, I am not paralyzed
> in my choices of lifestyle and commitments.[23]

The logic of conviction, as a structuring activity, comes into play whenever the individual is confronted with self-defining choices based not only on what is objectively known, but more fundamentally, on what is judged to be of value. Rational analysis and interpretation can yield a clarification of options, but in themselves "provide no criteria for highly consequential value choices."[24] As Fowler himself puts it

> In these situations, we choose and act (and/or
> find explanations and rationales for our acts)
> with reference to our assumptions or convictions
> about the character of power and value in an
> ultimate environment. Our choices and
> explanations of choices in these situations
> reflect operative attachments to meaning giving
> images and centres of value and power.[25]

Fowler is adamant in his own conviction that such a broadening of our understanding of knowing so as to include the logic of conviction does not represent an anti-rational or irrational understanding of faith. His efforts have been directed towards clarifying how faith is a "valuing apprehension" that incorporates but is not limited to intellectual reasoning.

There is a sense in which Fowler's epistemology of faith is self-evident. The distinction between intellectual knowing and moral knowing and judgement is not a new one. Nor is Fowler breaking ground in his observations concerning constitutive knowing as a component of the experience of faith. What is unique to Fowler, however, is his assertion that faith is grounded in a "logic of conviction" that involves a patterned knowing, a patterned valuing, and patterned constructions of meaning.[26] These patterns can be understood as the cognitive and affective operations by which the human subject constitutes itself and relates itself to the ultimate conditions of its existence. Fowler's contribution to the field of faith studies lie primarily in clarification of the nature of these patterns.[27] A more thorough understanding of these underlying patterns requires a closer look at Fowler's concept of the role played in faith by modes of knowing that he calls ecstatic and imaginative.

Imagination and Valuation in Faith-Knowing

The third problem that Fowler attempts to resolve in his efforts to adapt the structural-developmental approach to the domain of faith is the integration of cognition with affective, symbolic and holistic forms of consciousness. As he points out:

> To move in this direction requires coming to terms with modes of thought that employ images, symbols, and synethesial fusions of sense and feeling. It means taking account of so-called regressive movements in which the psyche returns to pre-conceptual, pre-linguistic modes and memories, and to primitive sources of energizing imagery, bringing them into consciousness with resultant reconstruals of the experience world.[28]

Fowler also makes reference in this context to brain research which investigates how the mind employs the more aesthetically oriented right hemisphere of the brain in the ecstatic and imaginative modes of knowing that he claims underlie faith-knowing.[29]

The challenge in faith research is to see how rational (or left-brain) knowing plays the crucial role of conceptualizing, questioning, and evaluating the products of these other modes of knowing. Faith-knowing involves a subtle and complex interplay not between reason and feeling, but rather between different modes of knowing that are constitutive of self and that follow a discernible "logic" or pattern that can be understood formally. In the final analysis however, Fowler focuses on the role of imagination in his elucidation of the "how" of faith-knowing. Following the work of William Lynch, he asserts that "virtually all our knowing begins with images and that most of what we know is stored in images."[30]

An image, as Fowler uses the term, unites "information" and feeling; it holds together both orientation and affectional significance. It begins as a

vague, felt, inner representation of some state of affairs and our feelings about it. As such, images are prior to and deeper than concepts.[31] Fowler makes three points about "imaginal knowing" that illumine its nature more clearly.[32] The first is that knowing registers the impact of experience in far more comprehensive ways than present conscious awareness can actually monitor. As was noted earlier, experiences in infancy and early childhood seem to play a powerful role in the constitution of self, others, and the imaginal construing of the surrounding world. This constitutive knowing begins long before the emergence of "narratizing consciousness" that makes memory possible. The point here is that knowing is not dependent on and does not proceed directly from discursive thought. The most formative experiences of knowing precede the emergence of any logical operations and are grounded in images that are formed by faith and that are formative of faith.

The second point that Fowler makes is that this mode of imaginal knowing is not only a developmental fact of infancy and early childhood, but the foundation of knowing at all times. According to Fowler, "The spectrum of knowing taking place in us is always wider and more inclusive than the band of our conscious awareness or attention apprehends."[33] Here Fowler is referring to the well established notion of "subliminal" learning and

knowing which registers meanings and impressions on the human mind constantly without the necessity of narratizing or conscious attention to them. The formation of images is continuous and dynamic.

Fowler's third and final observation follows directly from the first two, and concerns his root definition of knowing. Conscious attention to and narratization of events in ones field of awareness may be a part of the learning process but one does not "know" what is being experienced until it has found linkages with previously formed images. The imaginal basis of all knowing implies linkage, extension, reorganization and often the re-valencing of images with different feeling. Fowler describes this in some contexts as "generative knowing" because the linkage and combination of new images with those previously formed can result in the formation of entirely new constellations of images (often experienced in dreams, for example).

Another important characteristic of image formation is its holistic nature. An image is a representation of a state of affairs that somehow "contains" that state of affairs as a "whole."[34] Fowler emphasizes that to think or know "about" something or someone, sets in motion a kind of scanning interrogation or questioning of the images that are associated with them. Fowler claims that

in a process that involves both a forming and an expression, we narrate what our images "know."

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or questioning of the images that are associated with
them. Fowler claims that

> in a process that involves both a forming and an
> expression, we narrate what our images "know."
> The narration may take story form; it may take
> poetic or symbolic form, transforming nascent
> inner images into articulated, shared images; or
> it may take the propositional form of conceptual
> abstractions.[35]

Thus, for Fowler, imagination is a way of seeing and
processing experience in the form of images which fuse
sense data with feeling. This process creates internal
coherence or "meaning" out of the welter of impressions
and experiences to which the human person is subject at
every moment.

When Fowler describes faith as a form of imagination,
he is focusing on that aspect of faith that "composes a
felt image of the conditions of existence grasped as a
whole."[36] It is precisely this felt image which Fowler
refers to as one's ultimate environment:

> Faith, as imagination, grasps the ultimate
> conditions of our existence, unifying them into
> a comprehensive image in light of which we shape
> our responses and initiatives, our
> actions...(Faith) is a dynamic process arising
> out of our experiences of interaction with the
> diverse persons, institutions, events, and
> relationships that make up the "stuff" of our
> lives... (Faith) is awakened and shaped by these
> interactions and the images, symbols, rituals,
> and conceptual representations, offered with
> conviction, in the language and common life of
> those with whom we learn and grow.[37]

Ernest Becker's characterization of the human being as "homo poeta" distinguishes man as the only creature faced with the challenge and burden of finding or composing some kind of order, unity, and coherence in the manifold force fields of life.[38] In Fowler's view, faith is the form of imagination that carries this out: situating, orienting, and empowering the human being by relating him to the largest possible frame of meaning which it "forms into one" from the events, persons, and experiences of daily life.

It is crucial here to recall the distinction Fowler makes between the "fictive" or "imaginative" constructs of intellectual speculation and the imaginal grasp of an ultimate environment composed by faith. Such an "environment of environments" is not merely a world view or philosophy of life although these may be conceptual expressions of it. It is a broader, deeper, "felt-sense-of-the-whole" that both "holds and grows out of the most transcendent centres of value and power to which our faith gives allegiance."[39] Through this process of "forming into one", faith's image of the ultimate environment grasps its essential character, that is, the disposition of value and power in it toward's one's self, others and the world.

For many individuals this "ultimate environment" is never made explicit. In Fowler's research interviews, many

non-religious persons deny the presence of any such
construct in their life or thought. But here again,
conscious awareness of or reflection on "ultimate
questions" is not the phenomenon that faith responds to.
As Fowler puts it:

> The fact that an image of an ultimate
> environment is largely unconscious or tacitly
> held makes it no less influential or operative
> in a person's initiatives and responses in
> life. Similarly, the fact that one images the
> ultimate conditions of existence as impersonal,
> indifferent, hostile or randomly chaotic,
> rather than as coherent and structured, does not
> disqualify his or her image as an operative
> image of faith."[41]

In this sense, faith can more clearly be seen as a
human universal, for every individual, consciously or
unconsciously, adopts some image of the ultimate
conditions of their personal existence and a disposition
or stance towards those conditions. Every person,
consciously or unconsciously, construes those conditions
as either positively, negatively, or indifferently
disposed towards them and shapes their every day choices
accordingly. The opposite of faith, as Fowler considers it
here, is nihilism, the inability to construe any
transcendent meaning to one's life, to image any ultimate
environment, and to orient or dispose oneself in any way
towards the conditions of one's existence. The absence of
faith in this sense, can result in an experience of
emptiness, abandonment, and a sense of invalidity. When

pressed far enough, these feelings can issue in unspecific rage and destructive pathology.[42]

There is one final question which is of great importance to a complete understanding of Fowler's description of the inner dynamics of faith. This question concerns Fowler's understanding of the relationship between the aspect of faith that invests trust and loyalty (which was attended to in the previous chapter) and the aspect of faith that composes a holistic image of an ultimate environment? Faith operates as that impulse to give trust and loyalty to another. This trust and loyalty relates the person to herself, to others with shared causes, and to a transcendent or ultimate environment. Faith also operates as that imaginal knowing that structures life experience into some totality, some canvas of meaning that endows the relationships, contexts, and patterns of everyday life, past, present and future, with significance. Put simply, faith is both a trusting of the heart and a construct of the mind. How does Fowler see these two movements of faith as related?

Fowler does not deal with this question in any systematic way but a clue to the answer can be gleaned from several key statements that he makes concerning the relationship between imagination and trust in the life of faith. In one of his most succinct, composite definitions

of faith, Fowler seems to give a certain analytic priority
to the aspect of trust and loyalty. Faith, says Fowler, is

> **The process of constitutive knowing**
>
> **Underlying a person's composition and maintenance
> of a comprehensive frame (or frames) of meaning**
>
> **Generated from the person's attachments or
> commitments to centres of supraordinate value
> which have power to unify his or her experiences
> of the world**
>
> **Thereby endowing the relationships, contexts, and
> patterns of everyday life, past and future, with
> significance.**[43]

Here faith is defined as a process of constitutive
knowing that construes or composes a frame of meaning. The
important point is that this knowing is generated from
attachments and commitments to centres of value and power
which have the capacity to unify and integrate experience.
Thus far, this analysis has focused on Fowler's
description of the imaginal knowing that "thinks"
holistically. But in this definition of faith, it becomes
clear that its holistic patterning derives from attachment
and convictional investment of trust in centres of value
and power. Ultimately it is these centres of value and
power that have the ordering and integrating force which
generate the spread of meaning out of which a person
lives. The suggestion here is that it is the personal,
convictional attachments that inspire the human
imagination in the comprehensive constructions of
faith-knowing.

Fowler is not speaking here of fantasy or make-believe, but the power of imagination to "form into one." He underscores that the effort to attend to these more holistic modes of knowing does not negate the part played by the logic of rational certainty.[44] The challenge is to see them in their proper relationship. His conception of this relationship is expressed clearly in the following statement:

> It is the character of faith as a knowing that it draws its imaging in response to the apprehension of and by value - by that which instantiates supreme worth. We form the imaginal orderings of our most inclusive realm of experience in relation to that centre or those centres of value which ground and confer value and worth upon us and upon our strivings. "Worth" and "worship" are etymologically related. We worship that which has supreme worth for us, and in relation to which our lives and strivings are confirmed in transcendent worth.[45]

I have argued here that Fowler's approach to faith seems to give a certain analytic priority to its relational dimension. By analytic priority I mean that in his description of the inner dynamics of faith, the ordering force of our convictional investments is basic to the ordering force of the imagination. It is important to recognize however that although there may be a discernible analytic priority given to one aspect of faith, functionally speaking both convictional investment and imaginal knowing work together. Whether tacitly held or explicitly formulated, Fowler has observed that all persons live out of a frame of meaning, or ultimate

environment, that is composed and re-composed continuously. In actuality, the faith-knowing process involves a dialectic between convictional investment and imaginal construing that cannot be resolved into any set of discrete inner acts. Fowler speaks of this in terms of "reciprocity":

> We image from our experiences of relatedness in the covenantal contexts of our lives. We enter into, form and transform our covenant relationships in reciprocity with the transcendent backdrop of meaning and power in relation to which we make sense of our lives.[46]

Having sought to make analytic distinctions and explicate the inner dynamics of faith, Fowler nevertheless honours the mystery of the process. As did Richard Niebuhr, Fowler likens faith to a cube, pointing out that from any angle of vision one can only see and describe three sides. The cube also has back sides, a bottom, and insides as well. Several angles of vision have to be coordinated simultaneously to do any real justice in a characterization of faith. It is a process that obviously involves both the mind and the heart, imagination and trust, rationality and passionality, objectivity and subjectivity.

The goal in this chapter has been to explore Fowler's description of the inner dialectic of faith-knowing in greater depth. To speak of faith as a "valuing apprehension" has required Fowler to reopen the age-old question of the relation between affectivity and reason

and has led to some original insights into the modes of cognition that combine to create the meaning that sustains human life. It was noted earlier however that this "philosophy of faith" is only a prologemenon to Fowler's main research efforts. These efforts have been directed not only to clarifying the cognitive dynamics of faith, but also the developmental dynamics of faith. An analysis of these will involve looking at how Fowler has actually "operationalized" faith for purposes of empirical research.

CHAPTER FOUR

FAITH AS A DEVELOPMENTAL PHENOMENON

My primary aim in this chapter is to examine Fowler's "operational" description of faith as a developmental phenomenon. In order to do this, it is necessary to inquire first into the particular notion of "development" that Fowler adopts from the thought of Jean Piaget, Lawrence Kohlberg, and Robert Kegan. With this in mind, it is possible to see how Fowler has applied that notion to the phenomenon of faith. In the second part I will outline briefly the operational aspects of faith that Fowler has identified in his research. The final section is devoted to a brief presentation and discussion of Fowler's description of the stages of faith.

The Meaning of Development

Fowler's image of faith as a developmental phenomenon is rooted in structural-developmental theory. This is a psychological theory which has a long and complex intellectual history a full account of which would be impossible here.[1] The aim in this section is limited rather to an exploration of some of the its root pre-suppositions as they inform Fowler's approach to faith as a developmental phenomenon. It is impossible to overstate the impact that the use of this particular theory has on Fowler's description of faith. As Dykstra

has pointed out, "a structural developmental theory of the nature of growth or change in faith requires precisely the kind of understanding of faith that Fowler in fact presents."[2]

Structural-developmental theory has its origins in evolutionary biology and is based on an organismic conception of growth.[3] Living organisms such as plants and animals grow through the process of division and specialization of cells, the combination of like cells into different tissues, and the combination of like tissues into separate sub-systems. Examples of these sub-systems in the human organism would be the digestive, circulatory, reproductive or nervous systems. In the growth of the human embryo, it is the processes of multiplication, differentiation, combination, and integration of cells which bring these elaborate structures or sub-systems into being. The organism itself is a hierarchichal integration of many levels of dynamic sub-systems forming one structural whole.

This process of self-organization always tends towards a dynamic equilibrium, a balance, a maintenance of harmony among all its constituent elements. It maintains this delicate equilibrium in two fundamental ways. First, through a process of "assimilation" of new experiences (selectivity) and second, by "accomodation" to new experiences (flexibility) within the limits possible at

its present state of organization. The former involves
organismic interaction with the environment in which the
structures of the organism do not change. The latter,
accomodation, endows the organism with the ability to
adapt or change its structures to meet novel situations
and thereby arrive at a new and higher state or "stage" of
equilibrium. Such structural "accomodation" is known more
generally as "development." Structural development in any
organism can normally be expected to continue until that
organism reaches a stage of structural equilibrium
adequate to its surrounding environment.

The organismic model of structural development has
been applied in realms as diverse as psychology,
sociology, economics and even astronomy to understand
organized complexity in all its manifestations as well as
the laws of its development.[4] As was mentioned in the
preceding chapter, Fowler's understanding of faith and its
development is based largely on the seminal research of
Jean Piaget into the nature and development of human
cognition.

Piaget postulated the existence of a series of
cognitive stages each of which he saw as an integrated set
of operational structures that constitute the thought
processes of a person at a given time. A "stage"
represented a kind of balanced relationship between a
knowing subject and his or her environment. As in

biology, Piaget conceived the development of these cognitive stages as the transformation of integrated "structures of the whole" in the direction of greater internal differentiation, complexity, flexibility and stability. Four basic stages mark the course of this development in human cognition: sensorimotor (approximately 0-2 years); preoperational (2-7 years); concrete operational (7-11 years); formal operational (11-15 years).[5]

Piaget's conception of a structural-developmental "stage" can be considered prototypical of the structural-developmental "paradigm" in general. An adequate summary of this paradigm must make mention of six principles. Each stage represents a discrete structural whole displaying a coherent pattern of cognition. Each stage of equilibration is qualitatively - not just quantitatively - different from the others. The stages of cognitive development follow an invariant sequence: they always follow the same order and no stage can be skipped. The stages are hierarchically integrated, each one building on and extending the operations of previous stages. The sequence is universal across the species reflecting genetically endowed potentials for operations of knowing. The operational structures of cognition do not emerge automatically as a function of chronological age or biological maturation but "develop" under the impact of

environmental challenge, stimulation, and support. This is not to suggest that the knowing organism is only a passive responder to environmental stimuli. Structural developmentalism, unlike behaviorist psychology, views the the organism as "self-regulating activity" in constant interaction with its environment.

Fowler's appropriation of structural-developmental theory parallels Piaget's approach in many essential respects. This was not always the case. Fowler's earliest preliminary sketch of the stages of faith owed a great deal to the developmental constructs in Erikson's psychosocial theory, Robert Bellah's theory of religious evolution, and Carl Jung's concept of individuation.[6] It was the influence of Lawrence Kohlberg and his structural-developmental approach to moral reasoning that originally inspired Fowler to adopt this paradigm in his investigation of faith and its development.[7]

Kohlberg's main assumption has been that moral judgement and action must have a rational (cognitive) core that lends itself to structural-developmental investigation. His second assumption, based on a Kantian conception of ethics, is that the heart of morality lies in knowing what is required of one.[8] A stage of moral development, therefore, is conceived as a formally describable pattern of thought or reasoning employed by a person in the adjudication of moral claims. Kohlberg views

the process of the development of this cognitive core of
moral reasoning as occuring in the interaction of persons
with the social conditions of their lives.

Kohlberg charts the development of moral (justice)
reasoning through six stages grouped in pairs on three
levels: Preconventional Level (Stage 1 Obedience and
Punishment Orientation; Stage 2 Instrumental Relativist
Orientation), Conventional Level (Stage 3 Interpersonal
Concordance Orientation; Stage 4 Authority and
Social-Order Maintaining Orientation), and
Postconventional Level (Stage 5 Social Contract, Legalist
Orientation; Stage Six Universal Ethical Principle
Orientation). In keeping with the Kantian cast of the
theory, this sixth stage conceives conscience in terms of
comprehensive, universal, and timeless principles,
"objectively" distant from particular concrete
situations.[9]

Piaget's and Kohlberg's influence on Fowler's model
of faith development has both implicit and explicit
dimensions. Fowler admits in Stages of Faith that one of
the most important contributions of the Piaget-Kohlberg
school to his project is its broadly epistemological
focus, a focus that connects well to the theological
perspectives on faith that Fowler has appropriated from H.
Richard Niebuhr and Paul Tillich. A strong theme in their
descriptions of faith has to do with faith as a way of

knowing or construing the world in light of certain disclosures of the character of reality as a whole that are taken as decisive.[10] Another more implicit dimension of Kohlberg's approach in particular was the suggestive but as yet incomplete ways in which it began to widen the scope of knowing to include the affective domain so crucial to a full understanding of faith.[11] This constituted the growing edge of the structural-developmental approach. Its application to the more complex phenomenon of faith-knowing was a natural extension for Fowler.

Fowler was impressed with Kohlberg's claim to have uncovered a succession of six "stage-like equilibrations" which constituted more or less comprehensive "moral logics." He set about to determine whether a similar succession of more or less comprehensive "faith logics" could also be discerned. Fowler shared Piaget and Kohlberg's focus on the rational core of the developmental process. He also adopted the basic assumptions of the "formalist" approach delineated above: each stage viewed as a discrete set of internally coherent and ordered operations of knowing, valuing and meaning construction; each stage exhibiting a certain formal uniformity in a range of persons; each stage emerging in a developmental sequence that is hierarchichal and invariant; and finally, each stage integrating the

operations of all prior stages and adding successively operations that are qualitatively new and more complexly developed.

Object-relations theory has added a novel dimension to the meaning of "development" in Fowler's approach to faith. As was noted earlier, Fowler has relied increasingly on Robert Kegan's decisive reshaping of the Piaget-Kohlberg paradigm in the direction of personality theory and ego development in order to give a more holistic perspective on the process of faith development. Such a perspective on faith holds together cognition and affectivity as component dimensions of the more total meaning constitutive activity that is ego. Kegan, in effect, shifts the Piagetian focus on cognition to the prior and more radically inclusive realm of personality development. The pattern of developmental activity, in Kegan's view, is seen as both the creation of the object (differentiation) and of the subject relating to it (integration). As Kegan expresses it: "Subject-object relations emerge out of a life long process of development in which a series of qualitative differentiations of self from world create an ever more complex of relation - successive triumphs of relationship to rather than embeddedness in."[12]

Space does not permit a detailed description of Kegan's stages of ego development but it is important to

observe how Fowler's description of faith development situates it within Kegan's more inclusive developmental schema. In fact, in his most recent presentation of the theory, Fowler not only explicitly correlates the two processes of faith and ego development, but seems to integrate them in a more comprehensive description of "the dynamics of selfhood and faith by which we become subjects in relation to God."[13] The context of this description is oriented more towards the outline of a theological anthropology, but it nonetheless reveals the broader notion of development that now informs Fowler's approach.

Clearly, the thought of Piaget, Kohlberg, and more recently Robert Kegan has played a significant role in Fowler's definition of faith as a developmental phenomenon. Although many observers have been critical of Fowler's appropriation of structural-developmental theory in his study of faith, Fowler has vigorously defended himself on this score. Their formalist structural-developmental focus on thought, moral reasoning, and ego development as patterned processes or operations rather than as ideational content, has offered Fowler the theoretical basis from which to make more rigorous empirical descriptions of faith development as a generically human phenomenon. Fowler asserts that "The structural approach suggested a way of focusing on some

features of faith that may be universal despite the great variety of particular symbolic, thematic and imaginal contents."[14]

His view of faith as a "structuring activity" has also allowed Fowler to be "content-neutral" making possible general comparisons across religious group lines. It has given him the means to develop formal criteria with which to make normative judgements concerning the overall adequacy of faith structuring activity. This implies that the more developed structural stages of faith-knowing are, in important ways, more comprehensive and adequate than the less developed ones; that the more developed stages make possible a knowing that in some senses is "more true" than that of less developed stages.[15]

The Aspects of Faith

In this second section I wish to outline the "aspects" of faith that Fowler has identified as operational structures within each stage. Fowler claims that these are the the patterns of knowing, valuing, and meaning construction that actually undergo development. A full appreciation of Fowler's theory demands both a "vertical" and a "horizontal" grasp of the stage-aspect description. This implies an understanding of the developmental stage sequence of each of the aspects individually; but also a sense of each stage as a

structural whole – the aspects in their interrelatedness.

Fowler's search for the structures of faith has led him to differentiate seven operational aspects which are integrated and reintegrated at each of the seven levels or stages of faith.[16] That is to say that each aspect has its own "vertical" developmental pattern through the stages. Fowler relies explicitly on the research of the pioneering structural-developmental theorists in elaborating the stages and structural transformations of the first three aspects.

The first, Aspect A, is labeled "Form of Logic" and is essentially a Piagetian description of the patterns of reasoning and judgement available to the developing person at each cognitive stage. Fowler claims that for the equilibrated operational pattern of a given faith stage fully to emerge, the correlated level of Piagetian cognitive operations must have been developed. He is careful to note, however, that cognitive development does not necessarily lead temporally, but that full development of the other operations or aspects is never found in the absence of the correlated cognitive functioning. Intellectual development progresses from the pre-operational phase in which imagination and fantasy dominate to a culmination in sophisticated scientific reasoning in which formal operations dominate.

Aspect B is referred to as "Perspective Taking" and is based on the research of Robert Selman into the individual's developing ability to take the perspective of others. This is of particular importance in the development of both faith and selfhood insofar as both processes are highly reflexive in nature and depende^R nt on relationships to and responses from significant others. Each successive level of development in the capacity for social perspective taking affords enhanced possibilities for knowledge of self and for intimacy with others. Development of this aspect of faith implies movement from infantile egocentricity to ever widening mutuality with persons and groups "other than" ones own.

Fowler has incorporated and modified the research of Lawrence Kohlberg in his description of Aspect C, which he calls "Form of Moral Judgement." A stage of moral development, as mentioned previously, is conceived as a formally describable pattern of thought or reasoning employed by a person in the adjudication of moral claims. Fowler asserts that there are significant parallels between moral judgement stages and faith stages. Development of this aspect of faith moves from pre-conventional moral reasoning based on punishment and reward towards a post-conventional, principled and universal loyalty.

Aspect D has been named "Bounds of Social Awareness" and is the first of four aspects that Fowler has uniquely identified in faith development research. This aspect focuses on the extent of inclusiveness and accuracy of construal of the reference groups in relation to which persons ground their identity and define their moral obligation. Although similar in some respects to Aspect B, **Perspective Taking,** this aspect differs in that it attempts to account for the typical range of persons and groups "who really count" in one's composition and maintenance of identity and of a meaningful world at each stage. Development in this aspect manifests itself in progressively more inclusive awareness of and relationship to persons and groups in one's social environment.

"Locus of Authority" is the name given to Aspect E. The concern here is to establish whom or what an individual looks to for validation of his or her most significant felt meaning. How is that locus "constituted?" How is it justified? This aspect centres on the patterns of constitutive knowing and commitment by which persons, ideas, institutions, experiences, and processes of one's own judgement are invested with meaning sanctioning authority. Development in this aspect involves a decentration of authority outside of oneself or one's group towards a more personal and autonomous form of authority.

Fowler refers to Aspect F as **"Form of World Coherence."** The focus here is on the way in which each stage composes and maintains a comprehensive sense of unified meaning. Faith images and "reasons" in wholes. This aspect reveals a sequence of stage typical "genres" employed by persons to conceive or represent patterns of coherence in their ultimate environment. These genres range from the episodic mode of integration found in early childhood to the conceptual and symbolic modes of mediation employed in mature adulthood.

Aspect G, the seventh of Fowler's faith operations, is **"Symbolic Functioning."** This aspect describes a developmental sequence of levels in "symbolic competence." Faith, in the composing of an ultimate environment, involves relationship to realities that can only be represented symbolically. An essential feature of the structural whole of any given faith stage is the characteristic way of using or responding to symbol, ritual, myth, or metaphor. Fowler emphasizes that in this aspect in particular account must be taken of the bihemispheric functioning of thought and imagination. Development in this aspect reveals itself as a progression from literal appropriation of symbols to a intermediate phase of demythologization, culminating in a post-critical participation in symbolically mediated reality.

The seven aspects of faith are outlined by Fowler in a particular "spectral" order. Aspects A to C represent what was earlier described as a "logic of rational certainty." These aspects are "contextualized by and integrated with the aspects of a logic of conviction (D, E, F, and G)."[17] It is interesting to note that these latter four aspects are the ones unique to faith development research. They involve cognition at a different level; a level of personal trust. With reference, for example, to Aspect E, Fowler observes

> With this aspect we are well into the elements of a logic of conviction. In the domain where the construction and worth of the self are at stake, trust in and loyalty to sources of authorization cannot be accounted for soley within a logic of rational certainty. In fact, trust in and loyalty to the logic of rational certainty as a comprehensive principle of authority may itself involve a faith commitment involving risk, judgement and conviction.[18]

In the movement through the successive stages of Aspect F, "Form of World Coherence," Fowler discerns the "reconciliation or integration of the logics of rational certainty and conviction."[19] And in Aspect G, "Symbolic Functioning," Fowler claims that "the dynamics of a logic of conviction must be seen as operative with powerful transforming potential for the orientation and functioning of the total psyche."[20] Thus, the description of the aspects moves from a focus on the intellectual operations at the core of the logic of rational certainty, to an elucidation of the processes involved in symbolic

functioning which lie at the heart of the logic of conviction. It is this convictional knowing that forms the foundation of faith.

The Stages of Faith

In this section, I wish to give a brief overview of Fowler's "horizontal" description of faith development. The "aspects" that Fowler has identified are interrelated "structuring operations" that develop together in stages. Following Piaget and Kohlberg, Fowler defines a "stage" as

> an integrated system of operations (structures) of thought and valuing which makes for an equilibrated constitutive knowing of a person's relevant environment. A stage, as a "structural whole," is organismic, i.e., it is a dynamic unity constituted by internal connections among its differentiated aspects.[21]

In Life-Maps and Stages of Faith Fowler has given detailed descriptions of the development of faith in terms of stages so defined with illustrative passages from actual interviews. For purposes of this study, I have relied on the more schematic presentation he offers in "Faith and the Structuring of Meaning" which is the introductory chapter of a critical volume of essays on his work.[22]

Fowler's description of the stages of faith traces the development of these seven aspects through six qualitative transformations. These transformations issue in "more complex inner differentiations, more elaborate operations (operations upon operations), wider

comprehensiveness, and greater overall flexibility of functioning."[23] Fowler admits that, despite their apparent orderliness, movement through the stages is actually often painful and deeply disorienting for most individuals. Moreover, the actual process of stage transition will not necessarily occur either in a movement from aspects A to G, or in an even and simultaneous transformation of all the aspects. Rather, transition will be uneven and ragged, with first one sector leading and then another catching up or creating "drag" on the whole faith development process.[24]

Fowler begins his stage descriptions with an outline of "primal" or "undifferentiated" faith. Here he treats dimensions of infantile experience that are not available for operational analysis in terms of the seven aspects of faith that he employs in the six higher stages. Fowler describes **Primal Faith** as a pre-language disposition of trust and loyalty toward the environment that takes form in the mutuality of one's interactive rituals of relationship with those providing consistent primary care. This may well include the intrauterine environment of the fetus before birth.[25] Infantile faith constructs "pre-images" of powerful and trustworthy ultimacy, in order to offset the anxiety that results from the separations and threats of negation that occur in the initial phases of human development. In psychosocial

terms, Fowler is dealing with what Erik Erikson describes as the tension between the development of basic trust and its struggle with basic mistrust.[26]

With the beginning of the use of language, Fowler identifies the first stage of faith which he designates as **Intuitive-Projective.** This style of meaning-making correlates with Piaget's pre-operational stage of reasoning and with Kohlberg's's punishment/reward stage of moral judgement. Typical of the child of three to seven, the lack of stable, logical operations, coupled with limited abilities in social perspective taking results in a fluid, "intuitive" mode of thinking which constructs or "projects" an ultimate environment by means of imitation, fantasy, and a powerful imagination. Experience has no logical coherence but is unified through a series of tableaus that are episodic in character. Social awareness extends to the family. Authority is external and based on relationships of attachment and dependence. Symbols have a magical and numinous quality and are identified with what they represent, giving them a capacity to permanently shape the affective and cognitive construction of the child's centres of value and power.

In the second stage, which Fowler designates as **Mythic-Literal Faith,** the emotive and imaginal funding of the previous stage is still operative, but the emergence of new logical operations (Piaget's Concrete-Operational

stage) make possible more stable forms of conscious interpretation of experience and meaning. Fantasy and reality are gradually separated as cause and effect relations begin to be understood. Perspective taking becomes possible but remains simple, not yet able to construct the interiority (feelings, attitudes, and internal guiding processes) of oneself or others. Moral judgements are based on reciprocal fairness: goodness is rewarded; badness is punished. Social awareness extends to "those like us." Authority remains external and is given to the incumbents of traditional authority roles. This stage of faith uses narrative or "myth" in its efforts to give unity and coherence to experience. Symbols are appropriated in a one dimensional and literal way.

Fowler refers to the third stage as **Synthetic-Conventional Faith**. The logic of this stage is early formal operational allowing the individual to recognize and work with, but not yet to construct, abstract systems of thought. According to Fowler, the dominant factor in the faith structuring of this stage is the emergence, typically in early adolescence, of "mutual interpersonal perspective taking." This endows the person with the capacity to construct the interiority of others and to see him/herself from the constructed perspective of the other on the self. The identity and worth of the self is embedded in the web of interpersonal relationships out

of which it later will become consciously independent.

At this stage, the identity of the self is derived and unreflective: one does not just have relationships; one is one's relationships. Moral judgements are based on the principle of interpersonal concordance. What is right is living up to group or societal expectations. Social awareness is bounded by a composite of the groups in which one participates. The locus of authority is in the consensus of valued groups and in personally worthy representatives of belief-value traditions. The images and values taken as authoritative are tacitly and uncritically accepted. World coherence is achieved, similarily, through a tacit synthesis of the conventional images and ideas of the group. Symbols now have a metaphorical rather than literal correspondence to what they symbolize, however evocative power inheres in the symbol without any attempt to interpret or de-mythologize.

Individuative-Reflective Faith is the descriptor for the fourth stage of faith. This stage requires upsetting the balance of stage three's tacitly held system of beliefs, values, and commitments and opening it up to critical examination and restructuring. Fowler has delineated a substage of Piagetian formal operations which he characterizes as "dichotomizing." These operations are able to autonomously construct abstract systems of belief and value and to polarize them. Conscious choice and

control become dominant. Social perspective taking also becomes explicit and systematic in accordance with self-selected groups or classes.

The identity of the self at stage four is seen as separate from relationships. Roles and relationships once constitutive of identity, now being chosen, become expressions of identity. Moral judgement is based on the principle of societal maintenance but from an ideological perspective of what constitutes ideal societal norms. The bounds of social awareness extend to ideologically compatible communities which exhibit congruence to self-chosen norms and insights. The locus of authority is now internalized and informed by a self-ratified ideological perspective. World coherence is organized as an explicit system with often rigid boundaries, making it resistant to the "penumbra" of mystery surrounding images, beliefs, and values other than its own. Symbols are separated from the reality symbolized and demythologized. They function to mediate conceptual meaning that resonates with the individual's ideology or world-view.

With stage five, **Conjunctive Faith**, the structuring operations that attempted to bring the contents of faith under conscious and deliberate control become more flexible and open to paradox. The dichotomizing logic of stage four becomes dialectical. This arises from an awakening to polar tensions within one's psyche which

cannot be resolved through the collapsing of one pole into the other. Social perspective taking remains mutual but now with groups, classes, and traditions "other" than one's own. Moral judgements are usually founded on what Kohlberg calls "prior rights and social contract" or "universal ethical principles" though it is not limited to just these two options. The bounds of social awareness extend beyond one's class or group and its corresponding norms and interests.

In stage five faith there develops a disciplined "ideological vulnerability" to the truths and values of outgroups and other traditions. The locus of authority is interiorized further and joined dialectically with the reflective claims of other potentially authoritative traditions. World coherence is achieved through a continual balancing of diverse metaphors, images, systems and concepts. It is pluralistic, but not simplistic, struggling to hold different elements in a creative tension. It is characterized also by a post-critical rejoining of irreducible symbolic power and ideational meaning. It develops a second or willed naivete, an epistemological humility in face of the intricacy and richness of the mystery that is mediated symbolically.

Universalizing Faith is the sixth and final stage in Fowler's developmental schema. From the paradoxical awareness and the embrace of polar tensions of the

previous stage, the structuring of this stage is grounded in the completion of a radical process of decentration from self as the epistemological and valuational reference point for construing the world. Fowler has further differentiated Piaget's formal operations to include a "synthetic" form of logic. This supercedes the dialectical reasoning of stage five, not by a suppression of differences, but through relating to a principle of being that unifies at a higher level of consciousness the polar opposites that apparently exist at lower levels. Social perspective taking is mutual with what Fowler, following H. Richard Niebuhr, calls the "commonwealth of being."[27]

Moral judgements at this stage are post-conventional, grounded on universal ethical principles such as neighbour love and non-violence. The bounds of social awareness are also universal in that they extend towards identification with the species as a whole. The locus of authority is centred radically in personal judgement informed by an intuitive participation in a higher order principle of discernment purified of egoic striving. World coherence is experienced as a "felt sense" of the Ultimate and is usually expressed through story, image, metaphor, or poem. The evocative power of symbols is actualized through the unification of the self with the symbolically mediated reality. Stage six is extremely rare. Fowler points to figures such as Mahatma Gandhi, Thomas Merton, Martin

Luther King, and Mother Theresa to illustrate its character.

Having reviewed briefly the aspects and stages that make up Fowler's "operational" description of faith development, it should be more clear what he means when he refers to the structural dimensions of faith. These logical operations can function within a variety of content traditions both secular and religious. They are not intended to represent any achievement scale or spiritual path[28], but only intended to illumine the styles by which individuals make "ultimate sense" of their experience and how these styles evolve.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE OBJECT AND CAUSE OF FAITH

In the next two chapters, I will be directing my attention to the normative dimensions inherent in Fowler's description of his most advanced stage of "Universalizing" faith. In this chapter, the focus will be specifically on what I have termed the "object and cause" of faith. My treatment of this topic will be divided into three parts. In the first section I will focus on some of the key elements of Universalizing faith with a view to understanding how Fowler's description of it is conditioned by H. Richard Niebuhr's conception of radical monotheism. In the second section I will examine Fowler's central conviction of the sovereignty of God and how he conceives the object of faith to be both the source and principle of being and value. Finally I will explore the image of the kingdom of God which is made explicit in the normative thrust of Fowler's thought. The relationship of trust and loyalty between the subject and object in faith extends ultimately to include devotion to a definite cause. That cause is the realization of what Fowler calls the "commonwealth of being."

First, a word might be in order about the use of the term "normative " in the context of this discussion. The term ordinarily implies some sort of standard used as the basis for comparison or evaluation. In this context, the

term "normative" refers to the image of human wholeness, completion, and fulfillment in faith that constitutes the ideal state in relation to which each of Fowler's stages represents a partial and limited attainment.[1] Put simply, it refers to the image of "good" faith. James Fowler is remarkably candid in his delineation of the theological origins of his image of faith and many aspects of it are made explicit in his description of Universalizing faith. There are, however, crucial assumptions and pre-suppositions that Fowler makes about the nature of both the object and subject of faith that remain implicit in his descriptions of Universalizing faith. A full understanding and appreciation of the normative dimensions of Fowler's image of faith requires attention to both the statements he makes about "mature" faith and the theological foundation that underlies those statements.

The Contours of Universalizing Faith

Stage six or "Universalizing faith" is the normative endpoint of Fowler's developmental schema and expresses, in his own words, the "culminating image of mature faith in this theory."[2] What are the essential features of Universalizing faith? Having already given a summary of Fowler's "operational" description of stage six faith structuring in the previous chapter, I wish here to synthesize some of the elements of Fowler's more

"philosophical" descriptions of stage six. These elements can be categorized as both phenomenological and ethical. The term "phenomenological" refers to the form of consciousness that Fowler claims to characterize this style of faith-knowing. The term "ethical" refers to the form of action that is seen to issue from this consciousness.

Speaking phenomenologically, the hallmark of stage six faith is the culmination of a radical process of decentration from self as the epistemological and valuational reference point for construing the world. Faith compositions are now generated in which a "felt sense" of an ultimate environment is inclusive of all being. This "universalizing apprehension" comes about as a result of a recentration and felt participation in the "transcendent principle of being." In a recent publication, Fowler has referred to the "God-grounded self" as the stage of selfhood correlated with Universalizing faith. As he puts it:

> ...with the Universalizing stage, persons are drawn towards an identification with God in which the bases of identity, knowing (epistemology), and valuing (axiology) are transformed. There is a relinquishing of self into the ground of Being, a kind of reversal of figure and ground in which the person of faith now participates, albeit as a finite creature, in a kind of identification with God's way of knowing and valuing other creatures.[3]

The universalizing apprehensions of this stage of faith have powerful ethical correlates. Whereas the self

in the prior Conjunctive stage of faith is "caught" between these apprehensions and the need to preserve its own being and well-being, the God-grounded self of Universalizing faith moves beyond this field of tension through a moral and, in some instances, even ascetic actualization of the universalizing apprehensions.

Fowler typically focuses on two ethical qualities of Universalizing faith. The first is what he calls "redemptive subversiveness." Purified of egoic striving, Universalizing faith is free to oppose the unjust or unredeemed structures and attitudes of the social, political or religious world. It thereby challenges and calls into question the basis of "the compromise arrangements in our common life which have acquired the sanction of conventionalized understandings of justice." [4] Universalizing faith is prepared to make the sacrifices necessary to achieve profound personal and social transformation.

The second ethical quality that Fowler emphasizes is "relevant irrelevance." The conventional standards by which value and worth are assigned to ethical actions are relativized by the absolute devotion of stage six individuals to love and justice. From the standpoint of those who seek institutional or social change, the often hidden and personal sacrifices characteristic of Universalizing faith achieve little or nothing and are

apparently irrelevant. But from a symbolic perspective, they could not be more relevant insofar as they challenge the very basis of all conventional value judgements.[5]

These phenomenological and ethical qualities are characteristic of and central to Fowler's normative image of faith. But this image derives from more than Fowler's empirical investigations of faith structuring. Fowler explicitly acknowledges his indebtedness to H. Richard Niebuhr's descriptions of radical monotheism as the inspiration for his image of Universalizing faith.[6] Following Niebuhr, Fowler employs the term "radical monotheism" in both philosophical and theological ways. Both usages illuminate the essential character of Universalizing faith.

In chapter two of this study, I noted how Fowler makes reference to radical monotheism as a type of "faith-identity relation" in which a person or group focuses its supreme trust and loyalty in a transcendent centre of value and power that is neither a conscious or unconscious extension of personal or group ego, nor a finite cause or institution.[7] In its philosophical usage, the term "radical monotheism" implies loyalty to the source and centre of all being, value and power that relativizes all other finite centres of value and power. In this philosophical sense it can be seen more abstractly as " a regulative principle, as a critical ideal against

which to keep our partial faiths from becoming idolatrous."[8]

As the operative notion underlying Fowler's image of mature faith, radical monotheism is, in fact, more than an abstract "critical ideal" or "regulative principle." It derives from the theological reflection of H. Richard Niebuhr and is an expression of the dominant thrust of biblical faith. In order to understand the all-pervasive influence of Niebuhr's ideal of radical monotheism on Fowler's normative image of faith it is necessary to examine some of the root assumptions that Fowler has appropriated from Niebuhr's theology.

Faith, Revelation, and the Sovereignty of God

In H. Richard Niebuhr's volume Radical Monotheism and Western Culture, the following definition of radical monotheism is given:

> For radical monotheism the value centre is ...
> the principle of being itself; its reference is
> to no one reality among the many but to One
> beyond all the many, whence all the many derive
> their being, and by participation in which they
> exist. As faith, it is reliance on the source of
> all being for the significance of the self and
> of all that exists. It is the assurance that
> because I am, I am valued, and because you are,
> you are beloved, and because whatever is has
> being, therefore it is worthy of love. It is the
> confidence that whatever is, is good, because it
> exists as one thing among the many which all
> have their origin and their being, in the One –
> the principle of being which is also the
> principle of value.[9]

Contained within this statement are two basic theological

presuppositions that are crucial to both Niebuhr's and Fowler's understanding of mature faith. The first is the underlying conviction of the sovereignty of God understood as the principle and source of being. The second is the inseparability of the principle of being and the principle of value. I will briefly examine each in turn as they relate to and influence Fowler's image of Universalizing faith.

The conviction of the sovereignty of God is an article of faith in the vision of both Niebuhr and Fowler.[10] For Fowler, this conviction is the confessional ground upon which his normative notion of faith is constructed. Even in the literature that is intended for a secular and pluralistic readership, Fowler presupposes a transcendent existent to which all faith is ultimately related and which it attempts to "construe" in progressively more adequate ways. In Stages of Faith, he asserts, for example, that "as we look at the data of our lives of faith ...we are struck by the recognition that faith is response to action and being that precedes and transcends us and our kind; faith is the forming of images of and relation to that which exerts qualitatively different initiatives in our lives than those that occur in strictly human relations."[11] In one of his earliest articles on the topic of faith development, he expressed

his conviction of the sovereignty of God in an almost creedal statement:

> I am convicted of the actuality, the a priori reality, of a transcendent source and centre of being, value, and power. I am convicted of the belief that human beings are ontically shaped for participation in and realization of this transcendent being, value, and power. Further, I am convicted that this source and centre exerts, in manifold ways, an attraction, a valence, a drawing into itself of our hunger for excellence of being. That is part, at least of what religious traditions have understood when they speak of Grace...[12]

How do these central convictions relate to and influence Fowler's image of Universalizing faith? It is important to recognize that for Fowler, the normative image of Universalizing faith does not involve so much structural considerations as it does a faith-identity relation characterized by total trust in and loyalty to an object of faith described as the "principle of being."[13] It might at first appear as though Fowler is forgoing structural criteria in favour of a particular content criteria in his normative understanding of faith. This is not actually the case. Were it so, Fowler would be guilty of importing his own centres of value and power as the normative endpoint of faith. His analysis is more subtle than that.

Fowler's insight, drawn directly from Niebuhr, is that faith is essentially a theistic and therefore "theological" phemenonon. That is to say that faith is always directed towards objects that can be formally

defined as "gods" or in his language, centres of value and power. It would seem that the normative tendency of faith, so defined, is towards an object that formally transcends all limited centres and sources of being and value. That centre or object is the principle of being and value: a formal, transcendent, and absolute standard that exerts "transforming and redeeming tension on the structures of personal and common life."[14] That is to say that it is the value centre which, when apprehended, relativizes all other value centres. The "standard" to which Fowler refers is not merely an abstract "category" but is rather the principle of being that comes to expression in moments of revelation.

In an important article entitled "Stage 6 and the Kingdom of God" Fowler makes clear the seriousness with which he takes revelation as the disclosure of what he calls the "absoluteness of the particular."[15] These moments of absoluteness, which occur in many revelatory traditions, bring to expression a truth that is one and universal. Absoluteness, as a quality of the transcendent which is expressed in particular moments or individuals in history, is not exclusivistic. It is the disclosure of the Real that necessitates a

> theory of relativity in faith in which forms of religious life are considered as relative representations or modes of response to that determinative centre of power and value which is the sovereign reality with which we humans have

to deal in life, whether we know it or acknowledge it or not.[16]

Fowler's descriptions of Universalizing faith are intended to illustrate the type of radically monotheistic faith in which individuals and communities respond in trust and loyalty to "the present and coming reign of a God of sovereign universality."[17]

The second crucial presupposition that Fowler makes concerning the object of Universalizing faith is its identification of the principle of being with the principle of value. This presupposition is also derived from Niebuhr's reflections on the nature of radically monotheistic faith. It is at the heart of both Niebuhr's and Fowler's approach to faith in terms of value-valuation and conditions the normative image of mature faith in Fowler's thought.

In order to understand Fowler's description of the "axiological transformation" that takes place in Universalizing faith, one must return to his basic definition of faith as trust in and loyalty to centres of value and power. Faith is essentially an affair of valuation that involves at one and the same time trust in that which bestows value on the self and loyalty to that which is valued. Those objective realities from which and for which selves live as valued and valuing beings may be described as centres of value or as causes that command our loyalty. There is a double principle at work in human

faith. Trust in centres of value as sources of personal worth can be seen as the more passive principle operating in faith. Loyalty to those values as causes to be served is the more active.[18]

Fowler not only appropriates H. Richard Niebuhr's phenomenology of faith in his description of it as a valuing apprehension, but he also borrows Niebuhr's typology of faith in his description of the "faith-identity relations" that were discussed in chapter two of this study.[19] There it was noted that for Fowler, one's commitments and trusts shape one's identity and that this shaping process takes place according to three general patterns: polytheism, henotheism, and radical monotheism. Polytheism denotes trust in and loyalty to a variety of finite centres of value or "gods" whether they be nation, family, career, or money. Henotheism denotes the ascription of supreme value to a single finite centre or standard of worth. Radical monotheism, upon which Fowler's notion of Universalizing faith is founded, involves trust in and loyalty to the One God as supreme source, centre, and principle of value. To quote Niebuhr directly: "It is not a relation to any finite, natural, or supernatural value-centre that confers value on self and some of its companions in being, but it is value relation to the One to whom all being is related.[20]

The ethical qualities of redemptive subversiveness and relevant irrelevance characteristic of Fowler's description of Universalizing faith flow from radically monotheistic faith which, in terms of trust, depends absolutely and assuredly for the worth of the self on the same principle by which it has being. Since that principle is the same by which all things exist, it accepts and esteems the value of whatever else is in the "commonwealth of being" regardless of the conventional value standards that would exclude some province of being from possessing or bestowing value.[21] As Fowler expresses it:

> In radically monotheistic faith the commonwealth of being, unified in the reign of God as Creator, Ruler, and Redeemer, is universal. This means that principles by which human beings divide themselves from each other – and from other species in the order of creation – are not divisions which finally determine their relative worth or value.[22]

The only principle that can finally determine the relative worth or value of any being is the principle of being itself. This is no arbitrarily chosen standard of reference but the infinite source of being and value that transcends all finite centres of value or "gods" and that discloses itself as Absolute in a variety of religious and cultural traditions. The decisive encounter with this centre and source of value in revelatory experience issues in an apprehension of one's own infinite value as well as the infinite value of all being.

To See the Kingdom:The Cause of Universalizing Faith

The principle of universal valuing is only one half of the image of radical monotheism. In terms of faith as loyalty, radically monotheistic faith and its derivative, Universalizing faith, is directed towards the principle and the realm of being and value as the cause for the sake of which it lives. This cause has a certain duality. On the one hand it is the principle of being and value itself; on the other, it is the realm of being and value.[23] Based on the fundamental premise that "all that is is good," the counterpart of radically monotheistic faith as trust in a universal principle of being and value is universal loyalty and devotion to all that exists and which therefore has value. Fowler's image of Universalizing faith implies, therefore, universalizing and radically inclusive apprehensions of value no longer limited by conventional apprehensions based on centres or standards of value that are finite and ultimately exclusive. This is the essential theological principle upon which Fowler's image of "Universalizing" faith is based. As Fowler himself expresses it, this form of faith

> interrupts all attachments to centres of value and power which might be prized out of egoic or group strivings. The sovereign God of radically monotheistic faith is an enemy to all idolatrous gods. This includes the gods of nation, self, tribe, family, institutions, success, money or sexuality. These partial gods are not negated in the judgement of a sovereign God. But they are relativized to the status of proximal goods. Any

claims of ultimacy for them or by them must be relinquished.[24]

Trust in the **object** of faith, the sovereign God of radical monotheism, coincides closely then with loyalty and devotion to the cause of the universal community or commonwealth of faith. It is the Jewish-Christian image of the kingdom of God that Fowler acknowledges as underlying his normative vision of Universalizing faith.[25] This image of the kingdom, or God-ruling, points towards a unity, harmony, and order in the commonwealth of being that is established by individual and communal trust in and loyalty to the principle of being and value. Universalizing faith is a faith that sees the kingdom. Persons of Universalizing faith have generated faith compositions in which their felt sense of an ultimate environment is inclusive of all being. They have become incarnators and actualizers of the spirit of an inclusive and fulfilled human community.[26] They are persons who act reflectively and intentionally in partnership with the sovereign God of radically monotheistic faith whose cause is the fulfillment of creation and the unity of being. As Fowler notes:

> This is not a homogeneous unity, in which differences and particularities are molded into a monolithic oneness. Rather, the unity envisioned in the kingdom of God, as expected in radically monotheistic faith, is richly plural and highly variegated, a celebration of the diversity and complexity of creation. The hallmark of the kingdom is a quality of righteousness in which each person or being is

augmented by the realization of the futurity of
all the others.[27]

Much more could be said about the object and cause of
faith that is implicit in Fowler's descriptions of stage
six. Space does not allow a complete exposition of the
many dimensions of H. Richard Niebuhr's vision of radical
monotheism which Fowler has appropriated in his thought.
In his recent work especially, Fowler has sought to
contribute to the emerging field of practical theology by
situating his developmental schema within a more broadly
based description of human response to God as Creator,
Ruler, and Redeemer.[28] He has focused more on the nature
of the "object" of faith, balancing somewhat his earlier
emphasis on the vision of the kingdom of God as the
"cause" of Universalizing faith. I have chosen to focus my
analysis on what I consider to be the most fundamental
image underlying his normative image of faith: that of a
sovereign God who is both principle of being and norm and
source of value. This, I would submit, is the most
primitive and most influential image of the object of
faith in Fowler's thought and conditions both the
normative and descriptive dimensions of his faith
development model.[29]

CHAPTER SIX

THE SUBJECT OF FAITH

The aim of this chapter is to continue an examination
of the normative theological presuppositions that underlie
Fowler's notion of faith by tracing the outlines and
lifting up the central metaphors of his theological
anthropology. The first part of the chapter explores
Fowler's implicit image of human being as both dependent
and responsible being in relation to a sovereign God who
is source and principle of being. The second part is
devoted to an examination of Fowler's notion of human
being as valuing and misvaluing being in relation to God
as norm and source of value. This will involve some
discussion of Fowler's implicit doctrine of sin. The final
section focuses on Fowler's central image of human being
called into covenant partnership with God. This will
include some analysis of Fowler's understanding of the
roles of revelation and grace. It becomes evident that
Fowler's normative image of mature faith is not conceived
of essentially as an endstate but rather a fundamental
existential attitude. This attitude is primarily the
result of a process of metanoia and conversion, and only
secondarily a product of faith development as such.

Faith and the Responsible Self

The foundational assumption of Fowler's theological anthropology is the absolute dependence of human being on a sovereign God. In the preceding analysis of the nature of the sovereign God as the "object" of radically monotheistic faith it was noted that, for Fowler, God is viewed as the source and unifying principle of all being and therefore the principle and source of human being.[1] Fowler expresses it thus: "Because God is sovereign, the fundamental fact about humans is their relation to God."[2] This, for both Fowler and Niebuhr, is not a deduction but an article of faith that correlates with the basic conviction of the sovereignty of God.[3] When Fowler asks "What is human being?" or "What is the human vocation?" he always has in view a subject in dependent relation to God.

This relational model of human being derives from the theology of H. R. Niebuhr which Fowler believes to be "both faithful and foundational for Christian seeing and being."[4] Niebuhr employs several metaphors for God's ways of being in relation to humankind which are biblically informed and illuminative of fundamental human experience. Each of the major metaphors has an analogue of response and partnership for human beings.[5]

This notion of "responsible selfhood" represents what Fowler calls the most comprehensive "synechdochic analogy"

in Niebuhr's thought.[6] The notion of "synechdochic analogy" refers to the modes of human being and response that correlate with the metaphors that both Fowler and Niebuhr use to describe the being and action of God. Although dependent, human being is clearly not passive in its relation to God, but is seen rather as responsive and responsible. The underlying presupposition here is that the human beings discover their identity and selfhood in responsive relation to others and to God. The dominant operative image of human being is that of "the answerer," responding to others and to God in dialogue. According to Fowler, the process by which we become a reflective subject before God involves both response and initiatives:

> Human action always involves response and initiatives. We shape our action (our responses and initiatives) in accordance with what we see to be going on. We seek to fit our actions into, or oppose them to, larger patterns of action and meaning...Faith...is a kind of knowing, a construing of the world in light of certain disclosures of the character of reality taken as a whole that are taken as decisive...Ways of being and ways of seeing are reciprocal.[7]

The passage quoted above indicates clearly that Fowler is appropriating Niebuhr's responsibility theory in the formation of his own image of human being and praxis in responsive relation to divine being and praxis. There are four distinct components of this responsibility theory that have a bearing on Fowler's theological anthropology. The first component of this theory has been presented: human being and action is responsive action. It is like

the action of one who answers, responds to another; it is reaction to action upon it.[8]

The second component of Niebuhr's responsibility theory is that of interpretation. In order to be the action of a "self," or to be a moral action, it must also be a response to interpreted action. A fitting response requires the construal of "larger patterns of action and meaning." It occurs only in accordance with the self's interpretation of the deed and the power to which it reacts. To quote Niebuhr directly, "We interpret events that force themselves upon us as parts of wholes, of sequences, as symbolic of larger meanings... It is these larger patterns in our understanding that guide our response to action upon us."[9]

It is this component of Niebuhr's responsibility theory that receives the most attention in Fowler's model of faith development. In the context of a vision of the responsible self, Fowler pursues the question of how the human person forms the larger patterns of understanding, or ultimate environments, that guide their seeing and being. Fowler focuses specifically on how the human capacity to interpret or construe these patterns "develops" over the human life cycle. As will be seen shortly, however, structural development is not the only factor involved in his understanding of the evolution of faith consciousness and certainly not the most important.

The third element of Niebuhr's responsibility theory that influences Fowler's theological anthropology is the essential element of accountability. Fowler never uses the term itself but refers rather to the centres of value and power that have decisive influence on the person's shaping of his or her ultimate environment. The implication is that human being is "responsible" not only insofar as it reacts to interpreted actions upon it, but also insofar as those reactions are are made in anticipation of answers to its answers. Accountability identifies the self's expectation of reactions to its own response and the sense of judgement and evaluation implied in that expectation - to whom or what does the subject appeal to sanction his response?[10]

Mere responsiveness becomes responsibiility only when the self recognizes and seeks to act upon its accountability before a reflective third or a mediating jury of representative Thous, social companions committed to the same cause. Taken to its ultimate conclusion, the human being is seen to be accountable to the principle and source of being and power, whether it is conscious of this or not. It inevitably seeks to fit its responses into or seeks to oppose that which is its ultimate environment.

The fourth and final element of responsible selfhood that enters into Fowler's theological anthropology is that

of community. Fowler, following Niebuhr, operates with a concept of "relational selfhood." All human being and action is dependent upon the faithful response of others in a community of shared interpretation and action in order to form a reliable sense of identity, to shape its dominant interpretative images of the real, and to develop conscience and conceptions of moral value.[11] Fowler appropriates Niebuhr's notion of a triadic structure of faith as the mode of being in relation to others and to communally shared centres of value and power. It is important to recognize that, for Fowler, the triadic structures that relate the person in faith to others as co-knowers, co-valuers, and co-interpreters in communities of interpretation are constitutive not only of faith but also of selfhood.[12]

The question remains as to how this formal characterization of dependent and responsible selfhood contributes to Fowler's understanding of human faith maturity? Both Niebuhr and Fowler contend that the self always stands in a faith-identity relation whereby it seeks to order all its other relations of trust and loyalty. Henotheism, polytheism, and radical monotheism are the faith-identity relations that refer to the self in its most fundamental trust and loyalty. Fowler's implicit adoption of Niebuhr's responsibility theory suggests that self-integrity and faith maturity are to be found only in

fully responsible selfhood, that is, in dependent and responsive relation to a centre of value and power that holds the self accountable in all its other relations.

Fully responsible selfhood stands in the faith-identity relation in which the human's responses, interpretations, and value-commitments are ordered and subordinated in a community of interpretation with an over-arching loyalty to the one true centre of being and value. This, of course, is radical monotheism. From the standpoint of radical faith in the sovereignty of God it may be asserted: "There is one Actor in all the actions upon you." And from this indicative flows an imperative: "So respond to all actions upon you as to respond to his action."[13]

Human Being as Valuing/Misvaluing Being

Fowler's explication of the faith-identity relations indicates his recognition of henotheism and polytheism as being the most common ways of integrating faith-relational triads. But the normative assumption that he makes in this explanation is that, as a valuing being, the human person has need of a being or god of supreme intrinsic value, which corresponds to all of his or her deepest needs.[14] The response of dependent human being to God as supreme value and centre of loyalty is only possible when the person comes to understand and experience his or her being

valued by God. Following Niebuhr, Fowler conceives the person as fundamentally a "self-valuer," and the transformation in his or her valuing that faith brings begins with a revolution in self-valuation and its basis.[15]

What is immediately evident in this understanding of faith is Fowler's indebtedness to H. Richard Niebuhr's understanding of the "religious need" which is at the heart of faith. According to Niebuhr:

> The religious need is satisfied only insofar as man is able to recognize himself as valued by something beyond himself...The valuation of which man becomes aware in religious experience is not, first of all his evaluation of a being, but that being's evaluation of him...Such a value experience is primitive and original. It deals with that absolute source of all value by which all other things have their value.[16]

In this passage, the valuational dimension of human being is brought to the fore. Fowler, following Niebuhr, also sees the generic and universal religious need for that which carries the value of deity, for that which makes life worth living, which bestows meaning on life by revealing itself as the final source of life's being and value.[17] Deity value, therefore, belongs to that Being which can actually fulfill the religious need. That is not to say that deity value is not idolatrously assigned to other objects, but that these objects, or "gods" cannot possibly fulfill the religious need.

The above observations serve to indicate that, for

Fowler, human being is not only valuing being but also mis-valuing being. Fowler does not develop a full blown doctrine of sin anywhere in his writings but it is clear that his valuational approach to human faith presupposes an approach to human sin similar to that of Niebuhr's.[18] Like Niebuhr, as well as Luther and Jonathan Edwards before him, Fowler sees human being as "worshipping being." What a person finds to be wholly worshipful, intrinsically valuable, that has the nature of his god or gods. Only on the confessional basis of faith in a God who is the supremely worthful one and who is the origin of all being and value is it possible to understand and formulate the Christian doctrine of sin.[19]

In his own treatment of the Fall and human sin, Fowler focuses mainly on what he calls the "illusion," the "burden," and the "modern heresy" of self- groundedness.[20] Self-groundedness consists in the mistaken belief that "we have within us - and are totally responsible for generating from within us - all the resources out of which to create a fulfilled and self-actualized life."[21] This makes the self the object of absolute value and the cause demanding absolute loyalty. This form of idolatry is most consistent with H. Richard Niebuhr's description of a polytheism in which the desires of the self are the only organizing centres of value in personal life. The inevitable result of this form of polytheism is

intra-personal and societal conflict, alienation, and eventual disintegration.[22]

Within the whole context of Fowler's account of the Christian "classic," he views human beings as "generative loci of Logos" which are created ex nihilo for participation and partnership in the life and being of God. In the Fall these

> ...Separated loci of Logos undertake to be primally creative, rather than participative. This results in a breach, alienation, and enmity, between God and God's creation and between created beings. The image of God in the creature undergoes distortion and separation. Anxiety and the threat of nonbeing strengthen the desperate efforts to assert, establish, and protect the self. Communal and social structures, as well as the passions of finite hearts, reflect the defensive self-absorption of those who experience - without knowing what is missing - a sundering from the ground and source of Being. The separation is complete, in that there is no faculty, no organ, or no capacity of the finite being that is not marked by the consequences of alienation.[23]

To speak of sinful humanity as "entrapped" in self-groundedness and its associated idolatrous systems of meaning and value would be an accurate summary of both Fowler and Niebuhr's approach. For both evidently view the will as a lever of choice and therefore totally dependent upon the self's (or the community's) organizing commitments. Following Luther and Edwards, Niebuhr and Fowler see the will as able only to serve its "gods." Transformation and liberation are possible only when the heart and mind are drawn away from and beyond the old limited centres of value to loyalties that are wider in

scope and less narrowly focused on the defense or security or aggrandizment of the self.[24]

As valuing beings, humans are not able to achieve transformation and liberation through an exercise of their own will or by drawing upon their own finite resources. They are seen to be utterly dependent on the source of being and value for their deliverance. This leads to a discussion of the third central image in Fowler's theological anthroplogy, that of the human being in a redemptive partnership with God.

Grace, Metanoia, and the Vocation to Partnership

From the very beginning of his formulations of faith development theory, Fowler has operated with a theological anthropology which views human being as reaching faith maturity ultimately in covenant relation to God. The movement from self-groundedness to God-groundedness involves far more than structural development in faith. It involves conversion or "metanoia" in one's existential orientation towards the ultimate environment.[25] This observation leads to a consideration of three questions. What, for Fowler, is the difference between "human" faith and "religious" faith? What is the nature of the metanoia that leads the person from human faith to religious faith? Finally, what are the

dimensions of responsible partnership that underlie Fowler's theological anthropology?

In his discussion of the normative tendencies inherent in his faith development model, Fowler makes a crucial distinction between what he calls "human faith" and "religious faith."[26] At one level, Fowler's faith development enterprise has strictly sought to clarify a developmental perspective on the human enterprise of "committing trust and fidelity and of imaging and relating ourselves to others and to the universe."[27] All human beings possess faith inasmuch as all human beings have an innate capacity for both trust in and loyalty to centres of value and power. Fowler is explicit in stating his conviction however, that "human" faith does not find its maturity or fulfillment in covenant relationship to just any centre of value and power. As he expresses it in Stages of Faith:

> I think it unlikely that persons will develop in faith beyond the Individuative-Reflective stage without committing themselves to some image or images of a faithful ultimate environment and shaping their lives in the human community so as to live in complementarity with it. Faith, at stages five or six, will take essentially religious forms. And while the Conjunctive or Universalizing stages appropriate their religious faith in inclusive and non-dichotomizing ways, they nonetheless require a representation of the ultimate environment as objective, real, and as the final and primal source of all being and value.[28]

The obvious question that follows from this distinction between human and religious faith is how the human subject

crosses the threshold, so to speak, and comes to image his ultimate environment as "faithful" so as to live in complementarity with it? Put another way the question remains: How does Fowler conceive the human subject as finally approaching his or her ultimate environment as objective, real, and as the final and primal source of all being and value?

Fowler does not address this question directly in any formal statement of faith development theory likely because the issue concerns the actual contents of faith rather than the structuring capacities of the subject. The issue concerns "conversion" more than development and focuses attention on the forms of faith rather than the stages. Fowler's general definition of conversion is "a significant recentring of one's previous conscious or unconscious images of value and power, and the conscious adoption of a new set of master stories in the commitment to reshape one's life in a new community of interpretation and action."[29]

Religious faith, therefore, involves the committing of trust and fidelity in and the imaginal ordering of an ultimate environment around a centre of value and power that is sufficient to fulfill the religious need for God, and not only the human need to structure meaning. It implies the recognition and shaping of one's life in relation to that Source of Being and Value that utterly

transcends all other centres of being and value. Religious faith points to an attitude of radical openness to the faith-relational triad that relates all persons to a common Ground of Being, Value, and Power. As Fowler himself expresses it:

> The issue is finally not whether we and our companions on this globe become Muslim, Jews, Buddhists, Taoists, Confucianists, or Christians, as important as that issue is. The real question is, will there be faith on earth and will it be good faith - faith sufficiently inclusive so as to counter and transcend the destructive idolatries of national, ethnic, racial, and religious identifications and to bind us as a human community in covenant trust and loyalty to each other and to the Ground of our Being?[30]

The question of how "good" faith is to be attained on earth is dealt with by Fowler not in developmental terms but ultimately in theological terms. Fowler's conception of the human will, as we noted earlier, sees it as incapable of extricating itself from idolatrous attachment to finite centres of value and power and as requiring liberation by a power beyond itself. In the biblical tradition out of which Fowler speaks, this movement towards religious faith requires the active involvement of the "transcendent Other" in human life. The normative image of mature faith in relation to which Fowler has sought developmentally related prior or preparatory stages, therefore, is not itself a developmental endstate but rather presupposes a form of faith consciousness already decisively shaped, illumined, or being restored to

trusting by a conversional experience of revelation and grace and the redemptive action of God. "Revelation" according to Fowler, "is the experience in which man's distrust of the cosmic other, his suspicion of Being is turned around."[31]

How does Fowler describe the process of metanoia that is required in order to transform suspicion of Being into trust? In his volume Becoming Adult, Becoming Christian he introduces the Eastern Orthodox notion of "synergy" to clarify the process by which this metanoia takes place. Synergy is the gracious gift of the Spirit that works to rectify and realign human development. Fowler describes it thus:

> Synergy means the cauterization and healing of our tendencies to self-groundedness. Synergy means the mingling of divine love with our capacities to love, guiding them and grounding them in the grace of God. Synergy means the release of a quality of creativity and energy that manifests our likeness to the restored image of God in us. Synergy means human beings fully alive and using the gift of our strengths and virtues in the service of the realization of the commonwealth of love.[32]

The grace of synergy seems to be operating at two separate levels in Fowler's thought. The first level is that of human faith. According to Fowler, grace operates in a "prevenient" way in the faith consciousness of all human beings. He calls this "ordinary grace"; grace that is "given in nature."[33] In faith development theory, Fowler has sought to describe the patterns by which

ordinary grace operates in the expectable and predictable stages of growth in faith. The organic continuity that is consistently displayed in the development of faith-knowing operations is a sign of the natural synergy that takes place between the human being and the Spirit.

Faith, considered as the foundation of selfhood and relational life and as a holistic way of knowing and valuing, is seen in terms of continuity between human experiences of fidelity and care, and trust in the ultimate conditions of existence. God's "prevenient grace" is effectively working even when persons seem to be in a "state of nature" or under the curse of the Fall, enabling us to use reason in the conduct of human affairs, to respond to the imperatives of justice, and to hunger for salvation.[34]

This is not to deny the reality of the Fall and the effects of sin. The most crucial factor differentiating the quality and movement of a person's or group's development in faith has to do with the conscious and unconscious availability of that person or group's potentials for partnership - synergy - with Spirit. As Fowler puts it:

> In a complex range of ways, we can be in either conscious or unconscious enmity with Spirit. From a variety of factors, the etiologies of which are exceedingly complex, we can bear deep dispositions that make us inimical to synergy with Spirit. Where, and to the degree that we bear this kind of enmity, growth to and in the latter stages of faith will be blocked. When

> one who was previously blocked experiences the
> effective breakthrough of Spirit that brings
> release and new openness to synergy with Grace,
> we are in the presence of what Christian
> theologians have traditionally called
> "salvation" or "saving Grace." Christians have
> traditionally called the condition of enmity or
> blockage to synergy with Grace, "sin."[35]

Fowler makes reference here to the operation of grace

at a second "redeemed" or "restored" level of faith

consciousness. This he defines as "extraordinary grace."[36]

At this level, the human being is open to conscious,

reflective, and committed partnership or synergy with the

intentional movements of God's Spirit. Conscious or

unconscious enmity with God's Spirit is being overcome and

the human being is being molded, shaped and transformed

for partnership with God's planfulness in creation.

Fowler speaks of this metanoia as the central image

underlying his normative vision of faith maturity:

> The crucial point to be grasped is that the
> image of human completion or wholeness offered
> by faith development theory is not an estate to
> be attained or a stage to be realized. Rather,
> it is a way of being and moving, a way of being
> in pilgrimage...The goal...is not for everyone
> to reach the stage of Universalizing faith.
> Rather it is for each person or group to open
> themselves as radically as possible - within the
> structures of their present stage or transition
> - to synergy with Spirit.[37]

The notion of "synergy" or "partnership" introduces

an explicit and rather decisive theological slant to

Fowler's image of faith. Following Brueggemann, Fowler

sees the movement from self-groundedness to

God-groundedness as a conversion process involving the

"transposing" of all identity questions into vocational questions.[38] Vocation to partnership is conceived as finding "a purpose for being in the world that is related to the purposes of God."[39] The main source of Fowler's inspiration here again, however, is H. Richard Niebuhr. Fowler consistently develops his notion of partnership in terms of the three Niebuhrian metaphors of God's action in the world. Corresponding to God's action as Creator, Governor, and Redeemer are the appropriate human responses of co-creation, co-responsibilty in the building of a commonwealth of justice, and cooperation in God's liberative and redemptive work.[40] It is this last metaphor that provides a window into what lies at the heart of Fowler's theological anthropology: his christology.

In his volume <u>Faith Development and Pastoral Care</u> Fowler points to Christ himself as the archetype of partnership or synergy with God:

> We do well to remember that in the Christian classic, the central paradigm for human cooperation in the liberative and redemptive work of God is to be found in the incarnation - God's becoming human and submitting to death on the cross. At the heart of the Christian understanding of incarnation is the reality of kenosis- literally, the self-emptying, the pouring out of the very self of God. In any Christian understanding of the human vocation to partnership with God, all self- or class-aggrandizing images are undercut by the paradigm of the incarnation. Partnership in the divine creativity and the divine governance are to be understood, Christianly, through the lenses of God emptying self in radical love, to reclaim, restore, and rehabilitate persons and societies.[41]

Fowler's image of the metanoia or conversion that leads to faith maturity is clarified most completely in his reflections on the cross and its implications for those who are intentional about embracing God's call to partnership. For Fowler, openness to synergy with Spirit is the fundamental attitude of faith. In the incarnation and crucifixon, it is possible to get a glimpse of the culmination of that metanoia. Movement towards identification with the source and centre of all Being and Power leads "downward" towards solidarity with Christ and his suffering in humanity. This implies solidarity with those among whom Christ said he would be found, the "anawim," - the oppressed, the sick, the poor, the marginalized.[42]

It is to be hoped that this examination of Fowler's theological anthropology has led to a deeper appreciation of the depth and power that underlies his normative image of faith. Too often the terminology of structural-developmental theory obscures the theological foundations of Fowler's vision, leading to misunderstandings and misplaced criticisms of its descriptive and normative claims. It is quite true that Fowler frequently makes statements about faith without indicating whether he is referring to "human" faith or the "religious" faith that is the gift of extraordinary grace. This has led to unnecessary confusion. His more recent descriptions of the

normative thrust of faith development in terms of metanoia and conversion seems to indicate, however, that he has shifted firmly and comfortably back to the confessional ground from which he began his explorations of faith. In his more recent work, Fowler sees structural-developmental theory as only one resource to be used in the much larger enterprise of clarifying a theological anthropology that expresses not only a quest for "meaning" but "responsible partnership" with God.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE ADEQUACY OF FOWLER'S IMAGE OF FAITH

Having surveyed the descriptive and normative dimensions of Fowler's image of faith, the question remains finally of its overall adequacy. In this concluding chapter, I hope to address this question by focusing on three issues. First of all, I believe it is useful to look at where Fowler's conception of faith fits within the framework of historic theological debate on the fundamental nature of faith. Second, the issue of descriptive adequacy needs to be addressed. Put simply, does the image of faith that informs Fowler's approach fully describe all that is involved in the faith experience of human beings, particularly the experience of those in the biblical tradition? The final issue relates to the normative adequacy of Fowler's image of faith and the future of the faith development enterprise as a whole: Will it be dominated by a concern to define faith in terms that are theologically appropriate in the Christian tradition only, or will Fowler attend in the future to his original concern to illumine the nature of faith as a human universal?

Fowler's Image of Faith in Theological Perspective

This study began with a question. That question was concerned with uncovering what was distinctive about

Fowler's contribution to the historic inquiry into the fundamental nature of faith. To put it more succinctly: What does Fowler say, if anything, that is new? Related to this question is the matter of context. To express it metaphorically: Where does the piece that Fowler offers fit into the larger puzzle that is faith?

The term "faith" has a long and venerable history within Christian theology and the phenomenon to which it points has historically been approached from a variety of traditions and perspectives. Faith has been examined as an existential decision, as obedient assent to a body of revealed truths, and as a total life response to the supernatural gift of divine grace. The categories by which faith has been traditionally understood have their roots deep in Judeo-Christian consciousness and have an inevitable influence on any "new" formulations. When "faith" is made the focus of empirical investigation, Fowler is really dealing with a borrowed term which derives from the language of a religious community. When the meaning of the term is reformulated in categories other than those of its original context, due respect must be given in the "translation" process.

At the beginning of <u>Stages of Faith</u>, Fowler makes reference to the thought of both Paul Tillich and H. Richard Niebuhr in his efforts to provide some initial orientation to his readers. Like them, Fowler wishes to

view faith as the universal human search for "an overarching, integrating and grounding trust in a centre of value and power sufficiently worthy to give our lives unity and meaning."[1] With them, Fowler wishes to participate in the recovery and healing of the term "faith"; to make it serviceable for a new generation with its own language, its own struggles, and its own ethos.

His initial references to Tillich and Niebuhr indicate that Fowler wishes to identify himself with a theological tradition whose focus has been on the personal and existential dimensions of faith. That tradition did not begin with Tillich and Niebuhr, but has its origins in the Reformation emphasis on "fides qua creditur" or trusting confidence in the One who reveals and is revealed, over against the traditional Roman Catholic concern for faith as the graced assent to the actual body of revealed truths ("fides quae creditur").[2] In the backround of Fowler's thoroughly existential conception of faith, looming like mountains shrouded in mist, stand figures such as Luther, Kant, Edwards, Schleiermacher, and Kierkegaard.[3]

Having acknowledged the distal sources of Fowler's theology of faith it is easier to understand the nature of the question that informs his approach. Like his theological mentor H. Richard Niebuhr, Fowler carries forward the venerable theological tradition that focuses on the "how" of faith rather than on the "what".[4]

Niebuhr's own searching analysis of the many meanings given to the word "faith" led him to intuit the structure of faith in inter-personal, triadic, and covenantal relations of trust and loyalty.[5] Niebuhr referred to his own approach as "social existentialism."[6] Fowler incorporates Niebuhr's social existentialist analysis of "human" faith as irreducibly relational with his own analysis of the intra-personal, cognitive and valuational dimensions of faith as a way of being-in-relation to one's ultimate environment.

Most importantly, however, Fowler follows Niebuhr in intuiting a link between the interpersonal experience of "human" faith and the possiblity of faith in God. As was explained earlier, underlying Niebuhr's search for the inter-personal structures and Fowler's search for the cognitive structures of "human" faith is a passionate quest for the "re-construction" of an authentically "religious" faith.[7] In this passage from Niebuhr's recently published volume Faith on Earth, it is possible to gain a glimpse into the centre of value and power that inspired him and later Fowler to search so carefully for the "structures" of human faith:

> When we have inquired thus far into the structure
> of faith there appears on the horizon the mystery
> of the Transcendent. It seems that even when we
> deal with the structures of faith as we find them
> in our ordinary experience we are dealing with
> realities that point beyond themselves to a cause
> beyond all causes, to an object of loyalty beyond
> all concrete persons and abstract values, to the

> Being or Ground of Being which obligates and
> demands trust, which unites us in universal
> community. In the light of Christian faith this is
> evidently so. The structures of faith which we
> find in our world are not only shadows and images
> of divine things but participate in the ultimate
> structure.[8]

Reference to the thought of H. Richard Niebuhr is not meant to imply that Fowler's image of faith is merely co-extensive with his. This is clearly not the case. While there is an obvious continuity in their visions and their approach to faith, Fowler's conception of faith is undeniably distinctive. As Craig Dykstra puts it in his introduction to a volume of critical essays on Fowler's thought,

> Fowler's theory is more than just any number of
> interesting and potentially useful academic
> analyses. It is an expression of a wider cultural
> and intellectual mood. It is a consolidation and
> crystalization of a whole way of seeing things
> that is already in some sense "out
> there"...Perhaps the central concern that Fowler's
> theory addresses is the need for a fundamental
> conception of the life of faith...It is a part of
> an ages-long search for a conception of the
> religious life, and, like its predecessors, one
> that both deals with issues that mark the
> contemporary life out of which it emerges and
> makes use of the resources of the contemporary
> culture.[9]

What are the issues that mark contemporary life with which Fowler's conception of faith deals? What are the resources that it draws from in its theoretical description of faith? Dykstra identifies two basic features of contemporary culture to which Fowler's image of faith

responds in a manner that traditional images have not and could not.

The first is the reality of pluralism.[10] Since the Enlightenment, but even more pressingly with the approach of the twenty-first century, the plurality of religious and pseudo-religious visions has become increasingly apparent and the parochial nature of exclusivist conceptions of faith has come under profound scrutiny and open criticism. The "global village" created by advanced transportation and telecommunication systems has, in effect, brought all religious and ideological visions into a "vulnerable proximity" to one another. The potential for misunderstanding, conflict and ultimately division has never been greater, but correspondingly, neither has there been a more promising moment in global history for work to proceed towards inter-religious and cross-cultural dialogue. Fowler's image of faith has emerged in such a "milieu" and responds to the need for some basic orientation in making sense of what binds humanity in its common quest for meaning and direction.

Sheer relativism - the view that all religious outlooks are relative to each other and to the circumstances, experiences and interests of the communities who form around them - is not a viable or meaningful attitude in the long term and perpetuates what Fowler describes as "the vertigo of relativity."[11] Exclusivism, likewise, only fuels

intolerance, chaos, and violence. Providing a functional image of faith that attempts to build on profound theological and psychological insights into human nature provides one way of holding together some of what may be universal about human faith experience while also recognizing the beauty and particularity of various ways of being in faith.[12]

A second feature of contemporary culture to which Fowler's image of faith responds is the psychological and developmental understanding of the human self. In Western culture, it has been the social sciences, particularly psychology, that have been providing the primary mode or language of interpretation of the human life cycle and as Dykstra rightly points out: "It should be no surprise that these resources are mobilized for the interpretation of change and development in faith and in the understanding of religious experience."[13] Fowler's appropriation of the thought of Erikson, Kohlberg, and Piaget in his own conception of human faith makes the meaning of that term intelligible to the modern mind in a unique and important way. The use of psychological categories in the conception of faith has its pitfalls and dangers, as Fowler's critics have amply demonstrated,[14] but the fact remains that such categories have a legitimate role to play in Fowler's recovery of the term "faith" for contemporary culture.

A third and essential feature that must be added to those observed by Dykstra is the pervasive nihilism that characterizes contemporary society. The sub-title of Fowler's volume <u>Stages of Faith</u> is "<u>The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning</u>." This underscores Fowler's concern, first of all, to theoretically identify the process of faith-knowing as a universal form of meaning making. Secondly, it indicates something of the author's recognition that faith as a form of meaning making in Western culture is threatened by a combination of influences and attitudes that could be adequately summarized by the term "secularism."[15]

Pluralism, a thoroughly scientific <u>Zeitgeist</u>, and the related phenomenon of nihilism that stems from the processes of secularization characterize the culture out of which Fowler's image of faith emerges and to which it is addressed. His image of faith is continuous in important respects with the theological tradition that has inspired it, but it breaks new ground in its appropriation of the insights and language of empirical psychology. It has also been the object of scholarly interest and criticism. As part of the present effort to assess the adequacy of the image, I will turn now to examine more systematically the nature of this criticism.

The Descriptive Adequacy of Fowler's Image of Faith

At one point of his discussion in Stages of Faith, Fowler acknowledges the range of criticism that his use of the term "faith" has engendered. He rather lightheartedly quotes his friend and colleague Harvey Cox who once commented: "There is something to offend everyone in this way of talking about faith!"[16] Despite this, Fowler remains adamant in his conviction that "There simply is no other concept that holds together those various interrelated dimensions of human knowing, valuing, committing and acting that must be considered together if we want to understand the making and maintaining of human meaning."[17]

Fowler's intention is clearly to offer a holistic structural analysis of faith.[18] He wishes to determine which types of operations are involved in the imaginal composition of a "felt image" of an ultimate environment and how those operations develop over the human lifespan. Critics have noted, however, that this operational description of faith does not always resonate or correlate completely with the more theologically grounded descriptions of faith that Fowler offers in his thought.[19] Fowler, himself, has acknowledged that he has "always considered it a fair question whether the "aspects" which we have identified as categories for the structural analysis of faith interviews adequately operationalize the rich and multiform understanding of faith we have been discussing."[20]

What more precisely is the nature of this gap between Fowler's theological and his operational understanding of faith? Walter Conn notes that Fowler offers an expansive notion of faith in which knowing, feeling, and valuing form an integrated whole but points to the fact that the seven variables included in Fowler's recent work are "heavily cognitive."[21] Conn makes reference to one of the most peculiar passages in Fowler's work in which he is commenting on a chart entitled "Faith: The Structural-Developmental Approach: A Summary Taxonomy of Structural Competences by Stage." Fowler says:

> As one examines this chart reflectively, it may seem that the dynamic which lies at the heart of faith - namely, a centring affection, an organizing love, a central object of loyalty and trust - is missing. And this is true. To note this is to be reminded again of the formal and structural focus of this stage theory. It is this formal character which gives the theory the possibility of being applied to a variety of different religious traditions with a variety of contents as regards prescribed beliefs, values, attitudes and behaviors.[22]

Conn rightly points out that "This passage ...suggests a confusion between "contents" and the "dynamic which lies at the heart of faith." It seems to presume that a structural approach, in order to maintain its general applicability to the contents of any tradition, must not engage the "dynamic that lies at the heart of faith."[23]

J. Harry Fernhout, in a highly perceptive critique of Fowler's image of faith, discusses the same problem that Conn and others have indicated: the problem of determining

more precisely what developmental phenomenon Fowler is actually studying.[24] Fernhout, like Conn, also claims that Fowler does not deal thoroughly with the core of faith, making his model conceptually unmanageable and ultimately lacking in an organizing centre. In reference to the same passage that Conn cites in his critique, Fernhout observes that

> ...at this crucial point Fowler fails to make a basic distinction between the universal human capacity for trust and commitment and the content-full variation in the object(s) of that trust. If faith, understood as trust or commitment (setting one's heart), is a universal part of what it means to be human, then it must have structural features that can be operationalized in a faith stages description. If what Fowler calls the "heart of faith" (see quote above) has no such features, then he lacks grounds for calling his theory a treatment of "faith" stages.[25]

Fowler has responded to this sort of criticism by reiterating his conviction that the principle of cohesion, the centring power of faith, is not a structural feature. "Ordering power, integrating power, meaning-making power in our lives, is exerted by that or those things on which we rest our hearts, or in which we trust most deeply."[26] Fowler insists that the search for a specification of the principle of integration in faith is going to be frustrated so long as critics look for a formal or structural centre.[27] Fowler has not swayed from his approach to the dynamic of faith-knowing in terms of the "interrelatedness" of structuring

and content, or the "interplay" of the structural operations of faith and the animating substance of faith.[28]

Fowler has given serious attention to the problem of incorporating affectivity or "feeling" into his formalist analysis of faith-knowing by way of reference to the neo-Piagetian approach of Robert Kegan. He has also formulated a distinction between the logic of conviction and the logic of rational certainty claiming that the latter is somehow grounded in the former. But the paradigm that governs the development of these "convictional" aspects is based on the same Piagetian approach to the development of the "cognitive" aspects. Moreover, none of the "convictional" aspects describes the valuational dimension which Fowler claims is integral to a holistic structural analysis of faith.[29]

It is not clear why Fowler steadfastly steers away from incorporating the non-cognitive dimensions of faith (risk, passion, commitment,) more explicitly into his analysis of the structuring operations of faith. Most peculiar is the omission of the valuational dimension which is the essence of the "dynamic that lies at the heart of faith." Fowler seems concerned to maintain a strict dichotomy between structure and content but, in relegating the valuational dimension of faith-knowing to content, he effectively separates cognition and affection, reason and emotion.[30] Attending to valuation, the dynamic at the heart of faith,

remains one of the most important, but most problematic, tasks in the area of faith development research.

The Normative Adequacy of Fowler's Image of Faith

In addition to the issue of the internal theoretical coherence of Fowler's description of faith, there remains the issue of its normative adequacy. The marriage of theological and psychological insights in Fowler's formulation of his image of faith has inspired criticism mainly from within the pastoral counseling and religious education communities that have been its primary audience and constituency. This criticism has emerged in basically two forms.

The first focuses on both the motives for and the manner in which Fowler has appropriated structural-developmental theory into his thought and offers searching ideological critiques of Fowler's approach. Employing a "hermeneutic of suspicion" these critics suggest that Fowler's use of the development "metaphor" in association with the phenomenon of faith is a sign of the preponderance of technical-rational reason in his approach as well as being an expression of modern, bureaucratic culture obsessed with achievement and progress.[31]

The second body of criticism has focused on the theological integrity of Fowler's image of faith asking whether and to what extent it conforms with traditional,

biblical understandings of the term. Concern has been expressed over the apparent "psychologization" of faith in Fowler's thought and his abandonment of traditional theological categories in favour of generic epistemological categories. As Dykstra has aptly phrased it, "The basic issue here is whether faith is really a human universal or a mode of life that is grounded in a more or less conscious and chosen responsiveness to the activity of God in the world."[32] It is this basic issue that is the focus of interest here.

It is not my intention to offer a full account of these theological critiques of Fowler's conception of faith, or even less to engage in any full scale rebuttal. I wish only to indicate the general thrust of these criticisms in order to illustrate both their validity and their limitations. In the end, I would also like to offer a tentative proposal that I believe would strengthen Fowler's position and enhance both the descriptive range and normative value of his image of faith. I have singled out the comments of James Loder and Craig Dykstra in my survey of the critical literature because they share a common concern in their analysis for the normative theological integrity of Fowler's approach which parallels, in a certain sense, the underlying concern of this study.

James Loder, in his reflections on Fowler's _Stages of Faith_, has questioned how Fowler's understanding of faith is

to be viewed in any definitive biblical or theological sense.[33] While he maintains that Fowler's is a sensitive and insightful study, he identifies the core developmental phenomenon that Fowler is describing not as faith, but as "the ego's competence in structuring meaning" and asserts that this is only "potentially but not necessarily related to faith in a biblical or theological sense."[34] He compares Fowler's image of faith to several essential features of faith as outlined in Gerhard Ebeling's study of the synoptic gospels[35] and poses the further question of how Fowler relates his understanding of faith to the image of faith as giving certainty to existence, as participatory in the omnipotence of God, as the gift given in an encounter with Jesus, and as ultimately salvific.[36]

Craig Dykstra argues that the paradigm Fowler adopts in elucidating the structural development of faith requires precisely the kind of understanding of faith that Fowler infact presents.[37] He claims that Fowler cannot define faith any differently and still have a structural-developmental theory of growth or change in faith. If faith were to be imaged as "appropriate and intentional participation in the redemptive activity of God," rather than as a "human universal," the implications for its relations to human development would be quite different.[38] As Dykstra points out, this alternative image of faith "has the advantage of not presuming that what faith means to a Christian, to a

Jew, to a Muslim, and to a social scientist is in every case the same."[39]

Both Loder and Dykstra make pointed and helpful criticisms of Fowler's image of faith. The depth and subtlety of their analysis cannot be conveyed in summary form but what is evident in both their positions are at least three underlying assumptions. First of all, both assume automatically that Fowler's image faith ought to be consistent in every respect with orthodox Christian conceptions of faith experience. Second, both assume that Fowler's structural-developmental categories of analysis convey the totality of his own understanding of faith. Finally, both appear to polarize their Christian theological images of faith with Fowler's more universal interpretation. This "either/or" dichotomy between biblical interpretations of faith and Fowler's more universal interpretation clearly fails to do justice to its theological foundation.

The general tone and substance of this type of criticism also betrays an overall lack of familiarity with the philosophical theology of faith that underlies and informs Fowler's approach. No thinker has had more of an impact on Fowler's image of faith in a pluralistic context than H. Richard Niebuhr and no adequate understanding of Fowler's image of faith is possible without a thorough understanding the Niebuhrian theology from which it derives. One of the main objectives of this study has been

to demonstrate how Fowler, like Niebuhr before him, works with a theology of faith that is both biblically grounded and universal in its applicability. A more positive evaluation of the normative theological dimensions of Fowler's image of faith results when the biblical sources of his Niebuhrian theology anthropology are considered more carefully.[40]

The lack of critical awareness of Niebuhr's influence is due in part to two major gaps in Fowler's earlier formulations of faith development theory. These gaps have led to confusions and misunderstandings concerning the relation of Fowler's image of faith to the Christian theological tradition. The first was an overall lack of clarity in Fowler's differentiation of religious and non-religious faith and the relation between the two.[41] Had this distinction been more thoroughly spelled out, it would have been possible to appropriate the dimensions common to both and the radical discontinuities of which Fowler is fully aware. More importantly, it would have been possible to discern another crucial insight that Fowler appropriates from Niebuhr: that human and religious faith are linked in a profound way.

The second problem, discussed earlier, has been Fowler's failure to more fully integrate his operational analysis with his theological understanding of faith. As a result, most critics have not engaged Fowler at the level of

his total understanding of faith but have focused on what they perceive to be reductionist tendencies in his structural-developmental approach. Had this integration been accomplished, it would have been clear that underlying Fowler's use of structural-developmental theory as a heuristic device is a profound theological understanding of the fiducial constitution of human existence.

Fowler has obviously taken note of the theological criticism of his image of faith. Following the publication of Stages of Faith in 1981, the formulation of his image of faith went through a number of noticeably significant changes. Put briefly, Fowler's apparent focus shifted from an effort to define faith and its development in universal categories to a subsuming of faith development theory into the larger programmatic concerns of practical theology. The influence of Christian theologians such as Walter Brueggemann, Jurgen Moltmann, Theodore Jennings and Paul Holmer have led to what Fowler has described as a "paradigm shift" in his thought.[42] This has resulted in a search for a "broad, variagated, and comprehensive theory of the kind of praxis that brings about the metanoia in which persons - of various developmental stages and of various personality types and histories - get access to and enter the praxis and disciplines of the Christian faith so as to be deeply reformed."[43]

There is a sense in which Fowler's "paradigm shift" only makes more explicit what has been basic in his approach to faith from the start. His situating of the faith development schema within a praxis model of divine-human encounter expressed by the three classic theological metaphors of creation, governance, and redemption is an extension of his analysis of Niebuhr's thought nearly twenty years ago.[44] While this shift has clarified many issues enormously in Fowler's thought and represents a worthy contribution to a practical theology of formation in faith, it unfortunately poses problems for what Fowler has identified as his other major concern - discourse on the meaning of faith within a fully public church. An important element has been de-emphasized in Fowler's image of faith. That element is language descriptive of faith which is both theologically grounded and intelligible to a pluralistic audience.[45]

In view of both the issues raised in scholarly literature concerning the descriptive adequacy of Fowler's image of faith and recent trends in Fowler's own thinking on the normative theological dimensions of faith development, two observations seem to be in order. The first concerns the theoretical coherence of the image of faith.

Clearly, this image could be enhanced greatly if Fowler was better able to integrate valuation into his operational analysis of faith. This would increase the descriptive

adequacy of his image of faith as well as clarify the theological basis for his normative claims.

As of yet, Fowler has not fully incorporated the "forms of faith" that he describes in terms of faith-identity relations into his developmental framework.[46] Nor has he explained in what sense his philosophical description of faith relates to his operational description of faith.

The second observation concerns the issue of normative theological integrity and public intelligibility in Fowler's image of faith. These two dimensions of Fowler's image are indispensable and in fact represent the essence of what I believe to be both Fowler's and Niebuhr's deepest concern: to make faith both meaningful and possible in the modern world. As was noted above, inadequate awareness of Fowler's underlying theology of faith on the part of many contemporary critics of his model have led them to dichotomize theological images of faith with the universal image of faith that Fowler articulates. The challenge remains for Fowler to articulate his image of faith in a way that overcomes this false dichotomy by adequately conveying both its theological groundedness and its universal descriptive and normative implications.

It is my conviction that a fuller appropriation of Niebuhr's value theory would help resolve many of these issues. It could be a resource for strengthening Fowler's image of faith as a descriptive heuristic device in order to

speak about faith from a universal standpoint. Fowler's presentation of the "faith-identity" relations that serve to integrate ones ultimate environment are based essentially on Niebuhr's theocentric and relational value theory.[47] The task of integrating valuation more fully into Fowler's operational analysis of faith could be facilitated by putting less emphasis on the structural development of cognitive functioning and drawing on Niebuhr's value theory to demonstrate more clearly how the "transvaluation of valuing" forms the dynamic at the heart of faith.[48] Niebuhr's reflections on the five stages involved in the revolution of value responses that occurs through revelatory experience are particularly suggestive in this respect.[49] From a normative standpoint, Niebuhr works out in his relational value theory the philosophical basis for acceptance of a formal and transcendent centre of value that is authentically universal.[50] Fowler's own attempt to base Universalizing faith on radical monotheism as the normative endpoint of faith development could be enhanced if he drew more directly on Niebuhr's discussion of values as "relative to structure and organic needs."[51] Niebuhr's insights into the "dogmatic" origins of all value systems holds promise for theological engagement with a pluralistic culture.[52] Such engagement must continue if Fowler's concept of faith is to have validity in the culture at large.

Clearly, fuller appropriation of Niebuhr's value theory

in the description of faith-knowing as a human universal would also reveal with more clarity the link that both Fowler and Niebuhr have discerned between human and religious faith as both a theocentric and relational phenomenon. It would enable Fowler to continue to describe the features of "human" faith in a way that is open-ended with respect to its fulfillment in "religious" faith. It would also supply the necessary descriptive categories to clarify how an image of faith can be theologically compatible with a biblical understanding of human nature without necessarily being exclusivist in its interpretation. Such categories are crucial if Fowler is to further develop the idea of "the absoluteness of the particular" which he has advanced in an effort to counter the relativism that pervades so much contemporary discussion of faith.[53]

This was, of course, the challenge that Fowler's theological mentor faced and the one that I suspect initially inspired Fowler himself. In an unpublished lecture given in 1984 at Harvard Divinity School, Fowler, speaking of his rereading of Niebuhr during his graduate studies, said:

> I had read Niebuhr earlier, but I had somehow not been ready for the richness, the subtlety, the catholicity of Niebuhr's thinking...Niebuhr had seen everything I had seen in terms of the vertigo of relativity, and yet had emerged from that with an astonishing capacity to affirm the sovereignty of God and to see that relativity need not lead to relativism..."[54]

Niebuhr and Tillich, as Fowler himself points out, had

solid theological reasons for claiming faith to be a human universal. Wilfred Cantwell Smith has added his own weighty contribution from the perspective of comparative religion to support this contention. In order for the faith development enterprise to succeed, Fowler must continue to elaborate an image of faith that affirms the sovereignty of God while still maintaining theological relativity. This is not an easy task but is essential if Fowler intends to continue to make normative claims concerning the nature of faith as a human universal. His "paradigm shift" notwithstanding, the image of faith that Fowler has formulated in response to the contemporary "quest for meaning" will continue to serve a profoundly important religious and theological purpose even if it leaves open the question of what form that quest for meaning takes.

ENDNOTES

INTRODUCTION

    1. LM p.16.

    2. H. Richard Niebuhr, <u>Faith on Earth</u> (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989; orig. 1957).

    3. SOF p.26.

    4. William Lynch, S.J., <u>Images of Faith: An Exploration of the Ironic Imagination</u> (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1973), p.37.

    5. Ibid. p.3.

    6. For a review of the literature up to 1984, see John McDargh,"Faith Development Theory at Ten Years" in <u>Religious Studies Review</u>, 10 (4):339-343, 1984. See also the attached bibliography.

1. FAITH AS A HUMAN UNIVERSAL

    1. See Gerhard Ebeling, <u>Word and Faith</u>, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1963), p.207.

    2. SOF p.4.

    3. SOF p.4ff.

    4. For a comprehensive historical overview of the meaning and usage of the term "faith" in the Western theological tradition, see James A. Mohler, S.J., <u>Dimensions of Faith: Yesterday and Today</u> (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1969), esp. p.94 ff.

    5. Paul Tillich, <u>Dynamics of Faith</u> (New York: Harper and Row, 1957) ix.

    6. Ibid., p.1.

    7. SOF p.5.

    8. See TSTK p.244. Fowler interprets Niebuhr's position on faith as essentially relational. As he expresses it further: "...prior to content, faith originates in relation...Niebuhr's theology begins with relation - the relation of person to person, of person to

community, of person and community to the mysterious One who is over against us. It involves the reader in the bringing to awareness of the implicit faith that is being expressed or denied in such relations."

9. Ibid., p.257. See also H. Richard Niebuhr, <u>The Meaning of Revelation</u> (New York: Macmillan Company, 1941), esp. chapter one.

10. Tillich, <u>The Dynamics of Faith</u>, p.4.

11. SOF p.98.

12. SOF p.5.

13. SOF p.14. See also Wilfred Cantwell Smith, <u>Faith and Belief</u> (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1979), esp. pp.129ff.

14. James Fowler, "Faith and Belief," unpublished essay, p.2.

15. See Wilfred Cantwell Smith, <u>The Meaning and End of Religion</u> (New York: Macmillan, 1963), esp. chapters 6 and 7.

16. SOF p.10.

17. Smith, Faith and Belief, p.12.

18. Ibid.

19. Ibid.

20. SOF p.11.

21. See also Wilfred Cantwell Smith, <u>Belief and History</u> (Charlottesville, Va.: University Press of Virginia, 1977).

22. Smith, <u>Belief and History</u>, pp.71ff. Also, Smith, Faith and Belief, p.69.

23. Smith, <u>Faith and Belief</u>, pp.117-120.

24. Ibid., p.118.

25. SOF p.14.

26. See also SOF p.208ff., esp. Fowler's discussion of the "absoluteness of the particular" which is influenced heavily by Niebuhr's understanding of revelation.

27. Fowler, "Faith and Belief," p.5.

28. Smith, <u>Faith and Belief</u>, p.117.

29. Ibid.

30. James Fowler, "Towards a Developmental Perspective on Faith," in <u>Religious Education</u>, LXIX (2): 207-219, March-April 1974, at 207.

31. SOF p.33. See also Robert Kegan's deeply insightful essay "There the Dance Is: Religious Dimensions of a Developmental Framework," in James Fowler and Antoine Vergote eds., <u>Toward Moral and Religious Maturity</u> (Morristown, New Jersey: Silver Burdett, 1980),pp. 403-440.

32. SOF p.110.

33. Fowler, "Faith and Belief," p.1.

34. Ibid.

2. FAITH AS RELATIONAL

1. See Erik Erikson, <u>Childhood and Society</u>, 2nd ed., (New York: Norton, 1963); <u>Identity, Youth, and Crisis</u> (New York: Norton, 1968); <u>Insight and Responsibility</u> (New York: Norton, 1964). Fowler refers to Erikson in "Faith and Belief," p.5. See also Fowler's recent essay "Strength For the Journey: Early Childhood Development in Selfhood and Faith," in Doris Blaze, ed., <u>Faith Development and Early Childhood</u> (Kansas City: Sheed and Ward, 1989), esp. pp.1-4.

2. Fowler, "Faith and Belief," p.5.

3. Ibid. The term "ultimate environment" is derived from the thought of H. Richard Niebuhr. See <u>Radical Monotheism and Western Culture</u> (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1943), p.47 where Niebuhr discusses the meaning of God's revelation of himself as First Person: "This principle of personlike integrity is fundamental in a revelation that is an event which elicits the confidence of selves in their ultimate environment and calls upon them as free selves to decide for the universal cause."

4. SOF p.16.

5. See Fowler, "Strength for the Journey," p.5ff. Fowler here expresses his desire to "go behind" the familiar perspectives of Piaget and Erikson on early childhood and to "try to find more precise, more deep, and more suggestive accounts - particularly of early infancy." He relies extensively on the work of Daniel Stern. See Stern's volume <u>The Interpersonal World of the Infant: A View from Psychoanalysis and Developmental Psychology</u> (New York: Basic Books, 1985).

6. SOF p.16.

7. SOF p.17.

8. SOF p.18.

9. LM p.18.

10. See Niebuhr, <u>Radical Monotheism</u>. Also Niebuhr's recently published volume <u>Faith on Earth</u> (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989; orig. 1957), esp. chapter 4. This manuscript was the focus of a substantial portion of Fowler's doctoral dissertation entitled <u>To See the Kingdom: The Theological Vision of H. Richard Niebuhr</u> (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1974). Reissued by University Press of America, 1985. The influence of Martin Buber on this relational conception of faith is obvious.

11. G. H. Mead, <u>Mind, Self, and Society</u> (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934).

12. J. M. Baldwin, <u>Social and Ethical Interpretations in Mental Development</u> (New York and London: Macmillan, 1897).

13. John Dewey, <u>Experience and Education</u> (New York: Collier, 1938); <u>A Common Faith</u> (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1934).

14. Fowler, "Faith and the Structuring of Meaning," p.17. Josaiah Royce, <u>The Sources of Religious Insight</u> (New York: Macmillan, 1912).

15. Fowler, "Towards a Developmental Perspective," p.208. These two dimensions of the structure of faith are summed up superbly in the following passage from Niebuhr's volume <u>Faith on Earth</u>, p.63.: "Faith and personality belong together. To be a self is to be the kind of being which can and must bind itself by promises to other selves; which in this I-Thou relationship of loyal-disloyal promise makers trusts and distrusts. Thus

not only faith and personality but faith and the interpersonal nature of personal existence are correlative."

16. Fowler, "Faith and Belief," p.6.

17. See esp. Niebuhr, <u>Faith on Earth</u>, chapter 4.

18. Fowler, "Faith and Belief," p.6.

19. Niebuhr, <u>Faith on Earth</u>, p.1.

20. Fowler, "Towards a Developmental Perspective," p.209.

21. Niebuhr, <u>Faith on Earth</u>, chapter 3.

22. Fowler, "Towards a Developmental Perspective," p.210.

23. See Fowler's analysis of this notion in TSTK pp. 209ff where he observes that for Niebuhr, "the tacit covenantal structure underlying the institutions and patterns of social life is inseparably linked up with faith as understood in more explicitly religious terms. The task of religion in society and culture is to criticize, to renew, and continually to transform the larger, organizing and meaning giving triads of trust and loyalty which provide the validation and sanctioning rationale for structures of faithfulness at more mundane levels." This theme has been picked up recently by proponents of a cultural-linguistic approach to faith who see in Niebuhr's thought distinctively "post-critical" elements. See for example R. Melvin Keiser, <u>Recovering the Personal: Religious Language and the Post-Critical Quest of H. Richard Niebuhr</u> (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988). Fowler himself is no longer making explicit reference to it.

24. Fowler, "Faith and the Structuring of Meaning" in Fowler, Vergote, eds., <u>Toward Moral and Religious Maturity</u> (Morristown, New Jersey: Silver Burdett, 1980), pp.51-85. Reprinted and revised in Craig Dykstra and Sharon Parks, eds., <u>Faith Development and Fowler</u>, (Birmingham: Religious Education Press, 1986), pp.15-45, at p.18.

25. Fowler, "Towards a Developmental Perspective," p.207.

26. LM p.21.

27. See Niebuhr, <u>Faith on Earth</u>, esp. chapters 5 and 6.

28. Fowler, "Faith and the Structuring of Meaning," p.18.

29. BABC p. 74. What I have termed as Fowler's "existential" analysis of faith is only tangential to what Fowler describes as Niebuhr's "existential" analysis of faith. Niebuhr's profound insights into the psychology of human rebellion and unbelief in terms of "negative" faith are, nevertheless, clearly operating beneath the surface here and inform Fowler's own normative theological perspectives on faith. See Niebuhr, <u>Faith on Earth</u>, chapters 5 and 6. Fowler's analysis is in TSTK pp.215ff.

30. TSTK p.216.

31. For Niebuhr's original explication of these forms of faith see <u>Radical Monotheism</u>, p.24ff. Fowler's adaptation is found only in SOF p.19ff.

32. SOF p.20.

33. TSTK p.208.

34. For Niebuhr's own fuller description of radical monotheism, see <u>Radical Monotheism</u>, pp.25ff.

35. SOF p.23.

36. Ibid.

37. See below, chapter 5.

38. Ernest Becker, <u>The Structure of Evil</u> (New York: Macmillan, 1968), p.210.

3. FAITH AS A MODE OF KNOWING

1. Fowler, "Faith and the Structuring of Meaning," p.19.

2. Ibid. Fowler's focus on the "composing" character of faith knowing finds its origins proximally in the thought of Jean Piaget and Lawrwence Kohlberg. Its distal source, however, is in the epistemology of Immanuel Kant. For an important discussion of Kant's influence on Fowler's image of faith, see Sharon Parks, "Imagination and Spirit in Faith Development: A Way Past the Structure-Content Dichotomy," in Dykstra and Parks, eds.,

<u>Faith Development and Fowler</u>, pp.137-156. See also SOF
p.44.

3. See chapter 4 below for a more detailed examination
of the concepts of "stage" and "development" in Fowler's
thought.

4. See Jean Piaget, <u>The Moral Judgement of the Child</u>
(New York: The Free Press, 1965 [orig. 1929]); <u>The Origins
of Intelligence in Children</u> (New York: Norton, 1963 [orig.
1936]); <u>Six Psychological Studies</u> (New York: Random House
Press, Vintage Books 1967.) <u>Structuralism</u> (New York: Basic
Books, 1970 [orig. 1968]).

5. SOF p.44.

6. See Lawrence Kohlberg, "Stage and Sequence: The
Cognitive Developmental Approach to Socialization," in
David A. Goslin, ed., <u>Handbook of Socialization Theory and
Research</u> (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1969); "The Child as
Moral Philosopher," <u>Psychology Today</u>, Sept., 1968:25-30;
"Moral Stages and Moralization," in Thomas Lickona, ed.,
<u>Moral Development and Behavior</u> (New York: Holt, Rhinehart
and Winston, 1976); "Education, Moral Development and
Faith," in <u>Journal of Moral Education</u>, 4(1):5-16, 1974.
See also Robert Selman, "The Developmental Conceptions of
Interpersonal Relations." A publication of the
<u>Harvard-Judge Baker Social Reasoning Project</u>, December,
1974, Vols.1&2; "Social-Cognitive Understanding," in T.
Lickona, ed., <u>Moral Development and Behavior</u>, pp.128-135.

7. Fowler, "Faith and the Structuring of Meaning,"
p.20.

8. Fowler, "Towards a Developmental Perspective,"
p.211. Fowler's reference to the apprehension of the Void,
the Enemy, and the Companion is drawn from his reading of
H. Richard Niebuhr whose rich analysis of "broken faith"
in terms of these categories was in turn inspired by the
thought of Alfred North Whitehead. See Alfred North
Whitehead, <u>Religion in the Making</u> (Meridian Books;
Cleveland: World Publishing Co., [1966], 1960). For
Fowler's discussion of Whitehead's influence on H. Richard
Niebuhr, see TSTK p.59ff. This aspect of Fowler's
description of faith will be examined more closely in a
later section.

9. For Fowler's treatment of these modes of knowing
within the context of faith development, see "Faith and
the Structuring of Meaning," p.21ff.

10. Ibid. Fowler uses the term "affection" here when the word "affectivity" might be more appropriate to denote the broader range of feeling, as distinct from thought, that he is referring to.

11. See Robert Kegan, <u>The Evolving Self</u> (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982).

12. Fowler, "Faith and the Structuring of Meaning," p.21.

13. Ibid. p.22.

14. Ibid. p.20.

15. Ibid. p.25.

16. Ibid. p.22.

17. Ibid. A word is in order here about the term "constitutive knowing." The use of this term introduces several ambiguities into Fowler's description of faith knowing, some of which can be treated here, and others of which await further clarification by Fowler himself. "Constitutive knowing" is a phrase that Fowler seems to use to distinguish a form of knowing that deals only with objects and their relations, from a form of knowing that is more inclusive; that composes or establishes both the known objects and the knower in relation to the known.
It is easy to get the impression that the "constitutive knowing" that underlies Fowler's understanding of faith is derived strictly from Kegan's extension of the Piagetian paradigm beyond object perceptions and relations into the realm of ego development. But this is clearly not the case. For Fowler, the structural features of constitutive knowing are disclosed to us in the work of Piaget, Kohlberg, Selman, and Kegan for each of their respective domains and serve us well, up to a point, in understanding the constitutive knowing that is faith. The obvious question here is whether there is any type of knowing that could be labelled "non-constitutive."
The only conclusion one can draw is that Fowler is operating with two different understandings of the meaning of "constitutive knowing." The first is a knowing that composes or establishes both the known and the knower in relation to the known without affecting the identity or worth of the knower in relation to the known. Faith presumably involves constructions of the self and others at different levels without the value of the knower being at stake. The second is a constitutive knowing that does affect the identity and perceived self-worth of the knower in relation to the known. It is not entirely clear what

Fowler is implying here as it is difficult to understand how constitutive knowing that composes the knower in relation to the known could fail to impinge at all times on the identity and worth of the knower. For a discussion of this basic ambiguity in Fowler's approach, see J. Harry Fernhout, "Where is Faith?: Searching for the Core of the Cube," in Dykstra and Parks, eds., Faith Development and Fowler, pp.65-89, at 76-78.

18. Ibid., p.23.

19. For a fuller presentation of Fowler's concept of the two "logics," see Fowler, "Faith and the Structuring of Meaning," pp.23-25.

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid.

22. SOF p.105.

23. Fowler, "Faith and the Structuring of Meaning," p.24.

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid.

26. FDPC p.56.

27. For a more thorough treatment of these "patterns" that Fowler has identified, see chapter 4 below. Fowler has also been in conversation with James Loder on the matter of the logic of transformation. See Loder's volume The Transforming Moment: Understanding Convictional Experiences (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1981). Part of Fowler's and Loder's dialogue is recorded in "Conversations on Fowler's Stages of Faith and Loder's The Transforming Moment," in Religious Education 77, No. 2 1982, 133-148.

28. Fowler, "Faith and the Structuring of Meaning," p.28.

29. Fowler is referring here especially to Robert E. Ornstein, The Psychology of Consciousness (San Francisco: W.H. Freeman, 1972); and Julian Jaynes, The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1976).

30. SOF p.25. See also William Lynch, Images of Faith.

31. SOF p.26.

32. For Fowler's most complete discussion of faith as "imaginal knowing" see SOF chapter 4. The title of this chapter is "Faith as Imagination." Strangely, Fowler's strong emphasis on the central role of images in this treatment of faith is not evident in later descriptions.

33. SOF p.26.

34. SOF p.24.

35. SOF p.26.

36. SOF p.25.

37. SOF p.25.

38. Ernest Becker, The Structure of Evil, p.210.

39. SOF p.28.

40. SOF p.31.

41. SOF p.31.

42. Fowler, "Faith and the Structuring of Meaning," p.7. This observation resonates deeply with those made by the philosopher-psychiatrist Viktor Frankl. See his early work The Doctor and the Soul (New York: Bantam Books, 1969 [orig. 1946]) and his classic volume Man's Search for Meaning: An Introduction to Logotherapy, trans. I. Lasch (2nd ed.; New York: Washington Square Press, 1963 [1959]).

43. Fowler, "Faith and the Structuring of Meaning," p.26.

44. Ibid., p.25.

45. Fowler, "Faith and Belief," p.8. When Fowler draws a distinction between the "logic of rational certainty" and the "logic of conviction," he is attempting to recover in modern language an integral and holistic understanding of the meaning of faith. One is tempted to suggest that the "logic of conviction" is a term denoting the cognitive capacity of that which has been classically understood as the "heart." In its ecstatic, imaginative, and intuitive mode of apprehension, it relates the human person affectively to centres of value which order and unify life experience. This becomes clearer in a striking reference that Fowler makes to St. Augustine who wrote in

his Confessions, "Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our
hearts are restless until they find their rest in Thee."
        The internal dynamics of faith, as Fowler descibes
them, would become infinitely clearer, I submit, if
Augustine's notion of the heart was respected as a viable
analytic category within contemporary psychological and
theological literature. It is not the physical heart that
Augustine is referring to, but rather the very centre of
the human personality that seeks to be attached in trust
and loyalty to an object of value. This object or centre
of value, whether one's mother, one's nation, or one's
career, bestows value upon the one who is loyal and
thereby grounds and unifies their existence.
        The epistemology of faith that Fowler describes seems
to be the way in which the imagination and reason
structure reality in "accordance" (kardia=heart) with that
which is valued and trusted. Fowler seems to confirm this
when he remarks that "Faith development theory, for all
its technical language and abstract concepts, is an
expression of the story of our search for communion with
St. Augustine's "Thou." Faith communities must discover
anew how to meet people as whole beings, embracing their
hearts as well as their minds, their bodies as well as
their souls." See "Faith and the Structuring of Meaning,"
p.40.

        46. SOF p.33.

4. FAITH AS A DEVELOPMENTAL PHENOMENON

        1. See, for example, Jonas Langer, Theories of
Development (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969);
Adrien Pinard and Monique Laurendeau, "'Stage' in Piaget's
Cognitive-Developmental Theory: Exegesis of a Concept" in
David Elkind and John H. Flavell, eds., Studies in
Cognitive Development: Essays in Honour of Jean Piaget
(New York: Oxford University Press, 1969, pp. 121-170.
For a philosophical critique of the notion of
"development" itself, see Robert L. Campbell and Mark H.
Bickherd, Knowing Levels and Developmental Stages,
Contributions to Human Development, vol. 16, ed., John A.
Meacham (Basel: Karger, 1986).

        2. Craig Dykstra, "What is Faith?: An Experiment in
the Hypothetical Mode" in Dykstra and Parks, Faith
Development and Fowler, pp.45-65, at 51.

        3. See Ludwig von Bertalanffy, "An Outline of General
Systems Theory," in British Journal for the Philosophy of
Science, vol. 1 139-164, 1950; Robots, Men, and Minds:

Psychology in the Modern World (New York: George
Braziller, 1967).

4. For an overview, see Fritjof Capra, The Turning
Point: Science, Society, and the Rising Culture (New York:
Bantam, 1982).

5. See SOF pp.37-86 for a fuller description of these
stages as they relate to faith development theory.

6. SM pp.35-37.

7. Ibid.

8. See especially Lawrence Kohlberg, The Philosophy of
Moral Development: Moral Stages and the Idea of Justice,
Vol.1 (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1981).

9. For an excellent critique of Kohlberg's and
Fowler's stage theories, see Daniel Helminiak, Spiritual
Development: An Interdisciplinary Study (Chicago: Loyola
University Press,, 1986), p.52ff.

10. SOF p.98.

11. SOF p.102.

12. Kegan, The Evolving Self, p.77.

13. FDPC p.55.

14. SOF p.99.

15. SOF p.101. Fowler is well aware of the
controversial   nature of this claim. He continues:
"Instinctively many of us reared in a pluralistic,
democratic ethos and saturated with an implicit values
relativism feel offended by claims like these. In the
domain of faith the assertion that more developed stages
are in significant ways more adequate than less developed
ones has to be made with even greater cautions and
qualifications than in the cognitive and moral reasoning
spheres. Yet we cannot (and will not) avoid making and
trying to corroborate that claim."

16. Fowler's operational description of faith has its
own developmental history. For an insightful discussion,
see John McDargh, Psycholanalytic Object Relations and the
Study of Religion, On Faith and the Imaging of God
(Lanham, MD.: University Press of America, 1983),
pp.39-40.

17. Fowler, "Faith and the Structuring of Meaning," p.33.

18. Ibid., p.37.

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid., p.31.

22. Ibid., pp.28-31.

23. Ibid., p.31.

24. Ibid., p.33.

25. FDPC p. 58.

26. SOF pp.54-55, 106-114.

27. SOF p.204ff. Also chapter 5 of this study.

28. See Fowler, "Stages in Faith," pp.203-207. Here, Fowler disavows any identification of the stages with a spiritual path but in a recent publication, he begins to draw some parallels. See his "Faith Development and Spirituality," in Charles C. L. Kao, ed., Maturity and the Quest for Spritual Meaning (Lanham, MD.: University Press of America, 1988), pp.19-41.

5. THE OBJECT AND CAUSE OF FAITH

1. James Fowler, "Stage Six and the Kingdom of God," Religious Education 75 No.3 1980, p.231.

2. Ibid. p.233.

3. FDPC p.75

4. Fowler,"Stage Six and the Kingdom of God," p.236.

5. Ibid. p.237.

6. Ibid. p.238.

7. SOF p.23.

8. SOF p.23. See also p.300.

9. H. Richard Niebuhr, <u>Radical Monotheism and Western Culture</u>, p.32.

10. TSTK, pp.53ff.

11. SOF p.32 See also p.30.

12. James Fowler, "Towards a Developmental Perspective on Faith," p.219. See also Fowler's remarks in "Practical Theology and the Shaping of Christian Lives," in Don S. Browning ed., <u>Practical Theology: The Emerging Field in Theology, Church, and World</u> (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1983), pp.148-156, at 156.

13. Fowler states that "I am not sure that Stage 6 really describes or requires any basic structural advance beyond stage 5." LM p.90.

14. Fowler, "Stage Six and the Kingdom of God," p.239.

15. Ibid. p.243.

16. Ibid. p.239.

17. Ibid. p.244.

18. Niebuhr, <u>Radical Monotheism</u>, p.22. Niebuhr calls this the "double principle" of faith. See also Josaiah Royce, <u>The Philosophy of Loyalty</u> (New York: Macmillan, 1908).

19. TSTK pp.141ff. Fowler also points out that for Niebuhr" both true selfhood and salvation involve, among other things, having the person's formerly conflicting, polytheistic value-commitments ordered and subordinated in an over-arching loyalty to the one true centre of being and value. And that this is only possible - or the response to God as supreme value and centre of loyalty is only possible - when man comes to understand and experience his being valued by God. Therefore man is also self-valuer; and the transformation in his valuing that faith brings begins with a revolution in his self-valuation and its basis." Fowler's description of "faith-identity" relations are based on this insight: that faith as trust and loyalty is the integrating force not only in social relationships, but also in the formation of identity and selfhood.

20. Niebuhr, <u>Radical Monotheism</u>, p.32. The approach taken here by Fowler, following Niebuhr, has been profoundly influenced by the theology of Jonathan Edwards. In Fowler's discussion of Niebuhr's ethics of response to

God the Creator, he notes that for Niebuhr "the moral life has a basis in the aesthetic... in man's response to the creative action of God there is a valuing that includes but transcends moral valuing - a valuing that appreciates the beauty, the variety, the richness of all being, and approaches an aesthetically grounded understanding that "whatever is, is good."" Fowler traces this Edwardsian theme throughout Niebuhr's doctrine of sin and redemption as well. See TSTK pp.176-178. See also Jonathan Edwards, <u>The Nature of True Virtue</u> (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1961 [1755]).

21. Niebuhr, <u>Radical Monotheism</u> p.33.

22. Fowler, "Stage Six and the Kingdom of God," p.239.

23. Niebuhr, <u>Radical Monotheism</u>, p.34.

24. Fowler, "Stage Six and the Kingdom of God," p.239.

25. Ibid.

26. Ibid. p.234.

27. Ibid. p.240.

28. See FDPC chapter 3.

29. In his study of Niebuhr, Fowler explores the metaphor of God as source of being and norm of valuing asserting that "this metaphor is really the primitive one in Niebuhr's thinking..." TSTK p.139. Fowler's own appropriation of Niebuhr's value theory in his analysis of the relational dimensions of faith and formulation of his "faith-identity relations" indicates the centrality of the value-valuation metaphor in his own thought.

6. THE SUBJECT OF FAITH

1. See chapter 5, p.101.

2. TSTK p.141.

3. James Fowler, "Practical Theology and the Shaping of Christian Lives," in Don S. Browning ed., <u>Practical Theology: The Emerging Field in Theology, Church, and World</u> (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1983), p.156.

4. Ibid.

5. Fowler points out that "this idea is close in ways to David Tracy's suggestion that we should speak of God as the "eminently relative one" - the divine relativity in relation to which all being is relative." See "Practical Theology," p. 156. See also David Tracy, <u>Blessed Rage for Order: The New Pluralism in Theology</u> (New York: Seabury, 1975), pp.181ff.

6. TSTK p.153.

7. SOF p.24, p.98.

8. H. Richard Niebuhr, <u>The Responsible Self</u> (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), p.61.

9. Ibid.

10. Jerry A. Irish, <u>The Religious Thought of H. Richard Niebuhr</u> (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1983), p.20.

11. Niebuhr, <u>The Responsible Self</u>, chapter 2.

12. For a discussion of the relational dimensions of faith, see chapter 2 of this study.

13. Niebuhr, <u>The Responsible Self</u>, p.126. See also Fowler's analysis in TSTK p.153ff.

14. Niebuhr, "Value Theory and Theology." In <u>The Nature of Religious Experience</u>, edited by J. S. Bixler, R. L. Calhoun, and H. R. Niebuhr (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1937),pp.93-116, at p.115. This is an important essay critiquing the use of value theory in theology. Niebuhr makes his own case for an approach that he calls "objective relativism," which forms the basis for Fowler's later formulation of a theory of "religious relativity." Niebuhr's characterization of the religious need and his description of "deity value" in terms of that Being which can adequately fulfill the religious need sheds much light on the basis of Fowler's theological anthropology as well.

15. TSTK p.167. Fowler's summary of this principle in Niebuhr's thought is as follows: "Through the redemptive action of God, the faith-knower begins to trust the creative source or action by which he is and by which all that is (or has being) is. In this reconciliation to the Creator, the faith-knower knows himself to be valued being. The experience of being valued transforms his personal axiology. He begins to perceive that he and his companions-in-being are co-members of an inclusive commonwealth of being, and that this commonwealth is

unified under the conserving, valuing regard of the One by whom it is and by whom it is faithfully sustained."

16. Niebuhr, "Value Theory and Theology," p.115.

17. Ibid.

18. While this remains, technically, a matter of conjecture, I have not found evidence in Fowler's thought that his position differs in any substantial way from that of Niebuhr.

19. TSTK p.105.

20. BABC p.101. See also Walter Brueggemann, "Covenanting as Human Vocation," in Interpretation 33 (2): 115-129.

21. Ibid.

22. H. Richard Niebuhr, Radical Monotheism and Western Culture (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1943), pp.29-30.

23. BABC p.83.

24. TSTK p.108. Niebuhr's idea that transformation and liberation are possible only through divine redemption has been influenced explicitly by both Luther and Edwards. Fowler points to that influence in his early study of Niebuhr's thought citing a composite quote that Niebuhr drew from one of Edwards' treatises: "The will is always committed or it is no will at all. It is either committed to God or one of the gods. "The will is as its strongest motive is." Man cannot transfer his loyalty from one of the false gods to God by exercising his will, since that will is loyal to the false god...So long as man is loyal to himself, or to his nation, or his class, or to his moral standard based upon a self-chosen highest good, his efforts to rescue himself will be determined by this loyalty. The consequence is that he involves himself more deeply in disloyalty to God." See Jonathan Edwards, The Freedom of the Will, Yale Edition, ed. by Paul Ramsey (Yale university Press, 1957), pp.141-148. The quote is taken from Niebuhr's essay "Man the Sinner." Journal of Religion, 15 (1935), pp.272-280, at 279.

25. See esp. BABC p.140.

26. SOF p.293.

27. SOF p.292.

28. SOF p.293.

29. SOF p.282.

30. SOF p.293.

31. TSTK p.156.

32. BABC p.146.

33. SOF p.303.

34. James Fowler, "Faith and Belief," unpublished essay, p.10.

35. BABC p.74.

36. SOF p.303.

37. BABC pp.74-75.

38. Brueggemann, "Covenanting as Human Vocation," p.125.

39. Ibid.

40. For an example of how Fowler develops these Niebuhrian metaphors in his own thought see FDPC chpt.3.

41. FDPC p.50.

42. FDPC p.51.

7. THE ADEQUACY OF FOWLER'S IMAGE OF FAITH

1. SOF p.5. Determining where Fowler's image of faith fits into the framework of historic debate is made somewhat difficult because Fowler himself never actually engages the classical perspectives of others on faith, nor does he ever explicitly defend his own usage of the term "faith" to refer to the structural-developmental processes he is investigating. Nevertheless, Fowler does make his own theological sources abundantly clear and it is to them that we must refer if we wish to place his image of faith in some sort of theological context.

2. For an illuminating discussion of this distinction and its bearing on the psychological study of faith see John McDargh, Psychoanaytic Object Relations Theory and the Study of Religion: On Faith and the Imaging of God (Lanham, MD.: University Press of America, 1983) esp.

chapter 2.

3. See H. Richard Niebuhr, "Faith in Gods and in God," in <u>Radical Monotheism and Western Culture</u> (New York: Harper & Brothers) pp.114-126.

4. Ibid. Fowler's recent interest in the "structuring power of orthodoxy" and the contents of faith indicates a less formalistic orientation than was evident in his approach initially but I believe that the "how" of faith is still his guiding concern.

5. H. Richard Niebuhr, <u>Faith on Earth</u> (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989; orig. 1957), esp. chapter 4.

6. H. Richard Niebuhr, <u>Christ and Culture</u> (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1951),pp.241ff.

7. SOF p.303.

8. Niebuhr, <u>Faith on Earth</u>, p.61.

9. Craig Dykstra, "Introduction," to C. Dykstra and S. Parks, eds., <u>Faith Development and Fowler</u> (Birmingham: Religious Education Press, 1986), pp.2-3.

10. Ibid. p.4.

11. SOF p.205.

12. Dykstra, "Introduction," p.4. For an analysis of Fowler's work as an example of the functional approach to the study of religion see McDargh, <u>Psychoanaytic Object Relations Theory</u>, pp.6-9.

13. Dykstra, "Introduction," p.4.

14. See esp. Gabriel Moran, "Looking at the Images: Responses from the Religious Education Perspective" in Kenneth Stokes, ed., <u>Faith Development and the Adult Life Cycle</u> (New York: Sadlier, 1982), pp. 149-179, <u>Religious Education Development: Images for the Future</u> (Minneapolis: Winston Press, 1983), pp. 107-129; Robert Wuthnow, "A Sociological Perspective on Faith Development," in K. Stokes, ed., <u>Faith Development and the Adult Life Cycle</u>, pp.209-223. General discussions of the issues surrounding the psychological study of religious faith can be found in <u>Concilium: The Challenge of Psychology to Faith</u> (Nijmegen, Holland; 1982).

15. SOF pp.207ff. Fowler deals specifically with

nihilism as one of the effects of secularization when he makes reference to the larger cultural shift in consciousness that "has come to see faith as belief or a belief system and, in what passes for tolerance or "understanding," maintains a dogmatic attitude of relativism regarding the truth or appropriateness of all such "systems of belief."

16. SOF p.92.

17. SOF p.92.

18. SOF p.32.

19. Walter Conn, <u>Christian Conversion: A Developmental Interpretation of Autonomy and Surrender</u>, (New York: Paulist Press, 1986), p. 85. J. Harry Fernhout, "Where is Faith: Searching for the Core of the Cube," in C. Dykstra and S. Parks, <u>Faith Development and Fowler</u>, pp.65-90.

20. Fowler, "Dialogue Towards a Future," in C. Dykstra and S. Parks, eds., <u>Faith Development and Fowler</u>, p.285.

21. Conn, <u>Christian Conversion</u>, p.85.

22. "Faith Development Theory and the Aims of Religious Socialization," in Gloria Durka and Joan-Marie Smith, eds., <u>Emerging Issues in Religious Education</u> (New York: Paulist Press, 1976), p.199.

23. Conn, <u>Christian Conversion</u>, p.86.

24. In addition to Fernhout, see also Mary Ford-Grabowsky, "What Developmental Phenomenon is Fowler Studying?," <u>Journal of Psychology and Religion</u>, 5(3): 5-13, 1986.

25. Fernhout, "Where is Faith?," p.86.

26. Fowler, "Dialogue Towards a Future," p.281.

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid. Fowler's more recent acknowledgement of the "structuring power" of narrative, of the depth unconscious, and even of doctrine seem to suggest that their structuring influence cannot be understood strictly within the bounds of a cognitive-developmental framework. This seems to apply as well to the "religious affections" that Fowler claims must be included in a practical theological analysis of human formation and transformation. It would appear that Fowler recognizes the

necessity of integrating these other dimensions of faith into his analytical framework but not in structural-developmental categories. This leaves open the question of whether Fowler's structural-developmental approach to faith was ever intended to fully "operationalize" the complex cognitive-affective-valuational-committed faith knowing process that he describes.

29. An important distinction has to be made here between "affective" and "valuational." Although they are intimately related, the first is concerned with the feeling dimension in a more general way whereas the second specifies the attitude of trust, loyalty and the "resting of the heart" on that object which is "worth-full" and which bestows worth. Fowler recognizes the theoretical necessity of this distinction in his appropriation of the term "constitutive" knowing to describe faith, however, as Fernhout indicates, he has a tendency to shift away from a specific focus on such "knowing-in commitment" to a concern with the impact of the commitment on the self, the transformation of consciousness that comes in the knowing the self as "constituted" by a powerful centre of value. As Fernhout expresses it, "While it is no doubt true that faith knowing involves such a transformation, conceptually this is a second step. The first step, knowing in commitment, remains undeveloped in Fowler's theory." Fernhout, "Where is Faith?," p. 83.

30. This is doubly strange in light of his insistence that he "cannot adopt the Piagetian theoretical separation of cognition and affection...but rather must account for their interpenetration in the dynamics of faith." LM p.37. It may be indicative of his desire to maintain the structure/content dichotomy for purposes of theoretical consistency and general applicability or it may imply that he does not believe a structural-developmental approach to valuation, the "dynamic that lies at the heart of faith" is possible.

31. See esp. John M. Broughton, "The Political Psychology of Faith Development," in Dykstra and Parks, eds., Faith Development and Fowler, pp.90-115; also Maria Harris, "Completion and Faith Development," in the same collection, pp.115-137. The appropriateness or inappropriateness of the metaphor of "development" as applied to faith is a large and complex issue that cannot be dealt with here. Suffice it to say that analysis of Fowler's model of faith-development at this level has been undertaken and has contributed valuable insights into his conception of faith.

32. In addition to the works cited above by Moran, Dykstra, and Loder, see also Stanley Hauerwas, "Character, Narrative, and Growth in the Christian Life," in Antoine Vergote and James Fowler, eds., <u>Toward Moral and Religious Maturity</u> (Morristown, New Jersey: Silver Burdett, 1980), pp.441-484, <u>A Community of Character</u> (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981); Craig Dykstra, <u>Vision and Character</u> (New York: Paulist Press, 1981).

33. James Loder, "Conversations on Fowler's <u>Stages of Faith</u> and Loder's <u>The Transforming Moment</u>," in <u>Religious Education</u> 77, No. 2 1982, 133-148, at p.135.

34. Ibid.

35. See Gerhard Ebeling, <u>Word and Faith</u>, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1963).

36. Loder, "Conversations," p.136.

37. Craig Dykstra, "What is Faith?: An Experiment in the Hypothetical Mode" in Dykstra and Parks, <u>Faith Development and Fowler</u>, pp.45-65, at 48-53.

38. Ibid. pp.53ff.

39. Ibid. p.54.

40. Some examples of those critics who are obviously unfamiliar with the theological basis of faith development theory are C. Ellis Nelson, "Does Faith Develop? - An Evaluation of Fowler's Position," in <u>Living Light</u> 20, 162-173, as well as Mary Ford-Grabowsky, "The Fullness of the Christian Faith Experience: Dimensions Missing in Faith Development Theory," in <u>The Journal of Pastoral Care</u> March 1987, Vol. XLI, No.1, pp.39-47. For a discussion of this problem see Stuart D. McLean, "Basic Sources and New Possibilities: H. Richard Niebuhr's Influence on Faith Development Theory," in Dykstra and Parks, <u>Faith Development and Fowler</u>, pp.157-180.

41. In response to Loder's theological reflections on his work, Fowler admitted the need for further "testing" of his "research methods" and his "theoretical constructions" which would result "in a clearer and sharper delineation of what I have called human faith and religious faith." See Fowler's contribution to "Conversations on Fowler's <u>Stages of Faith</u> and Loder's <u>The Transforming Moment</u>," in <u>Religious Education</u> 77, No. 2 1982, 133-148, at p.145.

42. See note 40 above.

42. Fowler, "Dialogue Toward a Future," pp.295-296. See Walter Brueggemann, "Covenanting as Human Vocation," in _Interpretation_ 33 (2) 115-129, _The Prophetic Imagination_ (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978); Jurgen Moltmann, _God in Creation: A New Theology of Creation and the Spirit of God_ trans.. Margaret Kohl (New York: Harper & Row, 1985); Theodore W. Jennings Jr., _Beyond Theism: A Grammar of God Language_ (New York: Oxford University Press, 1885); Paul L. Holmer, _Making Christian Sense_ (Philadelphia: Westminister Press, 1984). One of the first of Fowler's articles in which this shift was made apparent was "Practical Theology and Theological Education: Some Models and Questions," in _Theology Today_ Vol. XLII, No. 1 April 1985 pp.43-59. A preliminary examination of some of the implications of Fowler's paradigm shift can be found in Karl Ernst Nipkow, "Who is the Author of my Biography: Historical and Systematic Remarks to a Theology of Individual Faith History." Paper delivered at the University of Tubingen, Theology Faculty and Faculty of Social Sciences and Education, year unstated.

43. Fowler, "Dialogue Toward a Future," p.298. Fowler's more recent use of God and Spirit language serves him well in butressing his image of faith theologically and resonates more explicitly with his conviction of the sovereignty of God. Nevertheless, it would be unfortunate if Fowler's original concern to find "intermediate" language to express a contemporary fundamental theology of faith was abandoned.

44. TSTK esp.chapter 4.

45. Fowler, "Dialogue Toward a Future," pp.298ff. Fowler has written an important article entitled "Pluralism, Particularity, and Paideia," in the _Journal of Law and Religion_ 2 1984 pp.263-307 where he tries to articulate in a preliminary way the possibility of regrounding a paideia to "inform public education for a contemporary American society which is radically pluralistic" using a combination of faith development theory and root metaphor analysis. It is to be hoped that this kind of engagement with the culture continues.

46. SOF p.20ff.

47. SOF p.19.

48. See H. Richard Niebuhr, "Value Theory and Theology." In _The Nature of Religious Experience_, edited by J. S. Bixler, R. L. Calhoun, and H. R. Niebuhr (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1937),pp.93-116, at p.116.

Niebuhr writes : "The task of theology...lies then in the analysis of those characteristics by virtue of which a being has the value of deity for man, the examination of reasons for the failure of religions which attach themselves to beings which do not possess these characteristics adequately, and the description of the ultimate being, which as the supremely real and the source of all other being, is alone able by virtue of its character to satisfy the human need for God." For Fowler's analysis of Niebuhr's value theory, see TSTK p.172.

49. See TSTK p.178. Also H. Richard Niebuhr, <u>The Meaning of Revelation</u> (New York: Macmillan Company, 1941), esp. chapter 3, "Reasons of the Heart," and chapter 4, "The Deity of God."

50. H. Richard Niebuhr, "The Centre of Value," in <u>Radical Monotheism and Western Culture</u> (New York: Harper & Brothers), pp.100-113.

51. Niebuhr, "Value Theory and Theology," p.113.

52. Niebuhr, "The Centre of Value," pp.110ff.

53. SOF p.207.

54. Quoted in Dykstra, "Introduction," p.4.

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