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I am submitting a dissertation written by Cathy Robbs Turner entitled "The Utilization of Faith Development Theory and Faith Styles Perspective to Shape a Christian Education Program." I have examined the final electronic copy of this dissertation and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education, with a major in Learning and Leadership.

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Dr. Hinsdale Bernard, Chairperson

We have read this dissertation
and recommend its acceptance.

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THE UTILIZATION OF FAITH DEVELOPMENT THEORY AND FAITH

STYLES PERSPECTIVE TO SHAPE A CHRISTIAN EDUCATION PROGRAM

A Dissertation

Presented for the

Doctor of Education Degree

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Cathy Robbs Turner

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family for always encouraging me to strive

for my highest dreams and to always seize the day: sons, Josh and Jordan Robbs; parents,

Mary and Wylie Gross; sister, Lori Kelley.

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate characteristics of the faith development of members of the congregation of Oak View Methodist Church. The research evaluated the relationship between a person's faith level and his/her participation in Christian education. Contributing to the body of faith development research, this research served as an extension of Fowler's (1981) Faith Development Theory (FDT), as well as the Faith Styles Model (Streib, 2001; 2005), which is an advancement of FDT. In this mixed-method study the researcher also investigated whether there is a significant relationship between the Faith Development Interview (FDI), a qualitative measure of faith development and the Religious Schema Scale (RSS), a quantitative measure of faith development.

The quantitative instrument was a15-questions likert-scale survey administered to 900 adult worship service attendees with a response rate of 666 surveys, or 74%. From this sample twenty-one interviewees were randomly selected. Through a series of twenty-five Faith Development Interview questions, respondents were encouraged to experientially address faith issues by sharing details and feelings about their lived experiences.

The data from the RSS showed there is no significant relationship between a person's faith level and his/her participation in Christian education programs. Thus, if the goal of Bible study classes is to develop a stronger faith in the participants, this study indicates that the goal is not being achieved. The Religious Schema Scale shows promise as a predictor of Faith Development Interview scores and could provide a much more

time and cost effective method of measuring faith levels than the FDI. The FDI offers rich text about the attitudes and values in life that have shaped the faith of the interviewees and proves useful in providing data for Christian educators about faith levels of the congregation. The Religious Schema Scale results reveal an unanticipated yet important conclusion. The RSS score on one subscale does not predict the score on another subscale. Finally, Faith Development Interviews offer rich text about the attitudes and values in life that have shaped the faith of interviewees and proves useful in providing data for Christian educators about the faith levels of the congregation.

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CHAPTER ONE

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

Introduction and Background to the Problem

A major study of mainline congregations titled *Effective Christian Education: A National Study of Protestant Congregations* (Benson & Eklin, 1990) found that churches are not doing what it takes to help their members mature in their faith. Conducted by the Minneapolis-based Search Institute and funded by the Lilly Endowment, the three-and-a-half year study surveyed 11,122 people in 561 congregations in six denominations. The denominations included Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Christian Church, Presbyterian Church, Southern Baptist, United Church of Christ, and United Methodist Church. It found "effective Christian education is the most powerful single influence congregations have on maturity of faith" (Benson & Eklin, 1990, p. 3). If done well, Christian education has the potential beyond any other congregational influence to deepen faith (Benson & Eklin, 1990). The study focused primarily on formal Christian education, defined as "the programs and events a congregation intentionally offers to teach the faith to children, teenagers, and adults" (Benson & Eklin, 1990, p. 67). Benson and Eklin concluded that since Christian education is the central factor in the increase of one's maturity of faith, taking education seriously should become a church priority (Benson & Eklin, 1990).

While a primary role in a Christian Education (CE) program is to provide support for the spiritual growth of the congregation, mega-churches often have trouble personalizing educational programs and determining the levels of faith development within the congregation. As Professor of Theology, Matthaei (2004) noted, "Spiritual

formation and growth in faith are central issues for religious communities today with the advent of the 'postmodern' and 'postreligious' age" (p. 56). This thought gives rise to the essential question, "How do Christian educators nurture faith development in their congregations?"

Considered one of the fastest growing churches in its denomination, Oak View Methodist Church (pseudonym) is a suburban church in a southern city. Over the last ten years the church has grown from 962 members to a current membership of over 3,500. The church holds three worship services per Sunday, each with a unique style: gospel at 8:00 a.m., contemporary at 9:30 a.m., and traditional at 11:00 a.m. With three diverse services each Sunday, the church attracts attendees from varied backgrounds including lifelong Methodists, Catholics, Baptists, Evangelicals, and the previously unchurched. The average Sunday worship service attendance for all three services is approximately 1,800. The 8:00 service has the lowest attendance with an average of 100. The remaining 1,700 attendees are evenly divided between the 9:30 and 11:00 services.

Of great concern to the church staff is the fact that of the 3,500 members, only a small percentage participate in Christian education programs offered at the church either on Sunday or during the week. Only 15% of the 2,544 adults on the membership rolls participate in these Christian education programs, which include Sunday School and Small Groups. Roughly 22% of the 397 children on the church roll ages 3-10 participate in Sunday School, Children's Church, and Wednesday night activities. Approximately 10% of the 489 youth ages 11-17 participate in Sunday School. Recognizing the need to nurture the spiritual growth and development of its congregation and to reach out to the

majority of parishioners who do not participate in the life of the church beyond Sunday morning worship, the church has set out to evaluate its Christian Education program.

Statement of the Problem

The church's challenge is to design a doctrinally sound program that is relevant to the needs of the congregation. It desires to provide Christian education opportunities that are clearly defined, cover a wide variety of topics, and reach a broad spectrum of the congregation. This challenge leads to the primary research question of this study: How does the church support the growth of faith among its congregants? Of utmost importance to the church is the need to give parents tools to guide the faith development of their children. Committed to supporting members' varying spiritual levels, the church leadership began to focus on a central concern. What is the level of faith development of members of Oak View Methodist Church? A second concern is the relationship between the faith level and participation in Christian education. This faith assessment on a sample of the congregation at Oak View Methodist Church could assist the church leadership in developing an appropriate educational program that reflects the stages of faith of its members and hopefully encourages their spiritual growth and development.

The role of the Christian Educator at Oak View Methodist is to facilitate the spiritual development of the congregation. Recognizing faith levels and implementing effective programs to help congregants to grow in their faith is a challenge. A debate in the field of Christian education stems from the issue of whether or not one's faith level is a staged, structural development that is irreversible or developed over a lifetime, rising and descending at various points in a person's life. Over the last thirty years some Christian educators have begun to look to developmental psychology to assist them in

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program development. They have found correlations between this area of study and effective programs that nurture the congregation (Wilhoit & Dettoni, 1995). In the late 1960s and early 1970s religious educators took notice of Kohlberg's (1969) view of the formation of human conscience and found a connection to the development of faith and spirituality (Ward, 1995). Fowler (1981) suggested that Kohlberg's work served as a paradigm for the understanding of faith development. Fowler based his Faith Development Theory (FDT) on structural-developmentalism that construes faith as developing from one predictable, irreversible stage to the next. Fowler's measurement utilizes a semi-structured qualitative interview process, called the Faith Development Interview (FDI). While effective in assessing faith levels, the interview process is time consuming and costly making this type of qualitative assessment prohibitive for many churches.

As an advancement of faith development research (Streib, 2001) proposed a new perspective on the structural-developmental theory, the Religious Styles Perspective. Streib's (2005) revision is designed to account for the "life history and life-world relatedness of religion at its principal interactive, interpersonal origin and shape" (p. 114). Streib and Hood (2007) propose a quantitative measure, the Religious Schema Scale, that "claims to stand in the faith development research tradition" (p. 2). This scale promises a less time-consuming procedure and opens the possibility for Christian educators to have a less costly, yet reliable tool for measuring faith development.

In order to gain a better understanding of the faith development of congregants at Oak View Methodist Church and to subsequently design appropriate CE programs, this

research incorporated both the Faith Development Interview (Fowler, 1981) and the

Religious Schema Scale (Streib & Hood, 2007).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate characteristics of the faith

development of members of the congregation of Oak View Methodist Church. The

researcher evaluated the relationship between a person's faith level and his/her

participation in Christian education. Contributing to the body of faith development

research, this research is an extension of James Fowler's (1981) Faith Development

Theory, as well as the Faith Styles Perspective model (Streib, 2001; 2005), which is an

advancement of FDT. In part, this research reflects whether or not there is a relationship

between the Faith Development Interview (FDI) (Appendix A), a qualitative measure of

faith development and the Religious Schema Scale (RSS) (Appendix B), a quantitative

measure of faith development.

Research Questions and Hypothesis

For the main hypothesis, the researcher anticipated a positive relationship

between a person's faith level and his/her participation in Christian education. In order to

carry out the purpose of this study, answers were sought for the following questions

concerning faith development at Oak View Methodist Church:

What is the relationship between faith levels and participation in Christian education

programs? What is the correlation between the RSS and the FDI?

The researcher used the respondents' answers to questions in the RSS (Appendix

B) and FDI (Appendix A) as she sought answers to the research questions.

Conceptual Framework

This project finds theological and methodological roots in Methodism. John Wesley, founder of the Methodist Church, promoted "scriptural holiness" through preaching and teaching in a system of class meetings and societies throughout Great Britain and the colonies (Stokes, 1989). Wesley advocated that believers should join themselves to a small group for encouragement and accountability. John Wesley and his brother Charles banded together in a program of disciplined living. Because they lived their Christianity by *method*, they were called "Methodists" (Stokes, 1989). John Wesley instructed his preachers to call every Christian to move on toward perfection. The emphasis on "scriptural holiness" is a characteristic feature of the United Methodist heritage and points to the importance of Christian education within the denomination.

Methodism was established on a strong foundation of Christian education (Stoke, 1989). The Wesleys organized converts into small classes with a devout Christian leader. The classes were to meet together at least weekly in order to discuss their progress in the Christian life. The members read and discussed Scripture and prayed together. John Wesley offered these new converts some practical guidelines that were later incorporated in *The United Methodist Book of Discipline* (2004), a book that outlines a guide for Christian disciples. These efforts help to provide a basic knowledge. Subsequently, education for members of the Methodist church became more formalized with the establishment of schools and colleges (Watts, 1987).

Wesley's focus on scriptural holiness was a part of the evangelical movement of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Wesley emphasized it because it was grounded in the New Testament. This focus led Wesley to instruct preachers to "call every Christian

to move on toward perfection" (Stokes, 1989, p. 96). The stress on scriptural holiness or sanctification is a characteristic feature of the United Methodist heritage. According to Stokes (1989), Methodists believe that the real meaning of sanctification or perfection is not static but constantly moving into the direction of a life with God. This effort to move closer to God is an attempt to grow deeper in faith (Stokes, 1989). Christian education programs in the local church help support the faith formation of its members.

Part of the challenge for Methodists, as well as members of other denominations, is to help members identify their own faith level and then to help them move closer to God. Christian educators turn to faith development research to find ways to measure congregants' faith and to support their efforts to deepen their spiritual growth. Fowler's (1981) faith development theory has been the subject of a great number of theoretical and empirical projects (Streib, 2005). Nearly 90 dissertations have focused primarily or exclusively on Fowler's theory (Streib, 2005). One-third of these dissertations discuss Fowler's *theory* and 10% deal with *application* of faith development theory in religious education, pastoral care, and church work (Streib, 2005). The Faith Development Interview (FDI) is the qualitative instrument Fowler (1981) designed to measure one's faith level. Fowler & Dell (2006) assert that stage theory helps to match the competences of each faith stage with "ways of teaching and with the symbols, practices, and contents of faith at different levels of reflective inquiry and complexity" (p. 43). They also posit that paying attention to stage and stage advancement can help Christian educators shape the teaching and involvement of congregants (Fowler & Dell, 2006).

Streib (2005) holds that a revision of faith development research is needed. The Faith Styles Perspective provides a new view of Fowler's structural-developmental

theory with its traditional form of structural, hierarchical, sequential, and irreversible logic (Streib, 2005). Streib's (2001) faith styles perspective has questioned the structural coherence for a specific stage and irreversible succession of stage structures. Streib and Hood (2007) argue instead that faith stages may overlap and suggest the simultaneous presence or availability of different structural patterns. In another conceptual message, Streib and Hood (2007) posit that not only do cognitive-structural forces work to determine a specific faith style, but other aspects of faith play a role. These aspects include contents of faith, inter-personal relations, life-world influences and biography. While Fowler (1981) designed seven aspects of faith, the faith styles perspectives include aspects for representing God and expanding the inter-personal aspects. Streib and Hood (2007) delineate the faith development model as a four dimensional composition that embraces the symbolizations of the Divine God, of the self, of the self-other, and of the coherence of the world. This systematic model of seven aspects of faith expands the focus of qualitative-interpretation with faith development interviews by including a quantitative measure.

For both conceptual preciseness and for preciseness in empirical research, Streib and Hood (2007) further clarify the concept of "style" in faith development. Streib and Hood (2007) introduce the concept of "schemata" as an "internally coherent cognitive pattern, which structures a person's interpretation of specific experiences in a specific situation" (p. 6). Thus they define faith styles as the repetitive application of schemata. They conclude that it takes more than "one faith schema and its more than one-time use, but the repetitive application of various faith schemata to form a faith style" (Streib & Hood, 2007, p. 7).

In extending faith development research, Streib and Hood (2007) conclude that in terms of faith styles the distinction between schemata and styles has to be accounted for. This distinction allows the research to be explicit about what can be measured with some precision (faith schemata) and what can be inferred upon and estimated (faith styles) (Streib & Hood, 2007). Therefore, the Religious Schema Scale (RSS) is designed to measure schemata and contribute to estimating faith styles. According to Streib and Hood, (2007) assessments of faith styles using other empirical avenues, such as qualitative measures, can provide external validity to the RSS, a quantitative measurement.

This study focuses on Fowler's (1981) stages of faith and Streib's (2004) faith styles perspective as measures of faith. Fowler's (1981) model of stages of faith features structurally distinct patterns of faith orientation. While his framework calls on faith stages, Streib's (2004) faith styles perspective raises questions about staged development and the contents of faith as described in Fowler's theory.

Overview of Methodology

The research design of this project is a mixed-method study using quantitative and qualitative approaches during different phases of the research process. The research is a descriptive and exploratory study that (1) investigates levels of faith development at Oak View Methodist Church and (2) also determines whether or not there is a relationship between faith styles and faith development as measured by the Religious Schema Scale (RSS) and the Faith Development Interview (FDI). (See Appendix) It seeks to discover themes in the participants' faith meanings, then to describe those aspects of faith development. The qualitative methodology includes the use of the FDI in-

depth interviews of a sample from the church membership. Following Fowler's interview guide, in-depth interviews were conducted, then transcribed, coded and analyzed using the faith development theory criteria. Based on years of faith development interviewing, the *Manual for Faith Development Research* (Fowler, Streib, & Keller, 2004) includes full instructions, interview questions, probes, and possible answers.

The sample came from adults ages eighteen or older at Oak View who attended one of three Sunday morning worship services on a specific Sunday. Each adult attendee to the worship services was given a survey and asked to complete it at the conclusion of the service. The FDI participants were randomly selected from survey respondents who agreed to be interviewed by providing their phone number on the survey. This sample included both CE participants and non-CE participants. CE participants were characterized as those who have actively participated for at least one year in a Sunday or weekday Bible study group as described in the church's Christian Life brochure.

The researcher followed procedures to gain IRB approval for this research. She gained formal permission from the ministerial staff and the Church Council to conduct research at Oak View Methodist Church. She met with the Church Council at a regularly scheduled meeting to share the survey and interview procedures with them. The researcher worked with the church staff to secure a date for administering the RSS and a location for collecting them from respondents.

The quantitative methodology included the Religious Schema Scale (RSS), a quantitative likert scale measure for faith development. This questionnaire was given to adult attendees to the three Sunday morning worship services. The 15-question RSS survey is designed to elicit an identification of an aspect-specific style of faith through a

quantitative assessment. From a sub-sample of the respondents, twenty-one adults also participated in the Faith Development Interview. This was important for external validation of the RSS. Using both qualitative FDI ratings and quantitative RSS scores provides a unique data structure with one sample.

The open-ended interview questions consist of a series of twenty-five questions in four categories: life tapestry/life review; relationships; present values and commitments; and religion. All questions were asked in the given order and the interviewer used probing strategies with each question. Interviewees were allowed to answer the questions in their own time frame. The typical interview took approximately one to two hours. After the interviews were transcribed, a content analysis was completed in order to understand the person's faith system. Two persons working independently of one another coded interviews and the results of each compared for inter-rater reliability. SR Nvivo 7 (2006), designed for qualitative analysis was used to support aspect-stage mapping based on coding of interview text. The coding information was then exported to table-based software for further calculations. The structural analysis revealed the stage assignment.

Population and Sample

With a 3,500-member population, Oak View Methodist is a southern church with a predominantly white and affluent congregation. The average age of all heads of households is 49; however, the average age of all individuals in the database is 35. The total percent of families with children in the home is 42%. The sample for the Religious Schema Scale came from adult attendees at three Sunday morning worship services on a given Sunday. Surveys were distributed to all adults on the given morning. The pastor requested that all adults fill them out and return them to a designated place in the church

at the end of the worship service. As a part of the survey, participants indicated whether

or not they would agree to be interviewed for this research. The random sample for the

Faith Development Interviews, the qualitative portion of the study, came from

participants who agree on the FDI to be interviewed. The interviewees included both CE

participants and non-CE participants. CE participants were characterized as those who

have actively participated for at least one year in a Sunday or weekday Bible study group

as described in the church's Christian Life brochure.

<div align="center">Rationale for the Study</div>

The rationale for this study centers on two areas. One is based on the needs of the

church. Another rationale for the study is based on the need to extend the current

literature. The church is concerned for the spiritual growth and development of the

congregation at Oak View Methodist Church. Attendance in educational programs is

weak compared to the attendance at Sunday services. This fact points to the need for the

church to better assist members in their spiritual growth by determining their stage of

faith development and then developing programs to support them. This research is

intended to provide the church needed data for them to increase participation in education

programs by developing improved programs.

The current literature holds that faith development theory (FDT) is helpful in

matching appropriate educational methods with congregants' faith development stages.

The theory is also helpful in shaping educational aims that are involved in teaching and

exploring faith traditions (Fowler, 2004). Religious educators find FDT useful in

preparing leaders to teach to the different stages of development and to match their

methods to the groups' faith stage (Fowler, 2004). The rationale for this study also centers on the need for empirical projects in faith development theory (Streib, 2004).

<div align="center">Significance of the Study</div>

This research could extend the empirical study of faith development theory through data derived from a Christian education setting. It could also serve as an advancement of Streib's (2004) faith styles perspective as it seeks to show a correlation between the RSS (Streib & Hood, 2007) and the FDI (Fowler, 1981). The current literature holds that faith development theory is helpful in matching appropriate educational methods with congregants' faith development stages. The theory is also helpful in shaping educational aims that are involved in teaching and exploring faith traditions (Fowler, 2004). Religious educators find FDT useful in preparing leaders to teach to the different stages of development and to match their methods to the groups' faith stage (Fowler, 2004). University of Bielefeld Professor Heinz Streib with the Research Center for Biographical Studies in Contemporary Religion encourages projects that focus on religious education with particular attention given to client assessment and intervention effects (Streib, 2004). "Religious education appears to be the key field for which Fowler's theory is regarded to provide new insights" (Streib, 2004, p. 431).

The author of FDT, James Fowler (2004), notes the importance of this theory and the current and future challenges of religious education. The faith development literature has become extensive with over 30 research projects and over 80 dissertations (Streib, 2004). In addition to Fowler's initial 359 interviews, over 1,000 more have been added. More than half of the research projects have been empirical and the need is for more, particularly in the fields of religious education and pastoral care with attention to both

client assessment and intervention effects (Streib, 2004). This research attempts to support that need. With the use of the Religious Schema Scale, this research also attempts to extend the faith styles perspective research. This study is unique in that it uses both the FDI (Fowler, 1981) and the RSS (Streib & Hood, 2007) in a Christian education setting. The researcher sought to determine the predictive value of the RSS when used in conjunction with the FDI.

In addition to extending faith development research, this study could also affect religious education at Oak View Methodist Church by providing new insights into the design of Small Group Bible Studies and Sunday School classes. The membership and worship attendance at the church is strong; the participation in education programs is proportionately very weak. In addition, this study could lead to the creation of a vision for sustaining church growth, inform the ministerial staff concerning faith-based direction, and guide the development in educational programs.

<center>Definition of Terms</center>

An understanding of the following terms is essential in gaining insight in a study of faith development theory and faith styles perspective**.**

Active attendees - Those who have actively participated for at least one year in a Sunday or weekday Bible study group at Oak View Methodist Church as described in the church's Christian Life brochure.

Aspect – Characteristic patterns of mental operations a person employs in thinking about the object world. Based on Piaget's analysis of the development of logical thinking, Fowler describes seven aspects of faith development: form of logic, social perspective

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taking; form of moral judgment; bounds of social awareness; locus of authority; form of world coherence; and symbolic function (Fowler, Streib, & Keller, 2004).

Belief – "The holding of certain ideas" (Fowler, 1995, p. 11).

Faith – "Faith, at once deeper and more personal than religion, is the person's or group's way of responding to transcendent value and power as perceived and grasped through the forms of the cumulative tradition" (Fowler, 1981, p. 9).

According to Fowler (1981), faith is an active mode of knowing and being in which we grasp our relatedness to others and to our shared causes as all related to and grounded in a relatedness to power(s) and value(s) which unify and give character to an ultimate environment (p. 19).

Religion – Cumulative traditions that may be constituted by texts of scripture or law, including narratives, myths, prophecies, accounts of revelations…"it may include visual and other kinds of symbols, oral traditions, music, dance, ethical teachings, theologies, creeds, rites, liturgies, architecture and a host of other elements" (Fowler, 1981, p. 9).

Schema – "Coherent cognitive pattern, which structures a person's interpretation of specific experiences in a specific situation" (Streib & Hood, 2007, p. 4).

Schemata – "Synchronous structural patterns of (epistemological) interpretation and (praxeological) action impulse, which are structurally coherent and focused on a specific domain of experience or field of action" (Streib & Hood, 2007, p.4).

Stage – "An integrated system of operations (structures) of thought and valuing which makes for an equilibrated constitutive-knowing of a person's relevant environment" (Fowler, 1986, p. 31).

Structure – Patterns of mental operation that operate on content (Fowler, et. al., 2004).

Structures – Cognitive and affective operation patterns through which content is

"understood, appropriated, manipulated, expressed and transformed" (Fowler, et.al.,

2004).

Ultimate Environment – In Jewish and Christian terms, Fowler defines this as the

"Kingdom of God" (Fowler, 1986).

Delimitations of the Study

This study is restricted to a descriptive and exploratory correlational study of the

experiences of adults who are members or active attendees of Oak View Methodist

Church. Participants must be at least eighteen years old.

Limitations of the Study

For the investigator with a "model" such as the FDI, there could be a presumed

prejudice for confirming that model to the exclusion of reporting any evidence that does

not support the model. However, use of a prior developed theory is a benefit to inquiry.

In order to minimize this limitation of confirmation bias, the researcher adhered to the set

of procedures and outlines found in the *Manual for Faith Development Research*

(Fowler, Streib, & Keller, 2004) and to the guidelines of the Religious Schema Scale.

Because one major method of data collection was the interview, it was an

extremely time-consuming process, so number of participants was limited. Therefore,

there is a lack of generalizability with this study. The stories shared are individual stories,

and the themes that emerged from this study cannot be universally applied to all. As this

study takes place at one church, there are geographical limitations. Lack of skill as an

interviewer could influence data quality. The fact that the researcher is also a staff

member of the church could affect the answers of the interviewees.

Assumptions

1. This study will be conducted in an ethical manner according to the principles and guidelines specified for research.

2. The terms defined for the purposes of this research are consistent throughout the study.

3. Participants interviewed and surveyed will respond honestly to the interviews and survey questions.

Summary and Dissertation Outline

Chapter 1 provides a brief introduction into the background of the problem regarding the need to study faith development of congregants at Oak View Methodist Church. Chapter 2 consists of a review of the literature related to faith development theory and faith styles perspective including criticism. In Chapter 3 the researcher discusses in depth the methodology that will be followed in the research study. Chapter 4 serves as a quantitative analysis of the results of the Religious Schema Scale. Chapter 5 is a qualitative analysis of the results of the Faith Development Interview. In Chapter 6 the researcher provides a summary of the main points of the dissertation.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter presents a review of the literature concerning faith development theory, including its roots in staged-development theories and its theological foundations. It will provide a description of Fowler's (1981) six stages of faith development. This review also encompasses criticism of Fowler's theory and the extension of his theory by Streib and Hood (2007).

Faith Development Theory Background

The spiritual development and growth in faith are key issues for religious communities. Religious educators find it challenging to identify the faith development of church members and to design effective programs. Some Christian educators are looking to developmental psychology as a theoretical basis for the study of faith development (Fowler, 2004; Parker, 2006; Wilhoit and Dettoni, 1995). While developmentalism is not new, in the last twenty years Christian educators have turned to the theory as a basis for curricular design and educational practices. This review will trace faith development theory from the influence of Piaget (1967) and Kohlberg (1981), through Fowler (1981). It will also review criticism of Fowler's theory and the extension of this work by Heinz Streib (2001), who presents a faith styles perspective with a quantitative measure for faith development.

For over thirty years Fowler's structural-development model of faith has been the dominant paradigm for studies in faith development (Downs, 1995; Dykstra, 1986; Jones, 2004). As the originator of Faith Development Theory, Fowler is considered the seminal

researcher in the psychology of religion (Downs, 1995). Having taught at Harvard University and Boston College, Fowler recently retired from Emory University, where he was the head of the Center for Ethics in Public Policy and the Professions. Introduced to the moral development research of Kohlberg while at Harvard, Fowler began to study the psychological aspects of how people make meaning (Downs, 1995). Over the next ten years, Fowler developed a theory of faith development that was influenced by Harvard scholars (Kohlberg, 1969; Erikson, 1963; and Smith, 1979). He was also influenced by the theologies of Tillich (1957) and Niebuhr (1957). In addition, Piaget's (1967) stages of cognitive development from birth to adult played a prominent role in Fowler's theory. Fowler's (1981) research culminated in a theory of six stages of developmentally related styles of faith. Fowler (1995) defines theory as "an elaborate, dynamic model of very complex patterns in our lives" (p. xiii). He defines faith development as a sequence of stages whereby persons shape their relationships to values.

Fowler found a rich interplay of the perspectives of Piaget (1967), Kohlberg (1969), and Erikson (1963) as he considered the major developmental eras of the life cycle. See Appendix C for a chart detailing the interplay of perspectives. In developing his theory, Fowler (1981), following the patterns of the aforementioned theorists, used traditional divisions of developmental eras: infancy, early childhood, childhood, adolescence, young adulthood, adulthood, and maturity. Fowler was influenced by the cognitive development theory of Piaget, the moral development theory of Kohlberg, and the psychosocial theory of Erikson.

Piaget demonstrated a succession of four different "stages' characterized by developmentally related "structures of the whole" (Fowler, 1981, p. 44). Piaget's work

primarily focused on children and that they reason differently at various periods in their lives. He believed that everyone passes through invariant sequences. The five distinct sequences cannot be skipped or reordered. The stages are sensorimotor – birth to two years; preoperational – two years to seven years; concrete operational – seven years to eleven years; and formal operational – eleven years and up (Piaget, 1967). Piaget devised a method of interviewing children to discover how they thought about the physical world.

Based on his personal experience and his interest in Piaget's work (1967), Kohlberg (1969) offered a structural theory of moral development. Following Piaget's method of interviewing children, he devised a method for discovering how people respond to moral dilemmas. Fowler (1981) was interested in Kohlberg's views of how persons structure their judgments about the social world. Kohlberg's stages are pre-conventional – up to age nine; conventional – ages nine through adolescence; and post-conventional – adulthood. Like Piaget's stages, Fowler (1981) states that Kohlberg's stages are

> Hierarchical; that is, each builds on and integrates the operations of the previous stages. They are sequential, one coming after the other in logically necessary fashion; and the sequence is invariant. You can't skip over a stage. Based on cross-cultural research we believe the sequence to be universal. (p. 50)

While Piaget (1967) and Kohlberg (1969) focused their stage analyses on structural development, Erikson (1963) attended more broadly to the development of the personality as a whole as it interacts with person, institutions, and culture. Erikson's (1963) eight stages of the life cycle correlate with biological maturation and chronological ages. These stages are trust versus mistrust – infant; autonomy versus

shame and doubt – toddler; initiative versus guilt - preschooler; industry versus inferiority – school-age child; identity versus role confusion – adolescent; intimacy versus isolation – young adult; generativity versus stagnation – middle-age adult; integrity versus despair – older adult. Each of these psychosocial stages is precipitated by a crisis. Fowler acknowledges that Piaget (1967) and Kohlberg (1969) gave him impetus to study the structuring aspects of faith, while Erikson helped focus on the functional aspect of faith, the issues which help people cope during the different structural stages in the life cycle (Fowler, 1981).

With both theological and psychological foundations, the empirical core of Fowler's faith development theory is based on 359 interviews that he and his associates conducted from 1972 to 1981. Following Piaget's (1967) method of interviewing children to determine their cognitive development and Kohlberg's (1969) method of interviewing children to determine their response to moral dilemmas, Fowler (1981) devised his interview process. In the early 1970s Fowler and his associates interviewed children, adolescents, young adults, and adults in an age span from age 4 to the 80s. Using a questionnaire, as well as a set of interpretation and analysis guidelines, he conducted faith development interviews. Then the team began to form the baseline data that eventually resulted in the construction and validation of faith development theory (Fowler, Streib, & Keller, 2004).

Strongly influenced by the work of religionist Smith (1979), Fowler (1981) sees faith as more personal than religion and the way a person or group responds "to transcendent value and power as perceived and grasped through the forms of the cumulative tradition" (p. 9). According to Fowler and Dell (2006) faith is characterized

as an integral, centering process, underlying the formation of the beliefs, values, and meanings that:

1. Give coherence and direction to person's lives;

2. Link them in shared trusts and loyalties with others;

3. Ground their personal stances and communal loyalties in a sense of relatedness to a larger frame of reference; and

4. Enable them to face and deal with the challenges of human life and death, relying on that which has the quality of ultimacy in their lives. (p. 36)

According to Fowler (1981), "faith is our way of discerning and committing ourselves to centers of value and power that exert ordering force in our lives" (p. 24). He writes that faith is a dynamic process that comes out of our experiences as we interact with persons, institutions, and events. Faith forms a person's way of seeing life in relation to his/her ultimate environment (Fowler, 1981). Fowler (Fowler, Streib, & Keller, 2004) includes in his definition domains that he refers to as aspects of faith: logic, perspective-taking, moral judgment, social awareness, authority, world coherence, hermeneutics of symbols. These seven aspects represent windows on specific content domains and represent the thought processes produced in the interviewee responses. An analysis of these aspects assists the evaluator in coding the interview and in making a stage assignment.

Fowler (1981) has suggested six faith stages through which humans progress. Corresponding to Piaget's (1967) theory, Fowler's first three stages center around a child's cognitive abilities. Fowler describes infants as having primal faith, which be referred to as Stage 0. Infants are learning about the world primarily through physical

observation. Objects cease to exist when a baby does not see them. Faith development

begins in this stage through trust found in relationships with parents and other caregivers.

The concepts of love and goodness are taught through building safe, loving

environments. According to Fowler, the first pre-images of God have their origins in this

phase. He refers to *pre-images* because they are "largely formed prior to language, prior

to concepts and coincident with the emergence of consciousness" (Fowler, 1981, p. 121).

The strength of faith in this stage is the establishment of basic trust and development of a

mutual relationship with the ones providing primary love and care (Fowler, 1981).

In Stage 1, Intuitive-Projective Faith, a child age two to six or seven moves from

a "pre-stage" of trust to one that is imaginative and influenced by images. In early

childhood a child is highly imaginative (Fowler, 1981). According to Piaget (1967),

children in the Preoperational stage learn through intuition. Likewise, Fowler (1981)

believes children are influenced by stories, images, and symbols. He refers to this period

as Intuitive/Projective Faith. In Kohlberg's (1969) Preconventional Stage children are

determining what is right and wrong. Aligning with Erikson's (1963) theory,

preschoolers begin to imitate others and to develop a conscience, thus making adults a

powerful influence in the child's life. This stage is filled with fantasy and imitation and

the child is powerfully influenced by examples, moods, actions, and stories of adults. It is

the phase of first self-awareness and the strength of this stage is the "birth of imagination,

the ability to unify and grasp the experience-world in powerful images" (Fowler, 1981, p.

134).

Next, according to Fowler (1981), a child moves to Stage 2, Mythic/Literal, as

he/she begins to think more logically and orderly with the emergence of concrete

operational thinking. Children engage in storytelling, and their faith understanding is literal (Downs, 1995). Children in elementary school are classified under Piaget's (1967) Stages of Cognitive Development as Concrete Operational, and they think logically about objects and events. They interpret information literally and learn facts easily. As children move into Kohlberg's (1969) second phase of the Preconventional stage, they begin to consider their own interests. They do things for others because of what they'll get in return. Also, they are motivated by rewards. Erikson (1963) describes elementary age children as trying to develop a sense of self-worth by refining the formal skills of life and learning to play by the rules. According to Fowler (1981), faith at this stage of childhood is mythic and children find meaning through stories. Faith is also literal as long as it is limited to concrete thinking. Children are learning to sort reality from make-believe. In this stage a child has an almost exclusive reliance on narrative as the way to organize meaning, and the child sees the world based on reciprocal fairness and justice. The strength in this stage is the "rise of narrative and the emergence of story, drama, and myth as ways of finding and giving coherence to experience" (Fowler, 1981, p. 149). The transition to formal operational thought initiates a transition to Stage 3.

An adolescent's faith emerges in relational terms in Fowler's (1981) Stage 3, Synthetic/Conventional Faith. Beliefs are influenced by significant others. The "identity crisis" of adolescence, as Erikson called it, emerges from the discrepancies between images of self and values of others. In Piaget's formal operational stage, the individual is able to think abstractly incorporating the principles of formal logic. Kohlberg refers to this stage as the conventional phase, when adolescents believe that people should behave in "good" ways and should live up to family and community expectations. In the stage of

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synthetic-conventional faith, Fowler notes that a person's experience of the world now extends beyond the family. A person has a clustering of values and beliefs, and authority is found within traditional authority roles or in the consensus of a valued group. A considerable number of adults Fowler's team interviewed were best described in this stage (Fowler, 1995). The emergent capacity of this stage is the forming of a personal myth in identity and faith. Readiness for transition to the next stage is often marked by encounters with others that lead to critical reflection of one's beliefs and values (Fowler, 1981).

Typically in young adulthood, a person develops Stage 4 faith, Individuative/Reflective Faith, characterized by an interruption of the person's reliance of external authority figures (Fowler, 1995). As he/she forms a new identity, he/she makes independent choices about personal and group affiliations (Fowler, 1995). He/she forms a new identity. The young adult in Kohlberg's post-conventional phase wants to keep society functioning and begins to consider the rights and values that a society ought to uphold. Erikson (1963) recognizes this period as a time of intimacy versus isolation and notes the adult learns to make personal commitment to others.

During Fowler's (1981) Stage 4 a person begins to take seriously the responsibility for his or her own commitments, lifestyle, beliefs, and attitudes. The person is no longer defined by a group. Self-identity and a world outlook are differentiated from those of others. Symbols can now be translated into conceptual meanings. Self-fulfillment or self-actualization versus service to others is often a primary concern. Disillusionment with one's life compromises and the recognition that life is more complex than Stage 4's logic causes one to move to the next level of faith (Fowler, 1981)

Two significant indicators mark individuative-reflective faith. First, one must be able to reflect critically on the values, beliefs, and commitments subscribed to in the previous stage. Second, one must struggle with developing a self-identity that is capable of making independent judgments in relation to individuals and institutions that had been influential until this time (Fowler & Dell, 2006). Familiar and traditional beliefs and practices might not be discarded, but they are held with more self-awareness and intentional choice (Fowler, 1981; Fowler & Dell, 2006).

Known as Conjunctive Faith, Stage 5 generally develops in midlife or beyond. The person is aware of self-limitations, recognizes that people have different insights, and has a greater tolerance of others who have different beliefs. The adult in the conjunctive stage is a reflective thinker who recognizes that all kinds of truths can be approached from various perspectives (Fowler & Dell, 2006). Faith balances and maintains the tensions between multiple perspectives. This stage compares with Erikson's (1963) seventh stage, generativity versus stagnation, when success leads to a person feeling a sense of usefulness and accomplishment, while failure results in a shallow involvement in the world. Piaget (1967) refers to adulthood and maturity as the post-formal operational stage. Individuals in Fowler's conjunctive stage express an interest in truths to other cultures and religions. They have a desire to find new ways to relate to God, others, and self (Fowler, 1981; Fowler & Dell, 2006). In this stage one appreciates symbols, myths, and rituals of both his/her own and other belief systems. This stage reflects paradoxes with the self that is ready for closeness to what is different yet feeling threatened by those differences. The result is often passivity or inaction, which prevents one from proceeding to the next stage.

Stage 6, Universalizing Faith, represents an ideal and is extremely rare. Often with martyr-like characteristics, this person is typically devoted to universal compassion. This stage requires a decentralization of self and a devotion to universalizing compassion. Among the few that Fowler (1981) considers representative of this group are Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Mother Teresa. In Erikson's (1963) final stage, wisdom, the mature adult develops the peak of adjustment and is in a period of integrity. When one reaches Fowler's universalizing stage, one is concerned about creation and being as a whole, "regardless of nationality, social class, gender, age, race, political ideology, and religious tradition" (Fowler & Dell, 2006, p.41). The self is drawn out of self-limitations and becomes active in attempts to change adverse social conditions. With strength of passion, this person believes that all creation should recognize God's goodness and all humanity should live in peace. The person of universalizing faith is passionate in his/her "identification with persons and circumstances where the futurity of being is being crushed, blocked or exploited" (Fowler, 1981, p. 203). These persons are ready for fellowship with persons at any other stage and from any other faith tradition. Few claim this level and live this faith-related action (Fowler, 1981; Fowler & Dell, 2006).

Fowler's conception of the sequence of faith stages and their interrelations is a rising spiral movement with each successive stage linked to and adding to the previous ones. Spiral movements overlap with each stage addressing issues with a new level of complexity. Each stage represents a "widening of vision and valuing, correlated with a parallel increase in the certainty and depth of selfhood, making for qualitative increases in intimacy with self-others-world" (Fowler, 1981, p.274). Structural changes in each stage require one to rework the contents of one's previous faith stage and may result in

radical changes in the contents of faith. Readiness for structural stage change, as seen in the stages of Piaget (1967), Kohlberg (1969), Erikson (1963), and Fowler (1981), is in part a function of biological, psychosocial, cognitive, and moral development. Faith stage transitions are not automatic or inevitable and may occur more slowly in one person than another.

The qualitative portion of this research was administered according to Fowler's framework and interview guide. However, data analysis considered not only stage-based faith development, but also recent advancements in the research. According to Fowler and Dell (2006), Streib "is presently conducting the most significant research in the faith development tradition" (Fowler & Dell, p. 44). With years of research collaboration with Fowler, Streib considers Fowler's work to be the most comprehensive model of religious development and one that is open for innovative perspectives (Streib, 2003).

After twenty years of evaluating faith development research, Streib has developed a new perspective on faith development and has put it in concrete forms of theory and research (Streib, 2003). His suggestion of a faith style perspective questions whether the intellectual development of adults follows a structural-stage like logic or a fundamentalist form. Concerned with the Piaget (1967) form of cognitive-structuralist developmental perspective, Streib set out to revise the stage-based model and terms his model the "religious-styles perspective" (Streib, 2003). Unlike the spiral stages of Fowler's theory, Streib's approach takes into account the transformations that take place over a lifetime and considers that a person moves back and forth among the levels of faith development. By referring to "styles of faith" rather than "stages of faith," Streib and Hood (2007)

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imply that faith structures are not abandoned when new developments emerge but instead they recede into the background and are available for further use.

For the purpose of conceptual and empirical precision, Streib and Hood (2007) introduce the concept of "schema." Schema is a cognitive pattern that gives structure to the way a person interprets specific experiences. Challenging experiences and their positive counterparts, securing experiences, trigger interpretations that give meaning to the experiences and motivate one to act. Schemata are the patterns of interpretation and action impulses that are focused on a specific domain of experience or field of action. While schemata are structural patterns of interpretations and actions, faith styles are the repetitive application of schemata used to help a person find meaning and act in a variety of life-world domains. It is the repetitive application of a variety of faith schemata that forms a faith style (Streib & Hood, 2007).

Thus, Streib (2005) holds that the research method must account for the potential "cross-domain differences and for diversity within one stage or style of faith" (2005, p. 115). Streib and Hood (2007) conclude that the distinction between schemata and styles must be "accounted for in the research design to the effect that we can be explicit about what we are able to measure with some precision (schemata) and what we can only infer upon and estimate (styles)" (pp. 4 & 5). The Religious Schema Scale quantitatively assesses faith development and consists of sets of stage-specific items designed to speak to a certain aspect of faith.

This research gives consideration to both stage-based theory and faith-styles theory as each relates to appropriate intervention methods for Oak View Methodist Church.

Piaget's Influence

First, with the emergence of the social sciences in the last century, more religious leaders have paid attention to the study of human characteristics (Ward, 1995). For over fifty years key figures in the field of psychology have studied the role of faith in a person's life (Ward, 1995). The research of Jung (1958), Piaget (1967), and Kohlberg (1963) has impacted the study of faith development (Lownsdale, 1997). Piaget is best known for studying the stages of cognitive development from birth to adulthood. His theory suggests that people grow cognitively as they interact with knowledge and with people and the world around them. Through his naturalistic observations of children, he described four stages or patterns of development. His study has had implications for the religious community. Piaget believed that children are actively involved in making sense out of their moral behavior and do not simply adopt moral traits from adults. His theory suggests that people grow as they interact with knowledge and with people and the world around them. This understanding supports the idea that religious education should actively foster development, encourage interaction, and provide tools to help people solve life's dilemmas (Plueddemann, 1995). Piaget's work in moral reasoning fostered much of the thinking of Lawrence Kohlberg (Fowler, 1995; Piper, 2002; Plueddemann, 1995; Spohn, 2000).

Kohlberg's Influence

Second, in the 1960s religious educators took notice of the research of Kohlberg and his study of moral development (Ward, 1995). For over thirty years Kohlberg conducted a longitudinal study of ninety-eight American boys, ages ten to sixteen (Kohlberg, 1981). Every three years he tracked the development of their moral reasoning.

This research formed the basis of his theory of moral development. Following Piaget's method of interviewing children to understand their cognitive development, Kohlberg interviewed children to discover how they respond to moral dilemmas. Designing a structural theory, Kohlberg's model was based on the process rather than the content of moral decision-making. Kohlberg acknowledged that many factors influenced moral decisions, but he saw moral reasoning as one of the most powerful factors in morality (Stonehouse, 1995). Kohlberg believed that the functions of religion and morality were related but they could be differentiated (Kohlberg & Powers, 1981).

As people develop morally, the quality of their reason changes in a common path, yet the speed of this development varies from person to person. This pattern is recognized in three levels of moral reasoning, which Kohlberg named the Preconventional, Conventional, and Postconventional or Principled levels. His levels contain two distinct stages, and his research incorporated twenty-five basic moral concepts or aspects that were used to form dilemmas (Kohlberg, 1981). He referred to these types as stages because they represented an invariant developmental sequence, and they "come one at a time and always in the same order" (Kohlberg, 1981, p. 20). Kohlberg believed that the functions of religion and morality were related, but they could be differentiated (Kohlberg & Powers, 1981).

These moral issues have implications in religious education. Kohlberg's study found no major differences in the development of moral thinking among various religious groups including Catholics, Protestants, Jews, Buddhists, Moslems, and atheists. "Children's moral values in the religious area seem to go through the same stages as their general moral values" (Kohlberg, 1981, p. 123). Christian educators can learn from

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Kohlberg that effective teaching means helping children develop the ability to make good moral decisions and to accept moral responsibility (Stonehouse, 1995). Kohlberg's final stage, the Universal Ethical Principle Orientation (Kohlberg, 1981), set the goal for moral development: "acting according to universal moral principles for the good of humanity" (Spohn, 2000, p. 122). Critics of Kohlberg's theory claim his research ignored the areas of moral sensitivity, motivation, and character, that his instrument was narrow and rigid, and that his movement was based on flawed empirical and philosophical assumptions (Spohn, 2000). However, Kohlberg's theory found strong acceptance among Catholic schools across the country. As a result, educators who supported his structural moral development theory were prepared to accept the emerging research on faith development (Fowler, 2004).

Fowler's Theory

Fowler's structural-development model of faith has been the dominant paradigm for studies in faith development (Downs, 1995; Jones, 2004). While at Harvard, Fowler became familiar with the moral development research of Kohlberg, who later became his colleague and friend (Fowler, 1981). In addition, Piaget's (1967) structural framework impacted Fowler's study of faith development. Fowler claims one of the most important influences of Piaget (1967) and Kohlberg (1969) was their epistemological focus. Studying *how* we know helps in understanding faith as a way of knowing and interpreting (Fowler, 1981). Their structural approach also suggested a way to focus on the universal aspects of faith despite differences in the content of faith (Fowler, 1981). Unlike the Piaget and Kohlberg studies, Fowler emphasized the structuring of "affective, valuational, and imaginal modes of knowing" (Fowler, 1981, p. 99). Another similarity to

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the structural-developmental theories involves the use of structural stages and the descriptions of moral and cognitive reasoning. However, faith development is more concerned with the construction of *meaning* than with the construction of *knowledge* (Fowler, Streib, & Keller, 2004). Another contribution of structural development is the interactional approach that views development as active, dynamic interchanges. A final influence centers on normative directions, which implies that more developed structural stages are more adequate than stages that are less developed (Fowler, 1981).

The structural-development perspective also has limitations in faith development, which goes beyond a *cognitive* perspective. Faith development includes the role of imagination, emotion, and a moral sense. As Fowler (2004) notes, "In addition to the stages of knowing and of our growth in logic (Piaget), and in addition to growth in the stages of moral reasoning (Kohlberg), faith development theory has made explicit the role of social perspective-taking" (p. 412). Noting that neither Piaget nor Kohlberg offered a theory of the moral self, Fowler (1981) insists that a faith development theory must be a theory of personal knowing and acting. The relational aspects of structuralism are in the forefront of Fowler's (2004) theory.

Drawing from theologians Tillich (1957) and Niebuhr (1957), Fowler developed a broad view of faith. A universal human concern, Fowler (1981) believes both the religious and the irreligious are engaged with faith issues. Faith is a relational matter and the "patterns of faith that make selfhood possible and sustain our identities are covenantal (triadic) in form" (p. 33). For Fowler, all human association exhibits the covenantal pattern among the self, others, and a shared center of value and power (1981). Fowler clearly distinguishes the meaning of faith from the meanings of belief and religion.

Influenced by the work of religionist Wilfred Cantwell Smith, Fowler (1981) notes

Smith's distinction between faith and belief,

> Faith is deeper, richer, more personal. It is engendered by a religious tradition…it
>
> is a quality of the person not of the system. It is an orientation of the personality,
>
> to oneself, to one's neighbor, to the universe, a total response…to see, to feel, to
>
> act in terms of, a transcendent dimension. (p. 11)

Fowler (1981) describes faith as a verb that is active and states it is always relational.

Belief attempts to express what faith sees in an ultimate environment. Fowler believes

religion is constituted as faith shapes expression, celebration, and life in relation to the

ultimate environment. These definitions provide the backdrop for the faith development

theory.

Fowler's *Stages of Faith* (1981) presents the six stages of faith that comprise the

faith development theory. From intuitive faith through universal faith, Fowler presents a

developmental pattern found in all forms of faith. In his theory, stage-like positions form

a developmentally related sequence. The order of appearance is sequential and invariant.

Each stage builds on the previous one. In structured, semi clinical interviews of one to

three hours, participants tell about aspects of their lives and express their views and

experiences on existential life-issues (Fowler, 1986). Interviews are scored and analyzed

for structural features in order to understand participants' faith. The faith stage theory is

presented in terms of seven operational aspects that are integrated at each of the six

stages (Fowler, 1986). Now in its 40th printing, *Stages of Faith* serves as the primary

resource for faith development research. Widely accepted as the seminal researcher in

faith development theory, Fowler has seen both commentators and critics of his work over the last twenty years.

<div align="center">Criticism of Fowler's Faith Development Theory</div>

Criticism of Fowler's theory falls into two categories (Downs, 1995). One concern is that one's personal faith cannot be reduced to stages that are predictable. For some, it is inappropriate to reduce something as personal as faith to a series of patterns. Other criticism centers on Fowler's structural analysis and Fowler's pattern of stage development (Dykstra, 1986; Johnson, 1989; Nelson & Aleshire, 1986; Streib, 2001, 2005).

In 1986 former Princeton Professor Dykstra and former Harvard Professor Parks convened a group of thirteen professors in New York to give papers of constructive criticism on faith development theory and research (Fowler, 2004). For Dykstra (1986), the understanding of what faith means is at the center of the theory of faith development and he questions Fowler's description of a universal faith. Dykstra proposes an alternative to Fowler's approach by suggesting that faith is a mode of life that is grounded in responsiveness to God's activity in the world. Commenting on the aim of religious education in relation to faith development theory, Dykstra (1986) notes that it serves as a conversation partner with a religious community. It does not determine the faith norm for a community, but it shows the ways in which the contents of faith are formed. While Parks (1986) acknowledges Fowler's contribution to contemporary religious thought, she takes exception to his emphasis on structures and stages instead of the processes of faith, development, and imagination. She supports a theory that is

inclusive of an understanding of imagination and spirit and that addresses the relationship between structure and content.

Nelson and Aleshire (1986) examine Fowler's research techniques, articulate his strengths, and suggest ways to improve. They recognize the challenge of getting good data in qualitative research and note that Fowler's research methods were difficult with the complex topic of faith, the incorporation of developmental theories, and the coded interviews. After a detailed examination of Fowler's empirical methods, they conclude "the concerns themselves do not invalidate a single conclusion" (p. 199). Writing from a liberal perspective, Piper (2005) finds a strength in Fowler's inclusiveness; however, he challenges the methodological level and substance of the model. He raises serious questions about the ethnic composition of the sample, noting that Jewish respondents are over-represented and African American respondents are under-represented in the Fowler's sample.

Critics of the structural-development theories do not believe that faith is staged and "undergoes continuous development throughout the life cycle, following an invariant and hierarchical progression" (Johnson, 1989, p. 108). Professor and Christian Educator Johnson states that Christian spiritual formation is a gradual transformation that is dynamic and that at any time one can relapse into a previous state. "It is misleading, consequently, to think of spiritual formation in term of invariant, hierarchical, or lawful progression" (p. 111). Likewise, Streib (2004) calls into question the unilinear aspects of FDT and examines contemporary developmental psychology as it is related to religious orientation. Streib proposes a model of religious styles that will better account for the complexity of religious development. The faith styles perspective focuses on a complex

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concept of religious orientations and a broader variety of faith trajectories (Streib, 2004). The Religious Schema Scale (Streib, 2001; 2005) offers Christian educators a quantitative measure of faith development.

Writers in the field of Christian education also provide criticism of faith development theory. Westerhoff (2000) was heavily influenced by Fowler's stage theory. As a result, he describes four distinctive styles of faith. As a person's faith develops, that individual moves into a new style. One does not outgrow a style of faith but expands it by adding new elements. Westerhoff advocates the need for understanding the characteristics of faith development in order to provide for Christian education. He concludes that no single educational program is valid for any one group, and religious communities need "to provide experiences that help person move from one style of faith to another" (p. 97). Johnson (1989) believes that religious education has "basked too much in the euphoria of developmental psychology" (p. 105). She contends that Fowler deals with faith as a function of the ego and does not deal adequately with the total self as it acquires its identity in Christianity. Moreover, she notes that Fowler makes no mention of two Christian values, trust and virtue, in his seven formal aspects of faith. Johnson sees Christian spiritual formation as "our gradual transformation from a biological and socially mediated self into the more remarkable phenomenon of self as spirit" (p. 111).

From an evangelical perspective, Jones (2004) recognizes the two broad categories of Fowler's critiques: 1) the issue of content and structure, and 2) the issues of the universal developmental structure and a Christian understanding of faith as a divine gift. He contends, "Fowlerian stage-development and Christian faith-development are fundamentally dissimilar phenomena" (p. 346). He acknowledges that Fowler's theory

provides the psychical context for Christian faith. While Fowlerian stage-development

relates to a universal human religious experience through which an individual emerges

with an awareness of God, Christian faith-development focuses on the transformative

effect of Christ. Jones asserts that evangelical Christian educators should recognize the

differences between each phenomenon and try to better articulate the relationship

between them.

Streib (2005) argues for a revision of faith development research to include a

more quantitative approach and gives attention to structure, content, and narrative. Future

research should focus on an integrative approach combining both narrative analysis and

structural dimension. Streib (2001) extends Fowler's research by proposing a

modification of the structural development of faith development theory. Streib's model, a

typology of styles, is aimed at addressing more fully the "life-history- and life-world-

relatedness of religion" (p.143). Streib (2001) disagrees with Fowler's statement that the

faith stages are "invariant, sequential, and hierarchical" (Fowler, 1995, p.57). Referred to

as the milestone model, this approach draws the perspective style as curves that rise and

descend at various points in a person's life. Over a lifetime, a person may move back and

forth among the various stages.

In response to Streib, Fowler (2005) refers to the formalist stage theories of Piaget

(1967) and Kohlberg (1969) to support his belief that stages are "sequential, invariant,

and hierarchical" (p.167). In recognition of a "structuring and deconstructing power in

the cultural environment" (p.169), Fowler acknowledges Streib's logic. Further he

proposes that "we develop a theory of types that can crosscut stages but not replace

them" (169). Fowler suggests FDT as a framework and notes an additional range of

usefulness with further study into the crosscutting theory of types. As a pyschoanalysist, Rizzuto (2001) objects to the attention Streib gives to causative relationships in his modification; however, he agrees, "cognitive development is not the core element in the organization of religious experience" (p. 208). Rizzuto finds no contradiction between the value in Streib's styles and Fowler's belief that development is invariant, sequential, and hierarchical. His support is based on development in general. Rizzuto notes "development in all living creatures is sequential, has minimal variations, and is hierarchical" (p. 203).

Streib's use of "style" versus "stage" is a step in the revision of faith development theory (Streib, 2001) and research (Streib, 2005). "Styles" implies that faith structures are not abandoned when new developments emerge but instead are available for further use. This perspective acknowledges the possibility of the presence of simultaneous different patterns. Faith styles are the repetition of schemata, a pattern of interpretations and action focused on a specific domain of experience or field of action (Streib & Hood, 2007). This repetition is used to help a person find meaning and prepare to act in various life-world domains. Streib and Hood hold that a distinction between schemata and styles must be accounted for in a faith development assessment and note that distinction between what can be measured with precision (schemata) and what can only be inferred and estimated (styles) (Streib & Hood, 2007). They conclude that in order to form a faith style, it takes more than one schema and more than one use of schema. In addition, a combination of schemata may produce more than one faith style, and styles may overlap.

Thus, the Religious Schema Scale (RSS) is offered as a measurement of schemata, a quantitative measure for faith development. The conceptual framework of the

RSS is the faith styles perspective (Streib, 2001; 2005), which is a revision of Fowler's (1981) Faith Development Theory. Streib and Hood (2007) report that since the publication of Fowler's (1981) *Stages of Faith*, there has been notable interest in the empirical approach to faith orientation. Most of the over 50 independent research projects (Streib, 2003; 2005; Streib & Hood, 2007) have used the time consuming and costly faith development interview. Streib and Hood (2007) recognize that the construction of an effective quantitative scale is still an unfinished project. The Religious Schema Scale, in the faith development research tradition, addresses criticisms applied to Fowler's model of the sequences of stages.

Summary

With its roots in cognitive and moral developmental theory, Fowler's faith development theory has been the dominant paradigm for empirical study. This theory has had implications for pastoral and Christian education for over two decades. Hundreds of projects and empirical studies have contributed to the body of research. Faith development theory provides a useful framework for continued study with special emphasis on Christian education. The religious styles perspective serves as an integrative model of faith development that integrates a broader variety of systems of discourse. This life span perspective may serve to advance the theoretical reasoning and empirical research on faith development (Streib, 2007b).

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to explain the methods and procedures that were

used in this study involving the faith development of congregants at Oak View Methodist

Church. This chapter incorporates the research hypothesis, research questions, research

design, instrumentation, procedures, population, sample, validity, reflexivity, role of the

researcher, participants, procedures, data collection, and data analysis. The purpose of

this study is to investigate characteristics of the faith development of members of the

congregation. The research evaluates the relationship between a person's faith level and

his/her participation in Christian education.

Research Hypothesis and Research Questions

The researcher anticipated a positive relationship between a person's faith level as

measured by the FDI and the RSS and his/her participation in Christian education. In

order to carry out the purpose of this study, answers were sought for the following

questions concerning faith development at Oak View Methodist Church:

What is the relationship between faith levels and participation in Christian education

programs? What is the relationship between the RSS and the FDI?

Research Design

The research design of this project is a mixed-method study using quantitative and

qualitative approaches during different phases of the research process. The research is a

descriptive and exploratory correlational study that shows whether or not there is a

correlation between faith level and CE participation. This research project sought to

determine the faith stages of respondents through in-depth interviews and the Religious

Schema Scale. A model of faith development research designed by Fowler (1981) was

used as the qualitative guide for this study. The quantitative guide was the RSS (Streib &

Hood, 2007), a likert scale survey designed to measure for individual differences in faith

orientations.

Institutional Review Board Approval

The researcher followed procedures and gained IRB approval for this research

from the IRB office at the University of Tennessee, as well as the authorities at Oak View

Methodist Church. She gained formal permission from the ministerial staff and the

Church Council to conduct research at Oak View Methodist Church. She met with the

Church Council at a regularly scheduled meeting to share the survey and interview

procedures with them. The researcher worked with the church staff to secure a date for

administering the RSS and a location for collecting them from respondents.

As a part of the IRB approval process, the researcher sought approval from the

pastor and governing bodies of Oak View United Methodist Church. In order to maintain

confidentiality, names of subjects were not released. Interviewees were identified on

transcriptions by a coded number. Only restricted personnel had accesss to the

identifications of participants, and digital recordings were destroyed as soon as the

research process was completed. In any sort of report, the researcher did not include any

information that made it possible to identify specific participants. Research records were

stored securely in the reseracher's church office in the bottom drawer of her locked file

cabinet.

Quantitative Research Design

The quantitative research for this study consisted of a questionnaire and a fifteen-question likert scale survey. All adults in attendance at worship services on a designated Sunday were asked to complete this survey. Ushers distributed them to adults as they entered the sanctuary. The pastor referenced the survey during the service and invited adults to participate. He also explained the procedure. The questionnaire was designed to determine demographics of the respondents. The following categories provided relevant data for analysis: Oak View Methodist membership status; Christian education participation, gender, age, and marital status. The Religious Schema Scale (RSS) incorporates the advancements and revisions of previous quantitative faith development models (Streib & Hood, 2007).

Qualitative Research Design

The research procedure for the qualitative portion of this study employed a structured, semi-clinical interview. Van Manen (1990) refers to these types of interviews as conversational interviews that are designed to "gather lived-experience material" (p. 63.) The interviews were a structured procedure that used a series of twenty-five questions in a given order. However, the interviews were conversational and the interviewer employed probing strategies in the form of follow-up questions. Suggestions for probes and follow-up questions are found in the *Manual for Faith Development* (Fowler, et al., 2004). *Van* Manen (1990) notes that in using the conversational interview, it is important to realize that the "interview process needs to be disciplined by the fundamental question that prompted the need for the interview in the first place" (p. 66).

These interviews are semi-clinical and designed to assess the interviewee's faith level in an objective manner without making a value judgment.

Following the instructions set forth in *The Manual for Faith Development Research* (2004), the interviewer conducted twenty-one in-depth interviews. From the adult participants in the RSS, twenty-one interviewees were randomly selected from those who indicated their willingness to be interviewed. Individual interviews were conducted one-on-one in the privacy of the Director of Education's office. Prior to the interview, participants were given a Life Tapestry Sheet (Appendix D) or list of Faith Development Interview questions (Appendix A) with instructions and a chart. This exercise was designed to add richness to the interview process. Participants also received an Informed Consent that they signed prior to the interview in order to participate in the research. Interviewees told about aspects of their lives based on a series of twenty-five interview questions (see Appendix A). This list of questions was pursued in a uniform manner with specified probes and follow-up questions. Respondents were encouraged to experientially address faith issues by sharing details and feelings about their lived experiences. These interviews were recorded and transcribed, followed by an analysis of the respondents' answers. Next a content analysis was completed in order to ascertain the person's faith system. The structural analysis revealed the stage assignment for each participant.

Data Collection

This mixed methods study includes both quantitative and qualitative measurements. Data were collected in two phases: first, by surveying adult attendees on one Sunday; second, by interviewing twenty-one survey participants from the church

population. In qualitative research the phases of data collection are interwoven and overlap. McMillan & Schumacher's (2006) five phases of data collection were used in this study: "planning, beginning data collection, basic data collection, closing data collection, and completion" (pp. 322-323). In-depth interviews are a long, time consuming process, so data collection and analysis extended over a period of months.

Quantitative Instrument

The quantitative methodology is the Religious Schema Scale (RSS), a likert scale measure for faith development. This questionnaire was given to adults in attendance at Sunday morning worship services on a designated Sunday. The fifteen-question survey is designed to elicit an identification of aspect-specific style of faith through a quantitative assessment. The questions were designed by Streib and Hood (2007) to address stage-specific items found in Fowler's faith development. Each question speaks to a certain domain or aspect of faith and are listed under three sub-scales or schemata called Factors. Factor 1 is ttt (truth of texts and teachings); Factor 2 is ftr (fairness, tolerance, rational choice); Factor 3 is xenos (xenosophia) (Streib & Hood, 2007). The five questions related to Factor 1 refer to the texts, stories, and teachings of the respondent's religion. In this survey the respondent was asked to indicate the role these religious teachings play in his/her experiences and decision-making. Respondents examined the truth of their own religion and religious texts. The five questions in Factor 2 asked the respondent to rate his/her sense of fairness, tolerance, and decision-making in regard to culture, society, and religion. These questions refer to the respondent's relationship to others. The five questions in Factor 3 asked the respondent to rate her/his views on the world of religions. Respondents are asked to examine their views about their own religion against other

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religious views. The answers were in a five-point rating scale: strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree. The survey also included a demographics section, which elicited responses about church membership, Christian education participation, gender, age, and marital status. From a sub-sample of the adult respondents, twenty-one adults agreed to participate in the Faith Development Interview. The FDI process was important for external validation of the RSS. Using both qualitative FDI ratings and quantitative RSS scores provide a unique data structure with one sample.

In this phase of data collection, the researcher was responsible for preparing ample copies of the survey on the appropriate scantron sheets well in advance of their distribution. She briefed ushers who were charged with distributing them at the worship services. She was responsible for arranging for the location to collect surveys at the end of the worship services and briefing church leaders who assisted in collecting them.

After the data collection phase, the researcher tabulated surveys by scanning them in a scantron machine and getting them ready for analysis.

Qualitative Instrument

The qualitative instrument that was used in this study was a controlled in-depth interview. This method provided the participants a way to share their stories on their own terms without prompting or leading questions from the interviewer. The subject of faith is personal and the data must come from individual's life stories. Therefore, for ascertaining one's faith level, the interview method is superior to surveys, tests, questionnaires and other less personal methods for collecting data. As noted by Van Manen (1990), the interview "may be used as a means for exploring and gathering experiential narrative material that may serve as a resource for developing a richer and deeper understanding of

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a human phenomenon" (p. 66). Administering and coding this interview was an exercise in hermeneutics, the theory of interpreting and understanding data through an empirical study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). Language is the data on which the "interviewer bases inferences about the mental and emotional processes of the person being interviewed" (Fowler, 2004, p. 15). As provided in the *Manual for Faith Development Research* (Fowler, et.al, 2004*)*, the interview format has a specific agenda and is not entirely open-ended. The standard format provided a set procedure and criteria for the interviewer as a way of improving reliability and consistency.

The interview questions consisted of a series of twenty-five questions in four categories: life tapestry/life review; relationships; present values and commitments; and religion (Fowler, et al., p. 63). All questions were asked in the given order and the interviewer probed each question as needed. Interviewees were allowed to answer the questions in their own time frame, and the typical interview took approximately one to two hours. The interviewer used a digital recorder while providing the interviewee with interview questions.

Interviewees were offered a Life Tapestry Exercise (Appendix D) or the Faith Development Interview questions (Appendix A) prior to participating in the interview. This form is used to stimulate thinking in preparation for the interview questions. It is intended to add richness to the interview and not bias it by allowing the respondent time to think about questions prior to the interview session. The interviews were conducted following the specific instructions in the manual with directions on administering the interview, probes, and follow-up questions. The responses provided narratives on a wide variety of aspects in the life and faith of the respondent. The evaluation procedure as

described in the *Manual for Faith Development Research (*Fowler, et.al, 2004*)* provides an interpretation of the respondent's structures of faith. Each answer to the faith development questions speaks to one of the seven Aspects of Faith (Fowler, et al, 2004). This interpretation resulted in a stage assignment; however, the initial level of interpretation actually began with the process of conducting the interviews.

Upon completion of the interviews the researcher arranged for professional transcription services to transcribe the interviews. Transcription Guidelines from the *Manual for Stage Development Research* (Fowler, et.al, 2004) directed the transcription process. The following notations were made for each interview: name and identification code of the interviewee, as well as the date of the interview; number of pages with a running header; numbered responses in sequence. The researcher then proofread the transcript. Tentative data analysis began as the researcher began mentally processing the data.

<div align="center">Description of the Population and Sample</div>

The site for this research was Oak View Methodist Church, where the researcher is Director of Education. As a staff member, the researcher has garnered respect and trust of the congregation and has an understanding of the social map of the church. "A social map notes the numbers and kinds of people, the organizational structure, and the activities people engage in" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006, p. 343). The study centered on adults with a focus on two distinct populations within the Oak View Methodist Church: those who participate in Christian education programs at the church and those who do not. The RSS sample included adults who attend worship services on a given Sunday.

Each adult was given a survey as they entered the worship service. During the service the pastor invited all adults to fill out the survey and turn them in at a collection table in a designated place at the end of the service. The last question on the survey asked the respondent to indicate whether or not he/she would agree to participate in an interview. Those who agreed recorded their phone number on the space provided in the survey. Participants for the in-depth interview were randomly selected from those who provided their phone number on the survey.

The sample for the FDI included both CE participants and non-CE participants. CE participants were characterized as those who have actively participated for at least one year in a Sunday or weekday Bible study group as described in the church's Christian Life brochure. Participants were randomly selected from the list of survey respondents who agreed to be interviewed.

Validity

Understanding that "claims of validity rest on data collection and analysis techniques" (McMillan & Schumaker, 2006, p. 324) the researcher incorporated numerous strategies to enhance validity. Interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Low-inference descriptors provided concrete descriptions of the interviews. The researcher used a good quality digital recorder in order to provide accurate and complete records of the interviews. As topics were probed to gain more complete meanings, member checking was done within the interview.

Reflexivity

In order to establish credibility, the researcher incorporated reflexivity strategies, "rigorous self-scrutiny by the researcher throughout the entire process" (McMillan &

Schumacher, 2006, p. 327). The researcher used a peer debriefer, another researcher experienced in this type of inquiry, to discuss the preliminary analysis and next strategies. These conversations helped the researcher to understand her role in the inquiry and helped reduce stress that often accompanies fieldwork. A field log documented the work and provided a chronological record. This research was made available for inspection and review by outside reviewers.

<div align="center">Role of the Researcher</div>

Key for the researcher is the extent of familiarity with the basic principles of faith development theory and faith styles perspective. In addition, it was critical to have a deep understanding of the seven aspects of faith and the six stages of faith development. This understanding was necessary for both conducting the interviews and then coding them. The researcher determined the sample size and completed the sampling process. Having received the participants' release forms, the researcher conducted the interview process. The researcher conducted a few practice interviews and also practiced scoring them prior to beginning the research interviews. This practice helped the researcher avoid lowering the inter-rater reliability (Fowler, et al., 2004). The interviewer followed the standard interview form for FDT and probed questions as needed in order to elicit data. Using transcriptions from the taped interviews, the researcher coded the interviews using Nvivo 7 (2006) and then completed a qualitative analysis of the data.

<div align="center">Data Analysis</div>

<div align="center">*Quantitative Data*</div>

Analysis of the RSS is based on a three-factor structure that consists of fifteen items in three subscales. The three factors are Factor 1 - ttt (truth of texts and teachings),

Factor 2 – ftr (fairness, tolerance, rational choice), and Factor 3 – xenos (xenosophia). One sub-scale or schema was selected in each of the three factors and each sub-scale meets three criteria: domain-specific content orientation as indicated by their factor association, style-specific association as noted by marker items, and acceptable reliability (Streib & Hood, 2007). A Cronbach alpha-coefficient on the RSS determined its reliability.

Qualitative Data

Using the *Manual for Faith Development Research* (Fowler, Streib, & Keller, 2004) guidelines, the researcher coded the faith development interviews. The interpretation of the respondents' stories began the moment they shared them and they immediately began to be interpreted. Formal interpretation followed guidelines in the manual. These guidelines are empirically based on Fowler's Faith Development Project from 1972 to 1980 (Fowler, Streib, & Keller, 2004). A key to coding these interviews was to think of the interviewee's response in structural terms. These structural responses are identified in the ways a subject "operates" on specific content areas, which are referred to as the seven aspects of faith. The researcher coded the responses concerning these aspects by using a coded scoring sheet. The coding criterion lists each of the seven aspects and gives detailed information about each stage of that aspect.

Computerized software was used for the coding of the seven aspects of faith. QSR Nvivo7 (2006) software has been determined to be the most helpful for qualitative analysis of faith development research (Fowler, et.al, 2004). This software was used to support aspect-stage mapping based on coding of the interview text. The researcher evaluated each answer in an interview according to the corresponding key aspect.

Following the scoring, the researcher completed and interpreted the Stage-Aspect Map and then calculated the average score. In order to establish inter-rater reliability, the researcher and another trained scorer coded the interviews. The two scorers followed the same sequence and communicated frequently. The goal was at least an inter-rater reliability rate of 70% with at least 7% of the scores by both raters agreeing within one-half stage. At this point, the researcher drew conclusions based on the results of the analysis. Coding profiles of all interviews were saved and read into SPSS for further calculations.

Summary

In this chapter the author summarized the study, which utilized a mixed method design of qualitative and quantitative research. The data collection strategies included Religious Schema Scale surveys of attendees at Oak View Methodist Church and Faith Development Interviews of respondents who agreed to participate. Qualitative methods of data analysis included recording, transcribing, coding, and analyzing interviews. Quantitative methods of data collection included analysis of surveys. This chapter also addressed the issue of validity and trustworthiness in conducting research.

CHAPTER FOUR

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate characteristics of the faith development of members in the congregation of Oak View Methodist Church. The researcher evaluated the relationship between a person's faith level and his/her participation in Christian education. Christian education participation was defined as participation in Bible Study/Sunday School or Disciple classes. The researcher anticipated a positive relationship between a person's faith level and his/her participation in Christian education. A number of sub-hypotheses were also addressed. In order to carry out the purpose of this study, answers were sought for the following question concerning faith development at Oak View Methodist Church:

Primary Research Question: What is the relationship between participant faith levels and participation in Christian education programs?

The research also sought to determine the relationship between the RSS and gender and the relationship between the RSS and church membership.

Secondary Research Question #1:

What is the relationship between participant faith levels and church membership?

Secondary Research Question #2:

What is the relationship between participant faith levels and gender?

This researcher also sought to determine the faith stages of respondents through in-depth interviews and the Religious Schema Scale. The quantitative guide was the Religious Schema Scale (RSS) (Streib & Hood, 2007), a likert scale survey designed to

measure individual differences in faith orientations. In addition, a model of faith

development research designed by Fowler (1981) was used as the qualitative guide for

the in-depth interviews for this study. Data from both instruments were used to check

their correlation.

This chapter is focused on the quantitative results of the study and incorporates

the research procedures, demographics, instrumentation, and data analysis.

Research Procedures

In this descriptive and exploratory correlational study, the researcher utilized a

mixed methods strategy to collect and analyze the research data. The quantitative

instrument was a 15-question likert-scale survey administered to worship service

attendees on a given Sunday at Oak View Methodist Church. The Religious Schema

Scale (RSS) (Streib & Hood, 2007) was designed to measure for individual differences in

faith orientations. Each question speaks to a certain domain or aspect of faith and is listed

under three sub-scales or schemata called Factors. Factor 1 is ttt (Truth of Texts and

Teachings); Factor 2 is ftr (Fairness, Tolerance, Rational Choice); Factor 3 is xenos

(Xenosophia) (Streib & Hood, 2007). The total RSS for ttt is reversed scored. Five

questions address each factor in the RSS.

A section was included in the survey to provide demographics for the study. The

following categories provided relevant data for analysis: Oak View Methodist

membership status, Christian education participation, gender, age, and marital status.

The researcher, with a team of ushers, distributed 900 surveys to attendees at

three worship services on a Sunday morning. The response rate was 666 surveys, or 74%.

The researcher used descriptive statistics, frequencies, t-tests, one-way ANOVA to analyze the data collected for this study. In computing the total, RSS is reverse scored.

Demographics

The population of this study consisted of the congregation at Oak View Methodist Church present on the date the survey was disseminated. All adults in attendance at each of the three worship services on a specified Sunday morning were given a survey to complete and return at the end of the worship service. Of the 900 surveys distributed, 666 were returned for a return rate of 74%. **Table 4.1** shows more females than males participated in the survey. There were 381 (57.1%) females and 286 (42.9%) males in the sample.

Table 4.1: Gender of Participants

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	286	42.9
Female	381	57.1
Total	667	100.0

As **Table 4.2** shows, 42% of the participants have been members of Oak View for more than five years. Typical for this church is the relatively high percentage of Sunday morning attendees who are not members. Twenty-nine percent of the participants are not currently members. Twenty-one percent of the participants have been members for one to five years, and 7.9% have been members less than one year.

Table 4.2: Church Membership Status of Participants

Membership Status	Frequency	Percent
Not currently a member	192	29.0
Less than 1 year	52	7.9
1-5 years	139	21.1
More than 5 years	276	42.0
Total	667	100.0

Table 4.3 reveals the age distribution of participants: 27.4% of participants are ages 40-49, and 25% are ages 50-59%. Twenty-one percent are ages 60 or above, and 17.1% are ages 30-39. The lowest percentage of participants, 9.2%, are ages 18-29. Seventy percent of the participants are age 40 or older.

Table 4.3: Age of Participants

Age	Frequency	Percent
18-29	61	9.2
30-39	113	17.1
40-49	183	27.4
50-59	167	25.0
60 or above	142	21.3
Total	667	100.0

Table 4.4 reveals the marital status of the participants. A large percent of the sample, 78.3%, are married. Nine percent are divorced, 8.4 % have never married, and 3.1% are widowed. In the sample .6% indicated that they are living together or partnered.

Table 4.4: Marital Status of Participants

Marital Status	Frequency	Percent
Married	522	78.5
Divorced	62	9.4
Widowed	21	3.1
Never married	56	8.4
Living together/partnered	4	.6
Total	667	100.0

Table 4.5 indicates which worship service the participants attend on a regular

basis. While all three services include the same sermon preached by the Senior Minister,

the music in each service is distinctly different. The 8:00 a.m. service features gospel

music led by a gospel band. The 9:30 a.m. service is considered a contemporary service

with praise and worship music led by a praise team, and the 11:00 a.m. service is a

traditional one with music led by a choir. **Table 4.5** shows that survey participants were

spread nearly equally over the 9:30 and 11:00 a.m. services with 47.2% and 46.0%

respectively. The 8:00 service had 6.7% participants.

Table 4.5: Worship Service Attendance of Participants

Worship Service	Frequency	Percent
8:00 a.m.	45	6.7
9:30 a.m.	315	47.2
11:00 a.m.	307	46.0
Total	667	100.0

Table 4.6 and **Table 4.7** reveal the participants' involvement in the Christian

Education offerings at the church. Bible study classes are offered at various times during

the week and on Sundays. The church offers two Sunday School programs. One meets at

8:50 a.m. and one meets at 10:00 a.m. each Sunday. **Table 4.6** shows the percentages of those who have participated in either Bible study classes or Sunday School classes within the past year. Fifty-six percent have not participated, while 44% have. Disciple classes are in-depth Bible classes offered each year. Class members spend a year studying various books of the Bible. **Table 4.7** shows 73% of the participants have not participated in Disciple classes, while 27% have.

Table 4.6: Bible Study and Sunday School Participation

Bible Study/Sunday School Participation	Frequency	Percent
Participates in Bible Study/Sunday School	293	43.9
Does not participate in Bible Study/Sunday School	374	56.1
Total	667	100.0

Table 4.7: Disciple Class Participation

Disciple Participation	Frequency	Percent
Participates in Disciple	178	26.7
Does not participate in Disciple	489	73.3
Total	667	100.0

Instrumentation

A reliability analysis using the Cronbach coefficient alpha is presented in **Table 4.8**. To check the internal consistency, the researcher used Cronbach's alpha, which models internal consistency based on average correlation among items. Cronbach's alpha assesses the reliability of a rating that summarizes a group of survey answers. It measures underlying factors, which could reflect some attribute of the test-taker, such as omitting an answer to a survey question (Cronbach, 1951). The researcher used SPSS software to compute the coefficient alpha. A score was computed from each survey question and the overall score is defined by the sum of these scores over all the test items (Cronbach,

1951). When data have a multidimensional structure, such as in the RSS, Cronbach's alpha will usually be low with a value from 0 to 1. Nunnaly (1978) has indicated 0.7 to be an acceptable reliability coefficient. Coefficient alpha for the 15-item RSS is .75. The coefficient alpha for each of the sub-scales, Truth of Texts and Teachings, Fairness, Tolerance, and Rational Choice, and Xenosophia are also acceptable as shown in **Table 4.8**.

Table 4.8: Reliability Analysis

Scale	Coefficient Alpha	N	Number of Items
Truth of Text and Teachings	.79	663	5
Fairness, Tolerance, and Rational Choice	.73	662	5
Xenosophia	.79	660	5
Total Religious Schema Scale	.75	660	15

Results of Research Questions and Data Analysis

In order to carry out the purpose of this study, answers were sought for the primary question concerning faith development at Oak View Methodist Church: What is the relationship between faith levels and participation in Christian education programs? Christian education programs include Bible Study/Sunday School and Disciple classes. Fourteen hypotheses were tested for the Primary Research Question.

Primary Research Question: What is the relationship between participant faith levels and participation in Christian education programs?

Null Hypothesis #1: There is no relationship between a person's faith level and his/her participation in Disciple classes.

The null hypothesis was retained. There is no relationship between a person's faith level and his/her participation in Disciple classes. The researcher conducted a t-test to compare the means of two groups: those who have participated in Disciple classes at

Oak View Church and those who have not as related to the Religious Schema Scale

(RSS). The test showed that there is no statistical difference between the two groups. The

mean for the Disciple participants of the RSS was 48.63, while the mean for the non-

Disciple participants was 48.87. The difference is not significant at the alpha level of .05.

Table 4.9 presents the results of a t-test on RSS scores based on participation in Disciple

classes   (t = -.450, df = 658, p = .653).

Table 4.9: T-test Statistics for Disciple Class Participation and RSS Scores

Disciple Participation	N	Mean	SD
Participates in Disciple	178	48.63	6.41
Does not participate in Disciple	486	48.87	5.61
Total	664		

Null Hypothesis #2: There is no relationship between a person's faith level and his/her

participation in Bible Study and Sunday classes.

The null hypothesis was retained. There is no relationship between a person's

faith level and his/her participation in Bible Study and Sunday School classes. The

researcher conducted a t-test to compare the means of two groups: those who have

participated in Bible Study and Sunday School at Oak View Church and those who have

not as related to the Religious Schema Scale (RSS). The test showed that there is no

statistical difference between the two groups. The mean for the Bible Study and Sunday

School participants of the RSS was 48.27, while the mean for the non-Bible Study and

Sunday school participants was 49.21. The difference is not significant at the alpha level

of .05. **Table 4.10** presents the results of a t-test on RSS scores based on participation in

Bible Study and Sunday School classes (t = -320, df = 658, p = .749)

Table 4.10: T-test Statistics for Bible Study and Sunday School Class Participation

Bible Study/Sunday School Participation	N	Mean	SD
Participates in Bible Study/ Sunday School	290	48.27	6.05
Does not participate in Bible Study/ Sunday School	370	49.21	5.65
Total	660		

Descriptive statistics were also used to describe the partcipants' faith scale in the three factors: Truth of Texts and Teachings (ttt), Fairness, Tolerance, and Rational Choice (ftr), and Xenosophia (xenos). **Table 4.11** shows that the mean for RSS Truth of Text and Teaching is 20.62. This schema focuses on accepting the absolute truth of one's religious traditions and teachings. With an average score of 4.13 for everyone on that particular factor on the 5-point likert scale, this score indicates that the participants have a high degree of acceptance of the precepts of their religion. When making decisions, they take care to make the plans acceptable to their religion. They also believe that the teachings of their religion offer anwers to any questions they may have about life.

The mean for Fairness, Tolerance, Rational Choice is 21.79 and an average score of 4.35 for everyone on that particular factor. This schema focuses on an opennes to acknowledge and discuss differences in the opinions of others who may represent different religious views. This score indicates the members can look for a fair resolution of differences and can conduct rational arguments about their religion. They believe it is important to understand others by being sympathetic to their culture and religion.

The mean for Xenosophia is 17.62 with an average score of 3.52 for everyone on that particular factor. This schema indicates that contradictions and paradoxes can be

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acknowledged. There is an appreciation for differences and persons of other faiths can engage in dialogue. This is the lowest mean of the three factors and indicates that while the members recognize differences with symathy and rational arguments, they are not as open to engaging in religious dialogue with those who are different. This finding is important in terms of educational implications for the church. Church members are satisfied in their beliefs and are rooted in their text, the Bible; however, they do not show an interest in engaging in interfaith dialogue.

Table 4.11: Mean of 3 Religious Schema Scale (RSS) Factors

Scales	N	Mean
RSS Truth of Text and Teaching	663	20.62
RSS Fairness, Tolerance, Rational Choice	662	21.79
RSS Xenosophia	660	17.62

The researcher used a parametric measure of correlation, the Pearson r, to check the strength of the association between participation in Bible Study/Sunday School and the RSS and to check the association between participation in Disciple classes and the RSS. Pearson's Correlation Coefficient is to indicate a linear relationship between two measurement variables: participation in Bible Study/Sunday School and the RSS. Using SPSS, the researcher used Pearson r to see if one score predicts another. The RSS is divided into three factors: Truth of Texts and Teaching (ttt), Fairness, Tolerance, and Rational Choice (ftr), and Xenosophia (xenos). The researcher used SPSS software to compute the Pearson r. The Pearson r was checked against all three variables and

revealed there is no significant correlation between Christian Education programs and the RSS in all three factors. However, there is a significant relationship between two of the factors: ftr and ttt. **Table 4.12** shows the results for the Pearson r for Christian education partcipation and the RSS. The N is different in tables because some participants did not answer all the questions.

Null Hypothesis #3: There is no relationship between Truth of Text and Teaching and Disciple participation.

The null hypothesis was accepted ($r = -.037$, $p = .175$). There is no relationship between Truth of Text and Teaching and Disciple participation.

Null Hypothesis #4: There is no relationship between Fairness, Tolerance, and Rational Choice and Disciple participation.

The null hypothesis was accepted ($r = -.256$, $p = .248$). There is no relationship between Fairness, Tolerance, and Rational Choice and Disciple participation.

Null Hypothesis # 5: There is no relationship between Xenosophia and Disciple participation.

The null hypothesis was accepted ($r = .013$, $p = .372$). There is no relationship between Xenosophia and Disciple participation.

Null Hypothesis #6: There is no relationship between Fairness, Tolerance, Rational Choice and Truth of Text and Teaching.

The null hypothesis was rejected ($r = .256$, $p = .000$). There is a significant relationship between Fairness, Tolerance, Rational Choice and Truth of Text and Teaching.

Null Hypothesis #7: There is no relationship between Xenosophia and Truth of Text and

Teaching.

The null hypothesis was rejected (r = -.124, p = 000). There is a significant

relationship between Xenosophia and Truth of Text and Teaching.

Null Hypothesis #8: There is no relationship between Xenosophia and Faith, Tolerance,

and Rational Choice.

The null hypothesis was rejected (r = .378, p = 000). There is a significant

relationship between Xenosophia and Fairness, Tolerance, and Rational Choice.

It is also note worthy that xenos negatively correlates with ttt (r = -.124) but

positively with ftr (r = .378). This correlation is also referenced in the **Table 4.11**

narrative.

Table 4.12: Pearson r Results for Christian Education Participation and the RSS

		Disciple	RSS Truth of Text and Teaching	RSS Fairness, Tolerance, and Rational Choice
TTT	Correlation Coefficient	-.037		
	Sig (1-tailed)	.175		
	N	660		
FTR	Correlation Coefficient	-.026	.256	
	Sig (1-tailed)	.248	.000*	
	N	660	660	
Xenos	Correlation Coefficient	.013	-.124	.378
	Sig (1 tailed)	.372	.001	.000*
	N	660	660	660

*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed)

Secondary Research Question #1:

What is the relationship between faith levels and church membership?

Null Hypothesis #9: There is no relationship between the RSS and church membership.

The null hypothesis was retained. A one-way ANOVA test was used to determine if there is a significant difference between the scores on the RSS and church membership. **Table 4.13** shows the ANOVA table and **Table 4.14** shows the means on the membership status.

Table 4.13: ANOVA Table for Null Hypotheses 9

Membership Status	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	11.21	4	2.80	.08	.99
Within Groups	22441.19	655	34.26		
Total	22452.39	659			

Table 4.14: Means and SD for Church Membership and RSS

Membership Status	N	Mean	SD
Not currently a member	191	48.82	6.42
Less than 1 year	51	49.24	5.83
1-5 years	138	48.75	5.66
More than 5 years	273	48.74	5.59
Total	653	48.80	5.84

Secondary Research Question #2:

What is the relationship between faith levels and gender?

Null Hypothesis #10: There is no relationship between a person's faith level and gender.

The null hypothesis was retained. There is no relationship between a person's faith level and gender. The researcher conducted a t-test to determine the difference in the RSS based on gender in all three factors. **Table 4.15** shows the T-test.

Table 4.15: T-test of Gender and the RSS

Gender	N	Mean	SD
Male	284	48.76	.35
Female	376	48.84	.30

Summary

This research study focused on a faith styles assessment of the congregation at Oak View Methodist Church present one Sunday with special attention to those who participate in Christian Education (CE) programs through Bible Study, Sunday School, and Disciple classes. The 15-question likert scale Religious Schema Scale was administered to 900 worship service attendees on one Sunday morning with a return rate of 74%. The research showed no relation between Christian Education and faith styles. In

addition to providing insight in the relation between CE participation and faith styles, the research provides helpful demographic information.

More females than males participated in the survey. There is no significant difference between RSS scores and church membership or between RSS scores and gender. The largest percentage of participants, 41.4%, has been church members for more than 5 years. Seventy percent of the participants are ages 40 or older. A high percentage of the participants, 71%, is married. The percentage of participants at each service, 8:00, 9:30, and 11:00, reflects the average weekly attendance on a given Sunday morning: 7%, 47%, 46%, respectively.

In regard to the respondents' participation in Christian education programs, the research shows that there is no significant difference between participants' faith level and participation in Christian education programs. Fifty-six percent of the participants have not attended Sunday School or a Bible Study class at the church in the last year. Only 27% percent of the participants have participated in a Disciple class.

Participants view their biblical teachings with a more open perspective than with a more fundamental perspective as indicated in the ttt mean (20.62). Participants have a high sense of fairness, tolerance, and rational approach as indicatd in the ftr mean (21.79). However, they do not engage in interfaith dialogue as indicated in the xenos mean (17.62). This finding is important in terms of the church's educational implications.

The research shows acceptable reliability and validity. Concluding, factors other than Bible Study classes, Sunday School classes, and Disciples classes must contribute to participants' faith levels.

CHAPTER FIVE

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate characteristics of the faith development of members in the congregation of Oak View Methodist Church present on a given Sunday. Chapter 4 focused on the quantitative results of this study. Chapter 5 focuses on qualitative data. The researcher extended this study beyond the quantitative results from the Religious Schema Scale (RSS) to include Faith Development Interview (FDI). The bulk of this chapter is an analysis of the twenty-one participants' responses to the FDI. These participants were randomly selected from the 146 survey participants who agreed to be interviewed. The number of interviewees was limited to twenty-one because of the costliness and time needed to conduct qualitative research.

The researcher evaluated the relationship between a person's faith level and his/her participation in Christian education. Christian education participation is defined as participation in Bible Study/Sunday School or Disciple classes. A number of sub-hypotheses were also addressed. In order to carry out the purpose of this study, answers were sought for the following questions concerning faith development at Oak View Methodist Church:

Primary Research Question #1: What is the relationship between faith levels and participation in Christian education programs?

In Chapter 4 the researcher addressed the analysis of a likert scale survey completed by 666 respondents. The data revealed that there is no significant relationship between a person's faith level and his or participation in Christian education programs. In

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Chapter 5 the researcher will examine the responses of twenty-one interviewees to determine if there is a relationship between faith levels and participation in Christian education programs.

Primary Research Question #2: What is the relationship between the Religious Schema Scale and the Faith Development Interview?

Chapter 4 focused on an analysis of the Religious Schema Scale. Chapter 5 will focus on a comparison of twenty-one interviewees' scores on both the Religious Schema Scale and the Faith Development Interview to see if there is a relationship between the two.

The research also sought to determine the relationship between faith levels and gender and the relationship between faith levels and age. By analyzing the answers to the FDI, the researcher reviewed responses to evaluate the attitudes and values that have shaped the faith of the interviewees.

Secondary Research Question #1:

What is the relationship between faith levels and gender?

Chapter 4 addressed this question for the general group that completed the Religious Schema Scale and found there is no relationship between faith levels and gender. Chapter 5 will look at the scores of the sub-group who were interviewed to see if there is a relationship between faith levels and gender.

Secondary Research Question #2:

What is the relationship between faith levels and age?

Chapter 4 showed the analysis of the survey participants' age and their faith levels. It revealed that there is no relationship between the two. Chapter 5 will show the relationship between faith levels and age among the twenty-one interviewees. Secondary Research Question #3: What are the attitudes and values in life that have shaped the faith of the interviewees?

The majority of this chapter focuses on Secondary Research Question #3. This researcher sought to determine the faith stages of respondents through in-depth interviews and the Religious Schema Scale. A model of faith development research designed by Fowler (1981) was used as the qualitative guide for the in-depth interviews for this study. In addition, the interviewees' responses on the RSS were also analyzed and compared with their answers in the FDI.

This chapter is focused on the qualitative results of the study and incorporates the research procedures, instrumentation, demographics, profiles, and data analysis utilized in this study.

Research Procedures and Instrumentation

From the adult participants in the RSS, twenty-one interviewees were randomly selected from those who indicated their willingness to be interviewed. By providing their phone number on the survey, 146 participants agreed to be interviewed, if selected. The researcher contacted every seventh individual whose name appeared on the list of potential interviewees, and thus identifying 21 participants who agreed to be interviewed. Interviews took place March 13, 2008 through April 16, 2008. Twenty interviews took place in the researchers office at Oak View Church; one interview took place at the interviewee's office. Each participant was given a copy of the Faith Development

Interview (FDI) questions in advance of the interview and was allowed to use these questions for reference during the interview. They each signed two copies of an informed consent. One copy has been filed in the researcher's office locked file cabinet; the other was given to the interviewee. Each interview was digitally recorded and lasted one to two hours. As provided in the *Manual for Faith Development Research* (Fowler, et.al, 2004*)*, the interview questions consist of a series of twenty-five questions in four categories: life tapestry/life review; relationships; present values and commitments; and religion (Fowler, et al., p. 63). All questions were asked in the prescribed order and the interviewer used probes as described in the manual to provide for richer text. Respondents were encouraged to experientially address faith issues by sharing details and feelings about their lived experiences.

The recordings were uploaded to an ftp (File Transfer Protocol) site, which provides a secure way to exchange files over the Internet. Interview files from my computer were downloaded via the Internet to a site hosted by the transcription company. A professional transcription company that used a 3-step transcription process transcribed the interviews. Each transcript was transcribed and then proofread twice before being returned to the researcher. Transcription Guidelines from the *Manual for Stage Development Research* (Fowler, et.al, 2004) directed the transcription process. The following notations were given for each interview: name and identification code of the interviewee, date of the interview, numbered pages with a running header, and numbered responses in sequence.

Next the researcher coded the respondent's answers, using the guidelines set forth in the *Manual for Stage Development Research* (Fowler, et.al, 2004). The responses

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provide narratives on a wide variety of aspects in the life and faith of the respondent. The

evaluation procedure as described in the *Manual for Faith Development Research*

*(*Fowler, et.al, 2004*)* provides an interpretation of the respondent's structures of faith.

Each answer to the faith development questions speaks to one of the seven Aspects of

Faith: form of logic; perspective taking; form of moral judgment; social awareness; locus

of authority; form of world coherence; and symbolic function (Fowler, et al, 2004). The

affiliation of questions and themes with the seven aspects are summarized in **Table 5.1**.

Table 5.1: Affiliation of Questions/Themes with Aspects

Question	Theme	Aspect
1	Chapters, Marker events	Social Awareness
2	Influence of Past in relationships	Perspective Taking
3	Influence of Changes in relationships	Social Awareness
4	Changes in Image of God	Symbolic Function
5	Breakthrough (High Points)	Form of Logic
6	Crises (Low Points)	Form of Logic
7	Parents	Perspective Taking
8	Other current and past relationships	Perspective Taking
9	Groups, Projects	Social Awareness
10	Your life meaning	Locus of Authority
11	Potential Changes in self	Form of Logic
12	Current Beliefs	Locus of Authority
13	Harmony	Symbolic Function
14	Mature Faith	Form of World Coherence
15	Decisions, Life problems	Form of Logic
16	Right action	Form of Moral Judgment
17	Always right, Moral opinions	Locus of Authority
18	Purpose of human life, Plan	Form of World Coherence
19	Death, Dying	Form of World Coherence
20	Religious, Spiritual, Believer	Form of World Coherence

Question	Theme	Aspect
21	Spiritual discipline	Symbolic Function
22	Symbols, Rituals	Symbolic Function
23	Sin	Form of Moral Judgment
24	Evil	Form of Moral Judgment
25	Religious conflicts	Form of Moral Judgment

The researcher located the subject's response to each of the twenty-five questions. Using the computerized procedures in Nvivo 7, she highlighted each answer and "dragged" it into the appropriate aspect. When this process was completed, each of the twenty-five answers appeared in the "file" for each of the seven aspects. For the next step, the researcher determined the stage category for each of the answers in the aspects file. **Table 5.2** depicts Fowler's (1981) Stages of Faith.

Table 5.2: Fowler's Stages of Faith

Stage	Name
1	Intuitive-Projective Faith
2	Mythic-Literal Faith
3	Synthetic-Conventional Faith
4	Individuative-Reflective Faith
5	Conjunctive Faith
6	Universalizing Faith

Next the researcher calculated the average for each aspect to the nearest one-hundredth. Then she calculated the average of each of the seven aspect averages to the nearest one-hundredth. This score results in a stage assignment. Appendix E shows the chart used to calculate the stage assignment.

Another person working independently of the researcher coded 25% of the interviews. The five interviews were randomly selected, and all obvious names and references were blacked out in order not to avoid violating the subject's anonymity. The raters conducted practice scoring in order to increase the inter-rater reliability of the research. With an inter-rater reliability rate of 70% considered desirable, the two raters matched scores within one-half stage on four of the five interviews for a reliability rate of 80%.

Next the researcher calculated the interviewees' scores on the Religious Schema Scale using the 3-factor subscales: Truth in Text and Teachings (ttt); Fairness, Tolerance, Rational Choice (ftr); and Xenosophia (xenos). These scores were calculated from the fifteen-question survey they took during a Sunday morning worship service. The survey is designed to elicit an identification of aspect-specific style of faith through a quantitative assessment. The questions are designed by Streib and Hood (2007) to address stage-specific items found in Fowler's faith development. Each question speaks to a certain domain or aspect of faith and is listed under three sub-scales or schemata called Factors. The five questions related to Factor 1 (ttt) refer to the texts, stories, and teachings of the respondent's religion. This schema focuses upon accepting the absolute truth of one's religious tradition and the texts that constitute this tradition. The respondent is asked to indicate the role these religious teachings play in his/her experiences and

decision-making. Respondents examined the truth of their own religion and religious texts. The five questions in Factor 2 (ftr) ask the respondent to rate his/her sense of fairness, tolerance, and decision-making in regard to culture, society, and religion. This schema identifies the degree to which one is open to acknowledge and discuss differences in opinion. It also looks for a fair resolution of differences on the rational exchange of arguments. These questions refer to the respondent's relationship to others. The five questions in Factor 3 (xenos) ask the respondent to rate her/his views on the world of religions. This schema reveals the contradictions and paradoxes in one's religious views. It indicates whether one is open to appreciating differences in others so that engaging dialogue can take place. Respondents are asked to view their own religion against other religious views.

<div align="center">Demographics of Interviewees</div>

Both the RSS and the FDI provided demographics of the interviewees. **Table 5.3** shows that more females than males participated in the interviews. There were 13 (62%) females and 8 (38%) males in the sample.

<div align="center">**Table 5.3: Gender of Interviewees**</div>

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	8	38.0
Female	13	62.0
Total	21	100.0

As **Table 5.4** shows, the majority, twelve of the participants, have been members of Oak View for more than five years. Five of the participants are not currently members. Three of the participants have been members for less than one year, and one has been a member for one to five years.

Table 5.4: Church Membership Status of Interviewees

Membership Status	Frequency	Percent
Not currently a member	5	23.8
Less than 1 year	3	14.2
1-5 years	1	4.9
More than 5 years	12	57.1
Total	21	100.0

Table 5.5 reveals 32% of participants are ages 50-59, and 29% are ages 40-49%. Fourteen of the respondents are ages 30-39, and 14% are age 60 or above. The lowest percentage of participants, 1%, are ages 18-29. Seventy percent of the survey participants were at least 40 years old, while 85% of the interviewees were at least 40 years old.

Table 5.5: Age of Interviewees

Age	Frequency	Percent
18-29	2	1.0
30-39	3	14.0
40-49	6	29.0
50-59	7	32.0
60 or above	3	14.0
Total	21	100.0

Table 5.6 shows a majority of the sample, 14, are married. Two respondents are divorced; 2 are widowed, and 2 have never married. One respondent chose the answer, living together/partnered. Seventy-nine percent of the survey participants were married, while 67% of the interviewees were married.

Table 5.6: Marital Status of Interviewees

Marital Status	Frequency	Percent
Married	14	67.0
Divorced	2	9.5
Widowed	2	9.5
Never married	2	9.5
Living together/partnered	1	4.5
Total	21	100.0

Table 5.7 indicates which worship service the participants attend. While all three services include the same sermon preached by the Senior Minister, the music in each service is distinctly different. The 8:00 a.m. service features gospel music led by a gospel band. The 9:30 a.m. service is considered a contemporary service with praise and worship music led by a praise team, and the 11:00 a.m. service is a traditional one with music led by a choir. This table shows 52.5% of the interview participants attend the 11:00 service, and 38% attend the 9:30 service, and 9.5% of the participants attend the 8:00 service.

Table 5.7: Worship Service Attendance of Interviewees

Worship Service	Frequency	Percent
8:00 a.m.	2	9.5
9:30 a.m.	8	38.0
11:00 a.m.	11	52.5
Total	21	100.0

Tables 5.8 and 5.9 reveal the participants' involvement in the Christian Education offerings at the church. Bible study classes are offered at various times during the week and on Sundays. The church offers two Sunday School programs. One meets at 8:50 a.m. and one meets at 10:00 a.m. each Sunday. **Table 5.8** shows the percentages of those who have participated in either Bible study classes or Sunday School classes within the past year. Eighty-one percent have participated, and only nineteen percent have not.

The percentage of those participating in Bible study classes among interviewees is much greater than the participation percentage of the survey participants, which is 44%. Disciple classes are in-depth Bible classes offered each year. Class members spend a year studying various books of the Bible. **Table 5.9** shows 48% of the interviewees, as compared to 52% of the survey participants have participated in Disciple classes. Fifty-eight percent of the participants have not participated in Disciple classes, while 73% of the survey participants have not.

Table 5.8: Bible Study or Sunday School Participation of Interviewees

Participation	Frequency	Percent
Yes	17	81
No	4	19
Total	21	100

Table 5.9: Disciple Class Participation of Interviewees

Participation	Frequency	Percent
Yes	10	48
No	11	52
Total	21	100

Table 5.10 indicates that the interviewees are well educated. One has a Ph.D; 3 have a Master's degree; 14 have a college degree; 2 are currently in college; 1 has a high school diploma.

Table 5.10: Education Level of Interviewees

Education Level	Frequency
Ph.D	1
Master's Degree	3
College Degree	14
Current College Student	2
High School Degree	1
Total	21

All twenty-one interviewees profess to be of the Christian faith and currently attend a Methodist church. However, only three participants stated that they are lifelong Methodists. The other eighteen come from a variety of denominational backgrounds. The largest portion, ten, has a Baptist background. Two each come from Lutheran, Presbyterian, and Catholic backgrounds, and one has an Episcopalian background. One had no denominational background before coming to Oak View Church as an adult. **Table 5.11** indicates these results.

Table 5.11: Denominational Background of Interviewees

Denomination	Frequency
Baptist	10
Methodist	3
Catholic	2
Episcopal	1
Lutheran	2
Presbyterian	2
No denominational background	1
Total	21

Profiles of the Interviewees

A brief summary of each participant's age, denominational background, Christian education participation, education, and marital status, is presented below. A pseudonym for each interviewee has been used to maintain the anonymity of the participants. The Faith Development Interview (FDI) score is listed following the summary. This number is on a scale from 1-6 and reflects Fowler's stage as described in **Table 5.3** and as calculated using the chart in **Table 4**. The participants' scores on the sub-scales of the Religious Schema Scale (RSS) are also provided. All scores are based on a 5-point likert scale. For Factor 1: Truth of Text and Teaching (ttt), a 5 indicates a strong belief in the

truth of the text and teachings of their faith system. For Factor 2: Fairness, Tolerance, Rational Choice (ftr) a 5 indicates a strong sense of fairness and tolerance in making decisions regarding culture, society, and religion. For Factor 3: Xenosophia, a 5 indicates a strong openness to other religious views.

1.   Jared is a single twenty-one year old male college student who has been a member of Oak View for less than one year. He was previously affiliated with the Baptist church. He has participated in Bible study or Sunday School classes but has not participated in Disciple classes. When Jared was 13, his father died and he has lived with his mother and has had several stepfathers over the years. FDI: 3.24; ttt: 3.00; ftr: 4.20; xenos: 3.40; RSS Total: 3.53

2.   Jeremy is a twenty-six year old male college student who joined Oak View less than a year ago. He has an Episcopalian background. He has participated in a Bible study class but never participated in Disciple classes. Jeremy was in a car accident last year that left him with shoulder injuries and constant pain, and he cannot drive. His relationship with his parents has been strained and he has been encouraging them to become involved in the church. FDI: 3.24; ttt: 1.20; ftr: 3.80; xenos: 2.20; RSS Total: 2.40

3.   Linda is a thirty-something married mother of two who joined Oak View less than a year ago. She is married to a Jewish man and they have decided to expose their children to both the Christian faith and the Jewish faith. She has never attended Bible study or Disciple classes at

Oak View. She was a Baptist prior to attending Oak View and is a college graduate. FDI: 3.62; ttt: 1.60; ftr: 4.00; xenos: 3.20; RSS Total: 2.93

4.   Nola is a married female in her thirties who grew up in Zimbabwe where she was a Catholic. She went to college in London and later moved to the United States where she earned a Master's Degree. She joined Oak View about five years ago and has participated in Bible study and Disciple classes. She struggled to come to terms with the death of her sister, and has strained relationships with her divorced parents who live in Zimbabwe. FDI: 4.51; ttt: 5.00; ftr: 4.60; xenos: 4.60; RSS Total: 3.40

5.   Ann is a forty-two year old female who is divorced. She is not a member of Oak View and has participated in a Bible study group but not a Disciple class. With a Master's degree, she works as a librarian. Ann has positive relationships with both parents who are divorced. She grew up as a Baptist. FDI: 3.75; ttt: 2.00; ftr: 4.80; xenos: 4.40; RSS Total: 3.73

6.   Marta is a married mother and grandmother in her forties. She is a high school graduate who immigrated to the United States from Mexico when she was a teenager. Marta was abused as a teenager and has endured many emotional and financial hardships as an adult. She has a Catholic background and while she attends Oak View regularly, she is not a member. She has never attended Oak View's Bible study or

Disciple classes. FDI: 3.14; ttt: 1.60; ftr: 4.60; xenos: 4.40; RSS Total: 3.53

7.   Joan is a married mother of three and is in her forties. She is a college graduate and works part-time as a nurse. She grew up in New Mexico where she attended Baptist churches. She has been a member of Oak View for over five years and has participated in Bible study and Disciple classes. Now she is beginning to feel comfortable attending services at a local Catholic church with its formality and traditions. FDI: 4.18; ttt: 1.60; ftr: 4.60; xenos: 4.20: RSS Total: 3.47

8.   Mitch is in his forties and is married with two stepsons. He did not attend church until he married and joined Oak View about ten years ago. He has a college degree and works as an accountant. He has participated in Bible study and Disciple classes. His mother died when he was younger and he regrets that his family was not active in church and did not encourage his faith. FDI: 3.77; ttt: 1.20; ftr: 3.80; xenos: 2.60; RSS Total: 2.53

9.   Charlotte is a married mother of two and is in her forties. She has a master's degree and is a college instructor. She grew up in Virginia attending a Presbyterian church with her parents and a sister who is handicapped. She has concerns about her aging parents and what will become of her sister when her parents are deceased. She has been a member of Oak View for over five years and has participated in Bible

study classes but not Disciple classes. FDI: 4.00; ttt: 3.00; ftr: 4.40; xenos: 4.60; RSS Total: 4.00

10.   Ella is a married mother of two daughters and is in her forties. She is a college graduate who grew up in another part of Tennessee and attended the Baptist church. She has been a member of Oak View for over five years and has participated in Bible study and Disciple classes. She is a homemaker and involved in charitable organizations. FDI: 3.93; ttt: 1.20; ftr: 5.00; xenos: 4.00; RSS Total: 3.40

11.   Carla is a homosexual female in her forties and living with her partner of twenty-six years. She grew up in Mississippi and lived there for most of her life until she re-located to Tennessee a few years ago. Her family has had a difficult time accepting the fact that she is gay. She was a Baptist until her move to Tennessee. Although she is not a member of Oak View, she has participated in Bible study classes but not in Disciple classes. She has a college degree and works full-time. FDI: 3.69; ttt: 2.60; ftr: 4.00; xenos: 2.60; RSS Total: 3.27

12.   Charles is a married male in his forties with two sons. His mother died when he was in his early twenties and Charles had a difficult time accepting her death. His relationship with his father has always been cordial but lacked warmth. He is a college graduate and has a career in the insurance field. Charles struggles with low self-esteem and states that his only truly meaningful relationship is with his wife. He was a Presbyterian until his marriage when he reluctantly began attending the

Church of Christ. He never joined because he never accepted what he termed as the "rigidity" of their doctrine. He has been a member of Oak View for over five years and has attended Bible studies and Disciple classes. FDI: 3.43; ttt: 1.40; ftr: 4.60; xenos: 4.20; RSS Total: 3.33

13.   Chuck is in his fifties with two adult children and has been widowed for two years. His wife's death has left him lonely and he has struggled with depression. He grew up in the North and is a lifelong Methodist. He is a college graduate and in the engineering field and has lived in several cities. He has been a member of Oak View for over five years but has not participated in Bible study or Disciple classes. FDI: 3.30; ttt: 2.80; ftr: 4.20; xenos: 3.00; RSS Total: 3.33

14.   Margie is a married female in her fifties with two children. She grew up in the North and her family attended a Methodist church. Her first husband was a fundamentalist Baptist who later became an Atheist. This difference in their faith was the major cause for their divorce. She is not a member of Oak View and has never attended Bible study or Disciple classes. She has a Master's degree and works as a librarian. FDI: 4.53; ttt: 2.20; ftr: 5.00; xenos: 5.00; RSS Total: 4.06

15.   Kim is a married female in her fifties and has one college-aged son. She has lived in several cities in the United States and in Venezuela. She has friends all over the world. She grew up in a close family and attended the Lutheran church. She has been a member of Oak View for

over five years and has been involved in Bible study and Disciple classes. FDI: 4.35; ttt: 2.80; ftr: 4.80; xenos: 4.20; RSS Total: 3.93

16.   Denise is a married female in her fifties with no children. She grew up in the Mid-west with a father who was an Atheist and a mother who took the children to the Lutheran church. Denise and her husband, a retired military officer, have lived all over the world. While they made acquaintances everywhere they lived, she does not claim any close friends except for her husband. She has a college degree and teaches Special Education in an elementary school. She is not a member of Oak View and has never participated in Bible study or Disciple classes. FDI: 3.18; ttt: 2.00; ftr: 4.00; xenos: 2.40; RSS Total: 2.80

17.   Donald is a male in his fifties with two children. His recent divorce has left him hurt and with low self-esteem. He has experienced many changes in the last year and is struggling to accept them. His family lives in other parts of the country and he rarely gets to see his children. His relationship with his mother is strained, yet he is trying to re-build it. He has been a member of Oak View for over five years and has participated in Disciple classes but not Bible study. FDI: 3.24; ttt: 2.60; ftr: 4.80; xenos: 2.40; RSS Total: 3.27

18.   John is a married male in his fifties with two children. He has a Ph.D and works as a psychologist and counselor. He states one of his greatest challenges, yet one of his greatest joys, has been in rearing his daughter who has Down's Syndrome. He was reared by a father who was an

alcoholic and a mother who took the children to the Methodist church. A life-long Methodist, John has been a member of Oak View for over five years and has participated in Bible study classes but not Disciple classes. FDI: 4.47; ttt: 2.40; ftr: 4.80; xenos: 3.60; RSS Total: 3.60

19.   Jack is a married male in his sixties with three adult daughters. He has a college degree and is retired. He states the greatest challenge he has faced has been the tragic death of his grandchild. He grew up attending the Baptist church and has been a member of Oak View for over five years. He has participated in Bible study classes but not in Disciple classes. FDI: 3.25; ttt: 2.00; ftr: 4.20; xenos: 3.60; RSS Total: 3.27

20.   Maeve is a married female in her seventies with one adult daughter. She enjoys her life and is very active. She fills her days attending to family members' needs, exercising, and attending church functions. She grew up in a close family and was a member of a Baptist church. She has been a member of Oak View since its opening over eleven years ago. She has been involved in Bible study and Disciple classes. FDI: 4.84; ttt: 2.20; ftr: 4.20; xenos: 4.00: RSS Total: 3.47

21.   Nelda is an eighty-six year old widow. She earned her college degree after her children were grown and continues to take classes to enrich her education. She developed a passion for art in her sixties and now teaches art courses to adults. She has a positive outlook on life and stays active through her artwork and church activities. She has many friends and enjoys visiting her children in other states. She has been a

member of Oak View for over five years and has participated in Bible study classes but not Disciple classes. FDI: 4.40; ttt: 2.60; ftr: 4.00; xenos: 4.00; RSS Total: 3.53

<center>Results of Research Questions and Data Analysis</center>

In order to carry out the purpose of this study, answers were sought for two primary questions concerning faith development at Oak View Methodist Church: First, what is the relationship between faith levels and participation in Christian education programs? Christian education programs include Bible Study/Sunday School and Disciple classes. Next, the researcher sought to determine if there is a relationship between the quantitative instrument, the Religious Schema Scale, and the qualitative instrument, the Faith Development Interview. In addition, a secondary research question allowed the researcher to examine some of the attitudes and values in life that have shaped the faith of some of the congregants at Oak View Methodist Church. The study of the themes of the interviews provide further insight into the faith development of the interviewees.

Primary Research Question #1: What is the relationship between faith levels and participation in Christian education programs?

Primary Research Question #2: What is the relationship between the Religious Schema Scale and the Faith Development Interview?

Primary Research Question #3: What are the attitudes and values in life that have shaped the faith of the interviewees?

Table 5.12 shows the names of the interviewees in order of age from youngest to oldest, along with their scores on the Faith Development Interview (FDI).

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Table 5.12: Faith Development Interview Scores

Interviewee	FDI
Jared	3.24
Jeremy	3.24
Linda	3.62
Nola	4.51
Ann	3.75
Marta	3.14
Joan	4.18
Mitch	3.77
Charlotte	4.0
Ella	3.93
Carla	3.69
Charles	3.43
Chuck	3.3
Margie	4.53
Kim	4.35
Denise	3.18
Donald	3.24
John	4.47
Jack	3.25
Maeve	4.84

Interviewee	Mean
Nelda	4.4
Mean	3.83

Table 5.13 shows the ANOVA results for the Faith Development Interview scores by age categories. There is no relationship between the scores for FDI and age. The mean and standard deviation results are presented in **Table 5.14.** The youngest participants, Jared and Jeremy, do not have the lowest scores, and Nelda, the oldest interviewee does not have the highest score on the FDI. The mean indicates that the average for these participants falls in between Stage 3 Synthetic-Conventional Faith and Stage 4 Individuative-Reflective Faith. All interviewees scored between Stage 3 Synthetic-Conventional Faith and Stage 5 Conjunctive Faith. In Stage 3, a person has a clustering of values and beliefs, and authority is found within traditional authority roles or in the consensus of a valued group. A considerable number of adults that Fowler's team interviewed were best described in this stage (Fowler, 1995). Two significant indicators mark Stage 4, Individuative-reflective Faith. First, one must be able to reflect critically on the values, beliefs, and commitments subscribed to in the previous stage. Second, one must struggle with developing a self-identity that is capable of making independent judgments in relation to individuals and institutions that had been influential until this time (Fowler & Dell, 2006). Stage 5 generally develops in midlife or beyond. The person in this stage is aware of self-limitations, recognizes that people have different insights, and has a greater tolerance of others who have different beliefs. The adult in the conjunctive stage is a reflective thinker who recognizes that all kinds of truths can be

approached from various perspectives (Fowler & Dell, 2006). Faith balances and

maintains the tensions between multiple perspectives.

Table 5.13: ANOVA Table for the Faith Development Interview by Age Categories

Age	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.44	2	.22	.72	.50
Within Groups	5.49	18	.31		
Total	5.93	20			

Table 5.14: Means and SD on the Faith Development Interview by Age Categories

Age	Mean	SD	N
18-39	3.56	.34	5
40-49	3.93	.68	6
50+	3.87	.54	10
Total	3.81	.54	21

Table 5.15 shows the mean of 4.00 for females on the FDI is slightly higher than

the mean of 3.49 for males. The t-test reveals there is no significant difference

($t = -2.337$, df = 19; $p = .031$).

Table 5.15: T-test for Gender and Faith Development Interview (FDI)

Gender	N	FDI Mean	SD
Female	13	4.00	.52
Male	8	3.49	.43

Primary Research Question #2: What is the relationship between the Religious Schema

Scale and the Faith Development Interview?

Table 5.16 reveals a comparison of the interviewees' scores on the FDI and the RSS On RSS Factor 1, Truth of Text and Teachings (ttt), the participants' mean is 2.04, which is close to the average score of the 666 survey participants. This score shows that the participants hold a fairly strong belief in the truth of the text of their faith, the Bible, and the teachings of the Christian faith. This analysis revealed that there is a significant correlation between the FDI and RSS (r = .493, p = .023). This data is significant to the body of faith development research. **Table 5.17** shows the data for predicting the FDI using RSS. It reveals 24.3% of the variance in the FDI is accounted for by the variance in RSS The prediction equation is: FDI = .63RSS + 1.70.

Table 5.16: Faith Development Interview and Religious Schema Scale Scores

Interviewee	FDI	ttt	ftr	xenos	RSS reversed
Jared	3.24	3.0	4.2	3.4	3.53
Jeremy	3.24	4.8	3.8	2.2	2.40
Linda	3.62	4.4	4.0	3.2	2.93
Nola	4.51	5.0	4.6	4.6	3.40
Ann	3.75	4.0	4.8	4.4	3.73
Marta	3.14	4.4	4.6	4.4	3.53
Joan	4.18	4.4	4.6	4.2	3.47
Mitch	3.77	4.8	3.8	2.6	2.53
Charlotte	4.0	3.0	4.4	4.6	4.00
Ella	3.93	4.8	5.0	4.0	3.40
Carla	3.69	3.4	4.0	2.6	3.27
Charles	3.43	4.6	4.6	4.0	3.33
Chuck	3.3	3.2	4.2	3.0	3.33
Margie	4.53	3.8	5.0	5.0	4.06
Kim	4.35	3.2	4.8	4.2	3.93
Denise	3.18	4.0	4.0	2.4	2.80
Donald	3.24	3.4	4.8	3.6	3.27
John	4.47	3.6	4.8	3.6	3.60
Jack	3.25	4.0	4.2	3.6	3.27
Maeve	4.84	3.8	4.2	4.0	3.47

Interviewee	FDI	ttt	ftr	xenos	RSS reversed
Nelda	4.4	3.4	4.0	4.0	3.53
Mean	3.83	3.95	4.4	3.7	3.37

Table 5.17: Data for Predicting FDI Using RSS

Predictor	B	Standard Error of B	Beta	t	P
Constant	1.70	.86		1.97	.06
RSS	.63	.25	.49	2.47	.02

Four of the participants with the highest FDI scores, Margie, John, Maeve, and
Nelda, have ttt scores above the mean. This ttt score may be indicative of their openness
to teachings of other faiths. As one's faith moves toward Stage 6, one accepts a more
multidimensional view of theories and accounts of truth. It is interesting to note that Nola
scored high on the FDI with a 4.51; however, her RSS Factor 1 score for ttt is 5.00. This
RSS score indicates a fundamentalist approach to the texts of her faith. Another
observation is the scores of Jared, the youngest of the interviewees, scored 3.24 on the
FDI, and 4.8 on the ttt. These scores indicate a Synthetic-Conventional Faith on the FDI
yet his ttt score shows more openness to the teachings of other faiths. One conclusion is
that the RSS does not seem to be predictive of the FDI.

On the RSS Factor 2, Fairness, Tolerance, Rational Choice (ftr), the interviewees'
mean is 4.4, which is close to the average score of all the survey participants, at 4.35.
This score shows a strong sense of fairness and tolerance in making decisions regarding
culture, society, and religion. Two of the participants, Margie and Ella, scored a 5 on this

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factor. Margie spoke in her interview of her concern for the homeless and indigent who often visited the library where she works. She spoke with passion about her desire for the unfortunate in society to be treated with fairness. Ella volunteers for charities and commented on her desire to "give back" to the community. The two interviewees, Nola and Marta, who immigrated to the United States also scored high on this Factor; however, their interviews revealed different approaches to fairness. Nola was concerned with fairness and tolerance for others; Marta was concerned with fairness and tolerance by others. Nola volunteers with many immigrant groups and commented on actions being "right" when they do not hurt others. Marta scored a 4.6 on this Factor; however, in her interview she never indicated a strong sense of fairness or tolerance for others. However, she spoke of being mistreated and taken advantage of for many years and of her desire for others to treat her with fairness. She recognized a need to help others through volunteer work but has never taken action to do so. Nola scored a 4.51 on the FDI, while Marta's score was lower at 3.14.

On the RSS Factor 3, Xenosophia, the interviewees' mean is 3.7. This score indicates a moderate openness to other religious views. It is interesting to compare these scores to the participants' scores on the FDI. Participants who scored low, 2.2 - 2.6, on this factor also scored a lower stage on the FDI. All 4 participants who scored a 2.2 – 2.6 on this factor scored Stage 3 on the FDI. Persons in Stage 3 are in a "conformist" stage and typically do not have a strong enough grasp on their own identity to form an independent perspective. Thus the person in this stage is not as open to other religious views as is an individual at a higher faith stage. Eleven of the 21 participants scored over a 4.0 on the xenos factor. Of these 11, 7 also scored at least a 4.0 on the FDI. One who

moves to Stage 4 shows a readiness to critically reflects on one's own beliefs and values and a readiness to relate to others with different belief systems. Maeve, who scored a 4.0 in this factor and a 4.84 on the FDI shows an openness to other views. In her interview she commented, "…we all believe in God. We just take different paths and we're going to disagree because God gave us choice. So what we need to do is find the things we agree on and make less important the things we do not agree on" (Personal communication, April 5, 2008).

Secondary Research Question #3: What are the attitudes and values in life that have shaped the faith of the interviewees?

Fowler (1981) states, "The persons, causes and institutions we really love and trust, the images of good and evil, of possibility and probability to which we are committed – these form the pattern of our faith." (p. 4)

Stages of faith development were assigned by analyzing participants' answers to twenty-five questions that center on seven Aspects, or themes. A key to coding the interviews is learning to thinking in structural terms. The content of the participants' answers is not as important as "how" and "why" they arrived at their beliefs. Thus it is the structures of meaning making that are examined through the analysis of the interviews. A study of the participants' answers yields rich information about their attitudes and values in the life that have shaped their faith. A thematic analysis of the seven aspects follows.

Aspect A, Form of Logic, describes the pattern of mental operations a person uses when thinking about the object world (Fowler, 1981). Four prompts in the questions address this aspect: Decisions, Breakthroughs, Crises, and Changes. Participants who

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scored Stage 4 on this answer were able to reflect critically on the contents and operations of their faith. Joan described a "breakthrough" event that provided what she deemed a "deeply moving spiritual experience." Feeling a sense of desolation at the time, Joan recalled

> "I was living with sister and I just remember being in the bathroom and I do not know what I was upset about, but it was a very much, …almost a physical comforting that I felt … I am going to take care of you, we are going to walk together and it is going to be good," (Personal communication, March 20, 2008).

Mark remembered a moving experience at a prayer breakfast that was a "breakthrough" in his faith.

> "I went to the leadership prayer breakfast they have in April. And the speaker, he was a retired military pilot I believe. Anyway, he talked about his experiences and I think he had been a prisoner of war. He talked about how God led him and kept him safe though all that and brought him back home. At that time I already been baptized and all but they asked if anybody wants to turn their life over to Christ? I didn't stand up in front of the whole room and say that, but I said it to myself at that time," (Personal communication, March 31, 2008).

On the other hand, Jack, who scored Stage 3, was not able to reflect critically on breakthrough events in his life. He recounted, "I really cannot think of anything, probably other than my marriage. Marriage, kids, grandkids, those time lines," (Personal communication, March 26, 2008). Similarly, Jared was unable to formulate explicit systems of meaning. "I am sure I have but it is so much easier to remember negative things than positive. I know I have because I know what it feels like but I do not really

remember what those were," (Personal communication, April 16, 2008). Interviewees were asked if they had experienced times of crisis or suffering or had felt disillusioned about life. A Stage 4 response will typically be straightforward and will place the self in regard to others. There will be a hint of openness and a desire for closure through a selected set of meanings. Kim demonstrates this stage when describing her mother's illness and death.

> "When I was six months pregnant. That was very, very, very stressful. I never blamed God or anything, if that is what you mean. I did not do that. But, I really wondered, what was the point of my poor mother living and then not being alive to see her grandchild and why would that happen to somebody like her? Why could she not have fulfilled her dreams? She had two dreams… for me to have children and to go to Europe. She did not do either one. That really upset me that she could live and not do that," (Personal communication, March 19, 2008).

Demonstrating Stage 3 logic, Ann was able to reflect on the concrete experience of a depression during a bad marriage but not on the processes of it.

> "When I turned 30, I went through a depression, and it was like you would wake up in the middle of the night and it was dark, dark thoughts. My marriage really started going down and toward the end of that was a very confused, helpless time," (Personal communication, March 18, 2008).

Aspect B, Social Perspective Taking, describes the way a person constructs the self, the other, and the relationship between them (Fowler, 1981). It shows how the individual is thinking and feeling and how this relates to his or her own internal states. Three prompts in the twenty-five questions address this aspect: Past Relationships,

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Current Relationships, and Parents. Interestingly, all respondents scored a 4 or 5 on the question relating to parents. Demonstrating Stage 5 attributes, Charlotte attempts to "see" from her parents' perspective. She describes being a teenager and wanting to strike out and separate from her parents. "Then as an adult to kind of see them in balance and to recognize that they are human and they have very strong positives and very strong negatives." She goes on to describe in great detail an incident when her father cut his hand and came to her for comfort. "He has got a PhD, a very competent, capable and strong human being and yet he is giving me his hand and saying, 'I cut my hand and I don't know what to do…I thought, 'Oh, my goodness, I have become the parent,'" (Personal communication, March 18, 2008).

Carla tells of a strained and distant relationship with her mother because her mother disapproved of Carla's homosexual lifestyle. After years of separation from her mother, Carla analyzes her mother's viewpoint but often in a defensive manner pointing out her own viewpoint. Carla scored a Stage 4, instead of a Stage 5, which would have shown that Carla had the ability to identify with her mother's radically different perspective. She says their relationship is much better now…"I think she actually does see me as an adult now and accepts the path I have chosen, so to speak, and we seem to have good visits when I am there," (Personal communication, March 20, 2008).

Most of the respondents reflected positively on their relationship with their parents at the present. Many discussed strained relationships with parents in their pasts.

Aspect C, Form of Moral Judgment, includes looking at patterns of a person's thinking about issues of moral significance (Fowler, 1981). Four questions provide indicators for this aspect: Right Action, Sin, Evil, and Religious Conflicts. Moral

judgments at Stage 6 are highly principled and universal. Most respondents scored 3's and 4's on this aspect. Stage 3 is concerned with living up to expectations and fulfilling responsibilities, and stereotyping is common. Stage 4 judgments are oriented toward doing one's duty and reflect social order over the rights of the individual. On the question of evil, seven respondents stated that Satan or the Devil causes evil. Five stated that man's choices or free will causes evil. Others had similar answers but also mentioned greed and separation from God as causes for evil. Linda noted, "The presence of evil is the absence of God," (Personal communication, March 18, 2008).

Joan demonstrated Stage 4 traits, as her moral judgments are explicitly and rationally defended. She stated that she came up with a theory that this is not God's world but that he gave it over to man. She said that God gave people free will so that they would choose Him.

> "But then along with that free will came the ability to make different choices and I think when we made the choice to embrace something other than God, which is represented by the tree of knowledge, then I think at that point the world did not really belong to God anymore. I think that that is when evil became present on earth…So the way I deal with how things happen and why bad things happen is because although God could reach His hand down and change it all for the good, He does not because it is not His world and people have chosen not to choose Him," (Personal communication, March 20, 2008).

On the issue of religious conflict, Donald exhibits Stage 4 moral judgment as he reflects the conventional position of his self-chosen group and looks to fulfill his obligations.

"Well, I will not say that I accept other views, but it is not mine to correct them. I have an obligation to be a Christian, to worship God, to share with Him as much as I want to have shared with Him…There is a Holy Spirit in the world, and I have the piece of the pie that I take care of, and that is all," (Personal communication, March 24, 2008).

On the question of sin, the major difference in the answers lies in the depth of critical reflection. Most respondents referred to sin as a separation from God; however, the difference was found in the depth or lack of depth in their elaboration. Jared in a Stage 3 answer determined that sin is breaking the 10 Commandments and "doing anything that would make you feel guilty." He thought in terms of law and order and in feelings, (Personal communication, April 16, 2008).

Aspect D, Bounds of Social Awareness, has several facets. A person's group identification is central in this aspect (Fowler, 1981). It includes how a person relates to his or her group and addresses the question of the inclusiveness of the social world to which he or she belongs. Three prompts provide indicators for this aspect: Marker Events, Groups, and Changes in Relationships. Most of the respondents do not affiliate with many groups outside their church involvement and family groups. Only five participants are engaged in groups that are different or unusual in social awareness, which are indicators of Stages 4 and 5. Kim is the most actively involved with groups of people that are different from her. She displays openness to differences and actively seeks contact with people from various classes and social structures, an indicator of Stage 5.

Linda also demonstrates openness to groups and individuals who are different from her. A Christian, Linda is married to a Jew and participates actively in events from

both faiths. She stated, "My husband and I always support both church and synagogues, but also children's things seem to really strike a core in our hearts…anything to do with kids' stuff, any kids that are sick or hurting gets us every time," (Personal communication, March 18, 2008).

Charlotte demonstrates Stage 3 characteristics in that she does not identify with groups outside her family and peer group. "I have always felt like I was somebody who kind of stood on the outside. I try to stay outside of groups and relationships. So, I don't necessarily identify myself with a particular group," (Personal communication, March 18, 2008). She went on to say that she participates in a couple of church groups but hasn't chosen to participate beyond that group.

Denise, a teacher who has moved numerous times with her husband, exhibits Stage 3 characteristics and in some cases Stage 2. She has no children or living relatives outside of her husband. Denise has chosen not to participate in any groups beyond her work associations at the school. Most of her affiliations are centered on her husband's groups. He was in a motorcycle club that she was loosely involved in, but she stated, "If it were not for him, I would not have joined it." They have not joined Oak View Methodist Church although they have visited for several years. "We really enjoy it. I think what is keeping us from joining is that it is so big. We just do not feel like it matters that we join. I know that is a personal thing with us," (Personal communication, March 19, 2008). It should also be noted that she often spoke in terms of "we," referring to the beliefs of Denise and her husband, instead of speaking from her perspective alone.

Aspect E, Locus of Authority, focuses on three topics: selection of authority, relationships with authority figures, and responses to authority (Fowler, 1981). Three

questions provided material for this aspect: Meaning, Beliefs, and Always Right. Stage 6 authority is internalized and the person at this stage will make decisions based on his or her intuitions of the principle of being. The average for the participants in this study is 3.95. For the individual at Stage 3, group consensus and social convention play an important role in his or her acceptance of authority. This individual attends to primarily conventional authority symbols and personal charisma as an important validator of authority. Ann commented,

"I have always believed in the Golden Rule, doing to others as you would have them do to you. I also believe that people teach you how to treat them…You cannot be friends with every person in the planet, and I know where I work there are probably people who I am just irritating. They are introverts; they are negative; they just do not get me, and there are some people who I choose not to hang out with them," (Personal communication, March 18, 2008).

Demonstrating Stage 5 traits, Nelda believes in a critically informed individual conscience, as well as individual choice and responsibility.

"I believe in letting people decide, between them and God, what is right for them. In other words, I do not believe in judging people. I think that is the biggest sin of all…we don't know what we would do if we were in their shoes…I think God made us different and He expects more from some than He does of others," (Personal communication, April 2, 2008).

On the issues of morals, Charlotte demonstrated multiple perspectives and a critically informed conscience typically seen in Stage 5. She spoke of the many ways to view killing others through murder and in wars. "I think killing people is wrong, yet I

know there are some wars that are justified and that involved killing people." She went on to discuss her sense of right and wrong. "Yes, I have a personal sense of right or wrong. I just don't necessarily think that my personal sense of right and wrong is absolute," (Personal communication, March 18, 2008).

Most respondents agreed that the most important beliefs and values to them are their God, faith, family, and church.

Aspect F, Form of World Coherence, describes how a person constructs the object world and includes the person's worldview and how it is constructed (Fowler, 1981). Three prompts provide data indicating the respondent's form of world coherence: Purpose of Human Life, Death, and defining a Religious Person or a person of Mature Faith. Statements categorized as Stage 5 will show complexity in thinking about the world and will place emphasis on different perspectives. Demonstrating traits of Stage 5, Maeve accepts the possibility that much that is true remains hidden and she spoke with openness about the mystery of death. She answered the question, "What happens when we die?"

> "Oh, it is just crossing over to a lighted room. We are in the dark. We think we are in the light, but we are in the dark right now pretty much, wandering around, trying to find our way and do the right thing. We talk about these things in terms of our human minds and the limitations of which we speak and think. God may have something a whole lot better planned than that. I have no idea what happens to us after death. I am not going to be concerned about it. I know that God is in charge and He is the one that is the magnificent thinker, not I," (Personal communication, April 3, 2008).

Most respondents expressed a belief in both heaven and hell but disagreed on what might be required to go to heaven. While most agreed with Charles, "Jesus said the only route to me is through Jesus Christ because why else would He have died?" (Personal communication, April 7, 2008). Many of the interviewees addressed what Charles calls the "time concept." He noted, "I have always debated the time concept, are we immediately going to God's presence or are we sitting in a suspended state until the second coming, and I realize it does not matter. Death is your reward. You are going to be with God. It does not matter when it takes place," (Personal communication, April 7, 2008). He displayed Stage 4 logic by critically reflecting on his faith position.

Denise demonstrated a reluctance to discuss death based on her concern for family members who had died and did not "have a faith." She stated, "It is really hard to think of my family members not being with me. So, I do not think about it," (Personal communication, March 19, 2008). Similarly, Linda reflected on the concept of heaven and her Jewish husband. When asked about what happens when we die, she stated,

> "A peaceful thing, because I feel like when a person dies they are, in fact, if they are Christians they are in heaven, because I believe in that concept. It is a little harder for me now, because my husband not being Christian I just have some issues with that, because I just worry about him. But that was kind of one of our deals when we got married. I would not try to convert him and he would not try to convert me, so that is hard to even think about," (Personal communication, March 18, 2008).

Both Denise and Linda reflect Stage 3 views that are tacit rather than explicit.

When asked whether or not they consider themselves religious, fifteen responded, "yes," and six responded, "no." However, their definitions of a religious person are quite different. Denise does not see herself as a religious person and stated, "When I think of a religious person, I think of someone who has got the trappings of religion. They wear the clothing. I am not sure it is so internal," (Personal communication, March 19, 2008). Jack sees himself as religious and defines it as, "Believing in Jesus Christ, God, going to church, trying to be as Christ-like as possible," (Personal communication, March 26, 2008). Margie sees herself as religious and describes it as "following a set of rules of consistently," (Personal communication, March 24, 2008). Maeve prefers to describe herself as "spiritual," and commented,

> "Religious? I guess so. I am more inclined to try to be spiritual than religious. Religious is sort of a pattern by which we worship God. I guess I am because I am pretty staid in my pattern of worship," (Personal communication, April 3, 2008).
>
> Nelda bristled at the term "religious" and likened it to being rigid. "Rigid in what

you do about your faith if you're religious. I am not rigid. I do not know any people that really are rigid. The ones that I do know that are rigid in their faith are not very good company," (Personal communication, April 2, 2008). To the contrary, Nola is proud to be called "religious." "Religious. To me, I guess it is just about my relationship with God, my wanting to live my life for God. God, just being my everything that is what it means to me," (Personal communication, March 20, 2008). These differences point to the challenge in Christian education of clarifying the terms and faith language so that better communication can take place.

Aspect G, Symbolic Function, is concerned with how the respondent understands, appropriates, and utilizes symbols in the process of meaning making and locating centers of value (Fowler, 1981). Three questions address this aspect: Image of God, Ritual, and Spiritual Discipline. Individuals at Stage 5 translate symbols into concepts and are open to the power that the symbol has to evoke and sustain meaning. This individual uses a variety of analytical methods. While symbols are taken seriously, they are not literally interpreted. When asked about the importance of rituals, Maeve commented,

"I was responsible for getting the ash ready for three or four years, and I do not know that I really understood the ritual until I got those ashes and put them through a sieve. Plus the fact, after Ash Wednesday, I was at a restaurant and people came in and they had the ashes on their foreheads also. I felt a unity with them. So symbols have a tendency to unite us as churches, as religious patterns of worship and belief," (Personal communication, April 3, 2008).

Similarly, Nola expressed the value of symbols when she spoke of the cross.

"It is always a reminder of Jesus' love for us that He did not have to do it but He came on this earth and He died for me and my sins. And I cannot put into words how that makes me feel just knowing that somebody would just do something so amazing for me and in doing that just open the way for me to be able to go to heaven…The cross is just a reminder that if Jesus did that why can I not carry my cross when I am right here on earth?" (Personal communication, March 20, 2008).

Several respondents spoke about symbols and rituals in comments typical of Stage 3 views that did not go beyond one-dimensional literalism. Charlotte commented, "Communion, I guess the cross. I am not a particularly ritualistic person. Sometimes the

ritual itself substitutes what the ritual stands for," (Personal communication, March 18, 2008). Charles noted about communion, "It gives me a chance to reflect and to speak to God," (Personal communication, April 7, 2008). Donald said, "Baptism is important. I was raised a Baptist, and I think they have it right when it comes to baptism. I like communion, but I still don't fully understand it," (Personal communication, March 24, 2008).

On the topic of Image of God, several respondents shared Stage 5 thinking as they described the change in their views of God through their life span. Carla spoke passionately about her childhood and then her adult views of God.

"We were taught if you did certain things, you are going straight to hell and I can remember as a child, sitting in church and I have an aunt who was divorced and her ex-husband was an alcoholic. My pastor was preaching on divorce and said that people who divorce go to hell. It has left such a mark. I guess I thought she was going to hell and it upset me," (Personal communication, March 20, 2008). Then Carla reflected on her past views,

"I let everybody else tell me what God wanted me to do. I am an adult and I can make adult decisions and be okay with them. I think. 'How can people live without God because he is so wonderful?' I am not so scared of God anymore. I just want to do what He wants me to do," (Personal communication, March 20, 2008).

Maeve's description of her current image of God reveals a Stage 5 trait. She is no longer bound by the need to establish firm conceptual boundaries.

"He is still my creator. He is still in charge. I do not profess to and I do not even

try to figure out how He is in charge or what His meanings are. I am not the

person to talk to about why God allows wars, those kinds of things. I say it is

impossible to figure that out. He is the person that I trust to take care of things.

And that does not mean that I would not act because I would expect Him to do it

for me. Whatever direction the world is going, I cannot figure it out but He knows

and I trust Him completely with the events in my life now too, whatever happens,

I will get through it and it is for a purpose," (Personal communication, April 3,

2008).

Charles shows a tacit understanding of God and even resists the idea of analysis

of a symbol, characteristics of Stage 3. When asked to describe his image of God, Charles

responded,

"No change. He is still up there and after having studied the book of Job carefully,

I realized I have no idea how God operates. He did not ask me. I was not there

when He formed the world. It is hard to conceptualize God," (Personal

communication, April 7, 2008).

All twenty-one respondents stated that they pray, and eighteen of them pray daily.

Many of them set aside either morning or evening for a devotional time or a period of

meditation. Ella expressed depth and the multi-dimensional aspects of prayer

"Prayer allows God to speak to you. It is your way of reaching out to Him but also

in the meditation, when I am trying to be quiet and listen. Not just always the one

talking. And that also helps me to understand and interpret the Bible because it is

easy to misunderstand or misinterpret. I want to make sure to try to understand

what He is really trying to say to us," (Personal communication, March 25, 2008).

The analysis of each of these seven aspects for each of the respondents led to the Stage assignment.

Summary

This chapter extended the data analysis in Chapter 4. Chapter 4 provided the analysis of the Religious Schema Scale (RSS), the quantitative measure of faith scale. This chapter provides the qualitative analysis of the Faith Development Interview (FDI). The research process included twenty-one interviewees who were randomly selected from the adult RSS participants who agreed to be interviewed. These interviewees, ranging in age from 21 to 86, were interviewed according to the guidelines set forth in the *Manual for Faith Development Research* (Fowler, et.al. 2004). The interviews were professionally transcribed, and then coded and analyzed using the computerized procedures in Nvivo 7. The average of each of the seven aspects was calculated to get the stage assignment for each interviewee.

The chapter included the demographics and a profile of each respondent. All 21 participants profess to be Christians, and the average FDI of all participants is 3.83. The group is well educated; most hold college degrees and advanced degrees. They come from diverse denominational backgrounds, but all currently attend the Methodist church.

The chapter provided an analysis of each of the research questions. In addressing a primary research question on the relationship between Christian programs and faith levels, the researcher was unable to determine a positive relationship between faith levels and participation in Christian Education programs. The RSS showed no significant

relationship. The interviewees' show a variety of faith stages and there is no identifiable relationship between those who participate in Bible studies and scored a high stage on the FDI.

On the issue of a relationship between gender and faith levels, females scored slightly higher than men on the FDI. The mean for females on the FDI is slightly higher at 3.97 than the mean for males at 3.49. These results are typical of FDI scores based on gender.

The researcher noted that there is no relationship between the scores for FDI and age. The youngest participants do not have the lowest scores, and the oldest interviewee does not have the highest score on the FDI. However, it is noted that typically the younger interviewees scored 3s and the older interviewees scored 4s and 5s.

The bulk of this chapter is devoted to the attitudes and values in life that have shaped the faith of the interviewees. The FDI answers provided the researcher with a wide scope of data by which to study the faith perspectives of the sample from Oak View Church. Few of them have had what are described as breakthrough events or epiphanies during their journey of faith. Many of them describe crises in their lives with deaths and divorces being the most frequently mentioned. While most of the respondents reflected positively on their current relationship with their parents, many discussed strained relationships with parents in their pasts. Most defined "sin" as a separation from God.

Many respondents determined that evil is associated with Satan; others stated evil is caused by man's free will. Most of the respondents do not affiliate with many groups outside their church involvement and family groups. Most respondents agreed that the most important beliefs and values to them are their God, faith, family, and church. Most

of them consider themselves religious, but they have different definitions of the term. They all pray and most pray daily. The study and comparison of the responses has provided a rich analysis of the faith perceptions of the interviewees.

CHAPTER SIX

FINDINGS, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Chapter Six presents a summary of the main points of this dissertation. The purpose of this study was to investigate characteristics of the faith development of members of the congregation of Oak View Methodist Church. The research evaluated the relationship between a person's faith level and his/her participation in Christian education. Contributing to the body of faith development research, this research served as an extension of James Fowler's (1981) Faith Development Theory, as well as the Faith Styles Model (Streib, 2001; 2005), which is an advancement of FDT. The researcher also investigated whether there is a significant relationship between the Faith Development Interview (FDI) (Appendix A), a qualitative measure of faith development and the Religious Schema Scale (RSS) (Appendix B), a quantitative measure of faith development. This chapter includes the following sections: literature overview, research methodology, findings, implications and recommendations for the church and implications and recommendations for faith development research.

Literature Overview

The literature review traced faith development theory from the influence of Piaget (1967) and Kohlberg (1981), through Fowler (1981). It also reviewed criticism of Fowler's theory and the extension of this work by Heinz Streib (2001), who presents a faith styles perspective with a quantitative measure for faith development.

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For over thirty years Fowler's structural-development model of faith has been the dominant paradigm for studies in faith development (Downs, 1995; Dykstra, 1986; Jones, 2004). As the originator of Faith Development Theory, Fowler is considered the seminal researcher in the psychology of religion (Downs, 1995). In developing his theory, Fowler (1981), following the patterns of Piaget (1967), Kohlberg (1969), and Erikson (1963), used traditional divisions of developmental eras: infancy, early childhood, childhood, adolescence, young adulthood, adulthood, and maturity. Fowler was influenced by the cognitive development theory of Piaget, the moral development theory of Kohlberg, and the psychosocial theory of Erikson.

Piaget demonstrated a succession of four different "stages' characterized by developmentally related "structures of the whole" (Fowler, 1981, p. 44). Piaget's work primarily focused on children and posited that they reason differently at various periods in their lives. He believed that everyone passes through invariant sequences, a key element to Fowler's (1981) theory. Kohlberg (1969) offered a structural theory of moral development. Following Piaget's method of interviewing children, Fowler devised a method for discovering how people respond to moral dilemmas. Fowler (1981) was interested in Kohlberg's views of how persons structure their judgments about the social world. While Piaget (1967) and Kohlberg (1969) focused their stage analyses on structural development, Erikson (1963) attended more broadly to the development of the personality as a whole as it interacts with persons, institutions, and cultures. Fowler acknowledges that Piaget (1967) and Kohlberg (1969) gave him impetus to study the structuring aspects of faith, while Erikson helped focus on the functional aspect of faith,

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the issues which help people cope during the different structural stages in the life cycle (Fowler, 1981).

With both theological and psychological foundations, the empirical core of Fowler's faith development theory is based on 359 interviews that he and his associates conducted from 1972 to 1981. Following Piaget's (1967) method of interviewing children to determine their cognitive development and Kohlberg's (1969) method of interviewing children to determine their response to moral dilemmas, Fowler (1981) devised his interview process.

Fowler (1981) has suggested six faith stages through which humans progress. Corresponding to Piaget's (1967) theory, Fowler's first three stages center around a child's cognitive abilities. Typically, in young adulthood, a person develops Stage 4 faith, characterized by an interruption of the person's reliance on external authority figures (Fowler, 1995). Stage 5 generally develops in midlife or beyond. The person is aware of self-limitations, recognizes that people have different insights, and has a greater tolerance of others who have different beliefs. Stage 6 represents an ideal and is extremely rare. Often with martyr-like characteristics, the person who achieves Stage 6 is typically devoted to universal compassion. After twenty years of evaluating faith development research, Streib has developed a new perspective on faith development and has put it in concrete forms of theory and research (Streib, 2003). His suggestion of a faith style theory questions whether the intellectual development of adults follows a structural-stage like logic or a fundamentalist form. Unlike the spiral stages of Fowler's theory, Streib's approach takes into account the transformations that take place over a lifetime and considers that a person moves back and forth among the levels of faith development.

For the purpose of conceptual and empirical precision, Streib and Hood (2007) introduce the concept of "schema." Schema is a cognitive pattern that gives structure to the way a person interprets specific experiences. Streib and Hood (2007) conclude that the distinction between schemata and styles must be "accounted for in the research design to the effect that we can be explicit about what we are able to measure with some precision (schemata) and what we can only infer upon and estimate (styles)" (pp. 4 & 5). The Religious Schema Scale quantitatively assesses faith development and consists of sets of stage-specific items designed to speak to a certain aspect of faith.

This research gave consideration to both stage-based theory and faith-styles theory as each relates to appropriate intervention methods for Oak View Methodist Church.

Methodology

The research design of this project was a mixed-method study using quantitative and qualitative approaches during different phases of the research process. The researcher conducted a descriptive and exploratory study and sought to (1) investigate levels of faith development at Oak View Methodist Church and (2) determine whether or not there is a relationship between faith styles and faith development as measured by the Religious Schema Scale (RSS) and the Faith Development Interview (FDI).

The quantitative instrument was a 15-question likert-scale survey, developed by Streib and Hood (2007) and administered to worship service attendees on a given Sunday at Oak View Methodist Church. The Religious Schema Scale (RSS) (Streib & Hood, 2007) was designed to measure for individual differences in faith orientations. Each question speaks to a certain domain or aspect of faith and is listed under three sub-scales

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or schemata called Factors. The questions are designed by Streib and Hood (2007) to address stage-specific items found in Fowler's faith development. The researcher distributed 900 surveys to attendees at three worship services on a Sunday morning. The response rate was 666 surveys, or 74%. The researcher used descriptive statistics, frequencies, t-tests, and one-way ANOVA to analyze the data collected for this study.

A model of faith development research designed by Fowler (1981) was used as the qualitative guide for the in-depth interviews for this study. The qualitative methodology included the FDI (Faith Development Interview) of a sample from the church membership. From the adult participants in the RSS, twenty-one interviewees were randomly selected from those who indicated their willingness to be interviewed. As provided in the *Manual for Faith Development Research* (Fowler, et.al, 2004*)*, the interview questions consisted of a series of twenty-five questions in four categories: life tapestry/life review; relationships; present values and commitments; and religion (Fowler, et al., p. 63). Following Fowler's interview guide, in-depth interviews were conducted, then transcribed, coded and analyzed using the faith development theory criteria.

Findings and Discussion

This section presents the results of the research questions for both the quantitative and qualitative findings. The research shows acceptable reliability and validity.

One of the rationales for this study is based on the Christian education needs of Oak View Methodist Church. The church is concerned for the spiritual growth and development of the congregation at Oak View Methodist Church. The church desires to better assist members in their spiritual growth by determining their stage of faith development and then developing programs to support them. This research will provide

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the church needed data for use in designing Christian education programs. A discussion of the findings of two primary research questions and two secondary research questions follows.

Primary Research Question #1: What is the relationship between faith levels and participation in Christian education programs?

Christian education programs include Bible Study/Sunday School and Disciple classes. The church offers two Sunday School class meeting times on Sunday morning and a total of four Disciple classes that meet at various times throughout the week. Respondents were asked to indicate their participation in Sunday School and Bible studies in the past year and their participation in any of the Disciple classes that the church offers. Factors other than Bible Study classes, Sunday School classes, and Disciples classes must contribute to faith levels, since these survey results indicate there is no significant relationship between faith levels and Christian education participation.

The data shows that there is no relationship between a person's faith level and his/her participation in Christian education programs. This study supports the conceptual message about the influence of several factors in the faith styles perspective noted by Streib and Hood (2008). While cognitive-structural forces are at work in determining the preference for a specific faith style, one's contents of faith, inter-personal relations, life-world influences and biography also affect his/her faith level (Streib and Hood, 2008). A discussion of the findings of each Null Hypothesis follows.

Null Hypothesis #1 proposed that there is no relationship between faith level and participation in Disciple classes. Disciple classes are intensive Bible study classes that meet weekly for one year. Based on the results from the RSS, the study found that there

is no relationship between faith levels and one's participation in Christian education programs. The Null Hypothesis was retained. No relationship between a person's faith level and his/her participation in Disciple classes was apparent. This finding was surprising. Since Disciple classes are intense studies that require daily preparation and weekly meetings, the researcher and church staff expected that Disciple participation would significantly influence the students' faith levels. However, other variables must be considered. For example, survey participants were not asked to indicate information about their personal devotional time or other similar classes that might have influenced their faith. The survey did not account for religious teachings they may have experienced prior to programs at Oak View. These programs may have influenced their faith. Another consideration is that members who participate in Disciple classes increase their knowledge about their religion but not their faith level. Disciple participants study specific books of the Bible. Those who participate in all four courses will have studied the entire Bible. The findings of this study indicate that the studies do not promote growth in faith but do promote the growth of biblical knowledge.

It is interesting to note that only 27% of the survey participants have participated in Disciple classes, while 48% of the interviewees have participated in the classes. This higher percentage indicates that those who participate in in-depth Bible study programs like Disciple might be more comfortable discussing their faith, and therefore, agreed to be interviewed.

Null Hypothesis #2 suggested that there is no relationship between faith level and Bible study and Sunday School participation. The null hypothesis was retained showing that there is no relationship between a person's faith level and his/her participation in

Bible Study and Sunday School classes. Typically, Christian educators and other church leaders believe that Sunday School promotes a growth of faith, so this finding was troubling. Oak View offers a variety of Sunday School and Bible study classes that are typically classified as Small Groups. Sunday School classes are offered on Sunday mornings at both 8:50 and 10:00 a.m., and other Bible studies are offered at various times during the week. These classes are meant to support members in their faith journey by providing studies of inspirational books by contemporary authors and by studying books of the Bible. The findings suggest that these programs are not influencing the faith of the members as significantly as the church would have desired. Whereas Disciple classes are designed to promote intensive biblical studies, these small group studies have a different focus. They include interaction on a variety of topics related to spiritual growth and development. Other factors must be considered in order to explain this finding. The study does not account for the various teaching methods, styles, or resources that teachers used in their classes that may or may not affect an individual's growth in faith. Classes may be lecture based and not offer personal interaction that often leads to discussions of faith. Classes might not offer opportunities for members to share stories of their faith and thus provide the group insight into life stories that might influence faith.

One of the topics the RSS instrument focuses on concerns the teachings of one's religion, as well as the beliefs of other faiths. If Bible study classes do not explore teachings of other religions, then the classes would not provide support for the RSS questions related to other religions. Another area of concern is that most respondents are open to discussion about other religions but are not as open to the idea of holding positive dialogue with people of other faiths about religion. This finding suggests that while

participants in Bible study classes may discuss various religions, they probably do not encourage students' to engage in dialogue with those who have different beliefs.

 It is noteworthy that 81% of the interviewee participants have attended Sunday School or Bible Study classes in the last year as compared to 44% of the survey participants. This result indicates that survey participants who were engaged in Bible study groups might be more open to discussing their faith than those who are not engaged in these groups. Bible study participants often spend time in class sharing stories of their faith.

In addition to these quantitative results, the interviewees show a variety of faith stages and there is no identifiable relationship between those who participate in Bible studies and scores on the FDI.

The researcher used Pearson r to examine the interrelationships among the three RSS factors: Truth of Texts and Teaching (ttt), Fairness, Tolerance, and Rational Choice (ftr), and Xenosophia (xenos). The Pearson r was checked against all three variables and revealed there is no significant correlation between Disciple class participation and the RSS in all three variables. Since Disciple students tend to be more committed to learning about the teachings of their religions, this finding is troubling.

Null Hypothesis #3 suggested that there is no relationship between the factor Truth of Text and Teaching and Disciple participation. The null was accepted. A person's participation in a Disciple class does not necessarily mean that he/she will will be open to various interpretations of the text, stories, and teachings of his/her religion. Since Disciple classes are in-depth biblical studies, this finding is disappointing to the researcher and the church leadership. The participants make a year long commitment to

attend weekly classes and complete assignments related to the study. With this level of commitment and study, one would expect higher faith level scores from participants than non-participants. Certainly disappointing to Christian educators is the finding that questions related to Biblical teachings did not show a significant relationship.

Null Hypothesis #4 proposed that there is no relationship between Fairness, Tolerance, and Rational Choice and Disciple participation. The null hypothesis was accepted. This data indicates that the respondents' participation in Disciple classes does not predict his/her sense of fairness, tolerance, and decision-making in regard to culture, society, and religion. This finding is not as surprising as the findings in the previous Null Hypothesis since Disciple classes do not necessarily focus on issues related to this question. Instead, students study scripture passages in their historical context. However, it would seem logical for students to discuss issues of fairness, tolerance, and decision-making based on biblical principles during the course of the class. This finding may indicate that students do not engage in dialogue about cultures, society, and religion that would have the potential to increase their faith.

Null Hypothesis # 5 suggested that there is no relationship between Xenosophia and Disciple participation. This null hypothesis was accepted. The Xenos factor indicates how open the respondents are to religious views other than his/her own. The findings suggest that a person's participation in the Disciple classes does not indicate that he/she will appreciate the differences found in other religions. Again, Disciple courses do not incorporate the precepts of other religions in the curriculum, so it would not be expected that just by taking these courses, one would increase his/her faith level. However, one could expect that since the participants of this program tend to be more committed to

learning more about their faith through extensive Bible study that they would score a higher faith level than those who did not experience the course.

Null Hypotheses #6, #7, and #8 refer to the relationship among the three RSS Factors: ftr, ttt, xenos. All three were rejected. Null Hypothesis #6 suggested there is a significant relationship between Fairness, Tolerance, Rational Choice and Truth of Text and Teaching. Respondents who are tolerant of others and look for fair resolutions are also are accepting of the teachings of their religious texts. Null Hypothesis #7 proposed a significant relationship between Xenosophia and Truth of Text and Teaching. In other words, survey participants who are typically accepting of their religious teachings are also more open to engaging in dialogue with people from different religions. Null Hypothesis #8 indicated there is a significant relationship between Xenosophia and Fairness, Tolerance, and Rational Choice. Respondents who appreciate the differences in others in regard to religion are also likely to be more tolerant and strive for fair resolutions. It is interesting to note that xenos has a negative correlation with ttt. This finding indicates that a participant who appreciates the differences he/she finds in those from different religions probably does not strictly accept the absolute teachings of his/her own religion. Streib and Hood (2008) report similar findings regarding ttt and xenos.

Secondary Research Question #1:

What is the relationship between faith levels and church membership?

Survey respondents were asked to indicate their membership status with 4 options: not a member, less than a year, 1-5 years, or more than 5 years. Null Hypothesis #9 was retained. A one-way ANOVA test was used to determine if there is a significant difference between the scores on the RSS based on length of church membership. The

data finds that whether a respondent is a church member or has been a member for any length of time does not impact his/her score on the RSS. This finding is not surprising. Membership in church does not mean someone will have a high faith level, nor does length of membership indicate a high faith level. There are other variables that impact one's faith. The study did not take into consideration the impact of previous church memberships or how active the respondent is in his/her attendance at the church.

Secondary Research Question #2:

What is the relationship between faith levels and gender?

Respondents were asked to indicate their gender on the survey. Null Hypothesis #9 was retained. There is no relationship between a person's faith level and gender. It is noted that 376 females and 284 males took the survey and the mean for both groups was slightly over 48. As for the qualitative data, females scored slightly higher than men on the FDI; however, there is no significant difference in their scores. This data shows that one cannot expect a difference in faith level based on gender.

Descriptive statistics were also used to describe the samples' faith scale in the three factors of the RSS: Truth of Texts and Teachings (ttt), Fairness, Tolerance, and Rational Choice (ftr), and Xenosophia (xenos). The mean of 20.62 for RSS Truth of Text and Teaching indicates that the participants have a high sense of fairness, tolerance, and rational approach. The mean for Fairness, Tolerance, Rational Choice is 21.79 and indicates that the participants have a high degree of openness to inter-religious dialogue. The mean for Xenosophia 17.62 indicates that the participants view their biblical teachings with a more open perspective than with a more fundamental perspective when it comes to other religions. This factor shows the lowest mean, indicating many

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respondents are not open to views of other religions. Based on these findings, overall, the congregation at Oak View exhibits an openness to other beliefs and an appreciation of differences; however, they do not engage in religious dialogue with people from other faiths. This finding is surprising as the church's membership includes people from a variety of denominational backgrounds. Members include former Catholics, Baptists, Presbyterians, among other denominations, as well as members who were previously unchurched. One factor that draws members from various backgrounds is the perceived openness of the congregation. Anecdotal evidence suggests that many members left previous churches because they desired to leave fundamentalist teachings for a more tolerant and open congregation. One explanation might be related to the use of "religion" in the questions in this factor. The congregation might be open to dialogue with members of other denominations about their differences but not as open to discuss differences with members of other religions.

Primary Research Question #2: What is the relationship between the Religious Schema Scale and the Faith Development Interview?

One of the rationales for the study was based on the need to extend the current literature related to faith development theory and faith styles perspective. This study adds to the body of faith development research. The Religious Schema Scale (RSS) serves as a quantitative advancement and revision of Fowler's (1981), faith development theory. Streib and Hood (2008) reduced the original 78-item version of the RSS to a version with 19 items consisting of 3 subscales with acceptable reliabilities. This research included Streib and Hood's newest version of the RSS, a 15-item survey, which consists of 3 sub-scales with 5 questions in each.

A significant correlation shows there is a relationship between the FDI and RSS (r = . 493, p = .023). This data is significant to the body of faith development research and is a major finding in this study. This finding indicates that the RSS has potential to be predictive of FDI scores. The study found that 24.3% of the variance in FDI is accounted for by variance in RSS. However, the small sample of 21 interviewees makes the prediction tenuous and does not allow for a multiple regression.

Streib and Hood (2008), in their study of 828 participants in the U.S.A. and Germany, discuss the characteristics of the RSS to indicate or predict faith styles and faith stages. In their findings, Streib and Hood (1981) drew this conclusion:

Because the RSS measures a limited number of schemata, we can not expect perfect predictive characteristics of the RSS in regard to FDI ratings; in Fowler's terms, we would say, the RSS measures only specific structural patterns in selected aspects. (p. 25)

Streib and Hood (2008) also acknowledge that faith stages "are the absolute point of reference for external validation." (p. 25). Their study found that specific schemata, especially factors ttt and xenos could be expected to display at least moderate predictive power.

This study extends the work of Streib and Hood (2008). This research shows that a relationship exists between the FDI and RSS (r = .493, p = .023). This data is significant to the body of faith development research. While this study only included 21 participants of both the FDI and the RSS, the results show there is further need to test the predictive powers of the RSS and the FDI.

The researcher agrees with the findings of Streib and Hood (2008) that the most ideal way to do a comprehensive assessment of faith styles or stages is through the qualitative process of in-depth interviews. However, this research concurs with the findings of Streib and Hood (2008) that the new quantitative measure, the RSS, is reliable and valid enough to indicate three faith schemata and suggests further study.

Secondary Research Question #3: What are the attitudes and values in life that have shaped the faith of the interviewees?

The mean for all survey respondents on the RSS is 3.25, while the mean for the interviewees on the RSS is 3.37. These scores, based on a 5-point likert scale, reveal the participants have a degree of openness about their faith and acceptance of other beliefs. They also have a high sense of fairness, tolerance, and rational approach and view their biblical teachings with a more open perspective than with a more fundamental perspective. However, they are not as open to engaging in inter-religious dialogue with those from other religions. These scores reflect results similar to those obtained from the larger sample of survey respondents.

The bulk of Chapter Five is devoted to the attitudes and values in life that have shaped the faith of the interviewees. The FDI answers provided the researcher with a wide scope of data by which to study the faith perspectives of the sample from Oak View Church.

1. Only a few of them have had what are described as breakthrough events or epiphanies during their journey of faith.

2. Many of them describe crises in their life with deaths and divorces being the most frequently mentioned.

3. While most of the respondents reflected positively on their current relationship with their parents, many discussed strained relationships with parents in their pasts.

4. Most defined "sin" as a separation from God.

5. Many respondents determined that evil is associated with Satan; others stated evil is caused by man's free will.

6. Most of the respondents do not affiliate with many groups outside their church involvement and family groups.

7. Most respondents agreed that the most important beliefs and values to them are their God, faith, family, and church.

8. Most of them consider themselves religious, but they have different definitions of the term.

9. They all pray and most pray daily.

In addition to providing insight in the relation between CE participation and faith styles, the research provides helpful demographic information.

1. More females than males participated in the survey.

2. The largest percentage of participants, 42%, has been church members for more than 5 years.

3. Seventy percent of the participants are ages 40 or older.

4. A high percentage of the participants, 71%, are married.

5. The percentage of participants at each service, 8:00, 9:30, and 11:00 a.m., reflects the average weekly attendance on a given Sunday morning: 7%, 47%, and 46%, respectively.

6. Fifty-six percent of the participants have not attended Sunday School or a Bible Study class at the church in the last year.

7. Only 48% percent of the participants have participated in a Disciple class.

8. Participants do not have a high degree of openness to inter-religious dialogue.

9. Participants have a high sense of fairness, tolerance, and rational approach.

10. Participants view their biblical teachings with a more open perspective than with a more fundamental perspective.

11. All 21 participants profess to be Christians.

12. The average FDI of all participants is 3.83.

13. The group is well educated; most hold college degrees and advanced degrees.

14. They come from diverse denominational backgrounds, but all currently attend the Methodist church.

Conclusions

While this study resulted in some findings that many Christian educators might consider disappointing, it also concludes with suggestions for further study. The following conclusions are drawn from this study.

1. The results of Religious Schema Scale indicate that there is no relationship between Christian education and faith level and Christian educators should look to other variables for increasing their members' faith level.

2. The FDI offers rich text about the attitudes and values in life that have shaped the faith of the interviewees and proves useful in providing data for Christian educators about faith levels of the congregation.

3. The Religious Schema Scale shows promise as a predictor of Faith Development Interview scores and warrants further study. The use of the RSS, when proven to be a reliable and valid predictor of FDI, will provide a much more time and cost effective method of measuring faith levels than the FDI. However, the qualitative method of the FDI remains the most comprehensive assessment or stages of faith.

4. If the goal of Bible study and Disciple is to develop a stronger faith in the participants, this Religious Schema Scale results indicate that the goal is not being achieved.

5. The Religious Schema Scale results reveal an unanticipated yet important conclusion. The score on one subscale does not predict the score on another subscale. The Oak View congregation has beliefs rooted in the Bible (ttt) and a strong sense of fairness and tolerance of others (ftr); however, they are not interested in interfaith dialogue (xenos). Considering the value of this kind of dialogue in a modern, globalized community, this finding has strong educational implications for the church.

Recommendations for Practice

One of the primary goals of Christian education programs is to increase the faith level of members. Since these findings indicate that the goal is not being attained, perhaps Christian educators should consider examining the curriculum of their programs. A curriculum evaluation could provide insight into the methodology and content of the course offerings. Churches might consider using the FDI as a pre-course and post-course measurement to gain further understanding about the faith level of program participants. Oak View Methodist Church should use the RSS findings as a launching point to design

programs to increase the levels of faith. The lowest mean on the RSS was for Factor 3: Xenosophia, which indicates a strong openness to other religious views. The church might offer programs that teach about the precepts of other Christian denominations, as well as other religions. To increase the congregation's sense of fairness and tolerance, the church might consider offering classes in decision-making regarding culture, society, and religion. To increase the level of understanding of their own text, the Bible, and the text of other religions, the church might include discussions of other religious texts in various contexts. Since many participants do not participate in Christian education programs at the church, the church should consider options for increasing the faith level of the congregants that extend beyond structured, weekly classes. Perhaps periodic seminars, newsletters, and sermons would be viable avenues to discuss some of the faith-related issues.

Religious educators find FDI useful in preparing leaders to teach to the different stages of development and to match their methods to the groups' faith stage (Fowler, 2004). It would be helpful for the church to develop teachers within the church with more information about faith development so that they can lead classes patterned after the FDI questions.

<center>Recommendations for Further Study</center>

This research centered on a small sample of twenty-one FDI participants, a limitation to the study. In order to provide data of the predictive powers of the FDI on the RSS, future research should include a larger sample in order to check for the predictive powers of several variables. Future research is also needed to determine the reliability and validity of the RSS, as well as how other measures of religiosity may relate to RSS.

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In addition, churches might consider a study using the FDI as a pre-course and post-course measure of faith development. In addition, research of the faith level of congregations from other denominations is encouraged. As this study showed, being high on one subscale does not mean an individual will be high on another subscale, further study is needed to explore the differences in the three subscales of the Religious Schema Scale.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A
Faith Development Interview Questions

LIFE TAPESTRY/LIFE REVIEW
- Reflecting on your life, identify its major chapters. What marker events stand out as especially important?
- Are there past relationships that have been important to your development as a person?
- Do you recall any changes in relationships that have had a significant impact on your life or your way of thinking about things?
- How has your image of God and relation to God changed across your life's chapters? Who or what is God to you now?
- Have you ever had moments of intense joy or breakthrough experiences that have affirmed or changed your sense of life's meaning?
- Have you experienced times of crisis or suffering in your life or times when you felt profound disillusionment, or that life had no meaning? What happened to you at these times? How have these experiences affected you?

RELATIONSHIPS
- Focusing now on the present, how would you describe your parents and your current relationship to them? Have there been any changes in your perceptions of your parents over the years? If so, what caused the change?
- Are there any other current relationships that seem important to you?
- What groups, institutions, or causes, do you identify with? Why do you think that these are important to you?

PRESENT VALUES AND COMMITMENTS
- Do you feel that your life has meaning at present? What makes life meaningful to you?
- If you could change one thing about yourself or you life, what would you most want to change?
- Are there any beliefs, values, or commitments that seem important to your life right now?
- When or where do you find yourself most in communion or harmony with God or the universe?
- What is your image or model (an idea or a person) of mature faith?
- When you have an important decision to make, how do you generally go about making it? Can you give me an example? If you have a very difficult problem to solve, to whom or what would you look for guidance?
- Do you think that actions can be right or wrong? If so, what makes an action right in your opinion?
- Are there certain actions or types of actions that are always right under any circumstances? Are there certain actions or types of actions that are always right

under any circumstances? Are there certain moral opinions that you think everyone should agree on?

RELIGION
- Do you think that human life has a purpose? If so, what do you think it is? Is there a plan for our lives, or are we affected by a power or powers beyond our control?
- What does death mean to you? What happens to us when we die?
- Do you consider yourself a religious person? What does this mean to you?
- Are there any religious ideas, symbols or rituals that are important to you, or have been important to you? If so, what are these and why are they important?
- Do you pray, mediate, or perform any other spiritual discipline?
- What is sin, to your understanding?
- How do you explain the presence of evil in our world?
- If people disagree about a religious issue, how can such religious conflicts be resolved?

Appendix B

Religious Schema Scale
(for adults ages 18 and above)

This questionnaire contains statements that might describe your views. Read each statement carefully and decide if you agree with this statement. Please use the five-point scale and mark, for each statement, the response that best represents your opinion. Make sure that your answer is in the correct box. Please mark:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

Strongly Disagree if you strongly disagree or the statement is definitely false….
Disagree if you disagree or the statement is mostly false…
Neural if you are neutral on the statement, you cannot decide, or the statement is about equally true and false…
Agree if you agree or the statement is mostly true…
Strongly Agree if you strongly agree or the statement is definitely true…

Fill in only one response for each statement. Respond to all of the statements, making sure that you fill in the correct response. **Do not leave out any statement.** If you need to change an answer, make an X" through the incorrect response and then fill in the correct response. Please start now with the questionnaire.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

1. What the texts and stories of my religion tell me is absolutely true and must not be changed.

2. When people want to know how the world came to be, they need to hear a creation story.

3. When I have to make a decision, I take care that my plans are acceptable by my religious teachings.

4. The stories and teachings of my religion give meaning to the experiences of my life and reveal the unchangeable truth about God or the Divine.

5. The teachings of my religion offer answers to any question in my life, if I am ready to listen.

6. When I make a decision, I look at all sides of the issue and come up with the best decision possible.

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7. Although every person deserves respect and
   fairness, arguments need to be voiced rationally.

8. We should resolve differences, in how people
   appear to each other through fair and just discussion.

9. Regardless of how people appear to each other,
   we are all human.

10. It is important to understand others through a
    sympathetic understanding of their culture and
    religion.

11. We can learn from each other what ultimate truth
    each religion contains.

12. We need to look beyond the denominational and
    religious differences to find the ultimate reality.

13. When I make a decision, I am open to contradicting
    proposals from diverse sources and philosophical
    standpoints.

14. Religious stories and representations from any
    religion unite me with the ultimate universe.

15. The truth I see in other world views leads me to
    re-examine my current views.

16. Gender
       male
       female

17. Age

18. Marital status (choose one)
       Married
       Divorced
       Widowed
       Never married
       Living together/partnered

19. Have you participated in a Bible study or Sunday School class at this church in the last 12 months?

    yes
    no

20. Have you participated in a Disciple 1, 2, 3, or 4 class?

    yes
    no

21. How long have you been a member of this church?
    Not currently a member
    Less than 1 year
    1-5 years
    More than 5 years

22. Which Sunday morning worship service do you attend?
    8:00 a.m.
    9:30 a.m.
    11:00 a.m.

23. Do you agree to be interviewed, if randomly selected, as part of this research project?
    yes, and my phone number is _____
    no

Appendix C

Development Perspectives of Piaget, Erikson, Kohlberg, and Fowler

Era and Ages	PIAGET Cognitive Development	ERIKSON Psycho-Social Stages	KOHLBERG Moral Development	FOWLER Faith Development
Infancy (0 - 1½)	SENSORIMOTOR	Trust v Mistrust		PRIMAL FAITH
Early Childhood (2 - 6)	PRE-OPERATIONAL	Autonomy v Shame & Doubt Initiative v Guilt	PRE- CONVENTIONAL reward/punish	INTUITIVE-PROJECTIVE FAITH
Childhood (7 - 12)	CONCRETE OPERATIONAL	Industry v Inferiority	reciprocal relativity	MYTHICAL-LITERAL FAITH
Adolescence (13 - 21)	FORMAL OPERATIONAL	Identity v Role Confusion	CONVENTIONAL Approval/disapproval orientation/ mutual interpersonal relationships Law and order orientation. Social system & conscience. "Stage 4.5"	SYNTHETIC- CONVENTIONAL FAITH An ideology (coherent, rational, borrowed & supported by external authority)
Young Adulthood (21-35)		Intimacy v Isolation	POST- CONVENTIONAL Social contract orientation recognizes moral conflict	INDIVIDUATIVE- REFLECTIVE FAITH Recognize system, construct one's own rationalized world view
Adulthood (35-60)	POST-FORMAL OPERATIONAL	Generativity v Stagnation	Self-chosen ethical principles; universal	CONJUNCTIVE FAITH Validity of other systems; paradoxical
Maturity (60 +)		Integrity v Despair	"Stage 7"	UNIVERSALIZING FAITH Lived perfection of prior stage; often prophetic

"Developmental Psychology Netletter."
http://www.mc.maricopa.edu/dept/d46/psy/dev/Spring01/Spirituality/chart.html.

Appendix D
Life Tapestry Exercise: Instructions for the Respondent

Take a moment to review the chart entitled, The Unfolding Tapestry of My Life. Then refer back to this page for some explanation of the categories labeled at the top of the work sheet.

1. **Calendar Years from Birth:** Starting at the left column of the work sheet, number down the column from the year of your birth to the present year. If there is a substantial number of years in your life, you may wish to number the columns in two, three, or five year intervals.

2. **Age by Year:** This column simply gives you another chronological point of reference. Fill it in with the same intervals you used for calendar years on the left-hand side of the chart.

3. **Place—Geographic and Socioeconomic**: Here you may record your sense of place in several different ways. It could be the physical place you lived in at different times in your life, including the geographic area where you lived, or it could be your sense of your position in society or in the community. Record your sense of place in whatever way it seems most appropriate to you.

4. **Key Relationships:** These can be any types of relationships that you feel had a significant impact on your life at the time. The persons mentioned need not be living presently, and you need not have known them personally. (That is, they could be persons who influenced you through your reading or hearing about them, etc.)

5. **Uses and Directions of the Self:** Here you can record not only how you spent your time but also what you thought you were doing at that time.

6. **Marker Events:** Here you may record the events that you remember which marked turning points in your life-moves, marriages, divorces, etc. Major events occur and things are never the same again.

7. **Events or Conditions in Society:** In this column we ask you to record what you remember of what was going on in the world at various times in your life. Record this as an image or phrase, or a series of images and phrases, that best sums up the period for you.

8. **Images of God:** This is an invitation for you to record briefly, in a phrase or two, what your thoughts or images of God—positive and negative—were at different times of your life. If you had no image of God or cannot remember, one, answer appropriately.

9. **Centers of Value:** What were the persons, objects, institutions, or goals that formed a center for your life at this time? What attracted you, what repelled you, what did you commit your time and energy to , and what did you choose to avoid? Record only y the one or two most important ones.

10. **Authorities:** This column asks to whom or what did you look for guidance, or to ratify your decisions and choices at various points in your life.

As you work on the chart, make brief notes to yourself indicating the insights or thoughts you have under each of the columns. It is not necessary to fill out the columns in great detail. You are doing the exercise for yourself, so use shorthand or brief notes. Later you can use the second work sheet to make a copy of your tapestry to bring to the interview.

After you have finished your work with the chart, spend some time thinking about your life as a whole. Try to feel its movement and its flow, its continuities and discontinuities. As you look at the tapestry of your life, let yourself imagine it as a drama or a play. Where would the divisions of it naturally fall? If you were to divide it into chapters or episodes, how would these be titles? When you have a sense of how your life might be divided, draw lines through these areas on the chart and jot down the titles on the reverse side of the work sheet.

This is the unfolding tapestry of your life at this particular time. In the coming days or months you may want to return to it for further reflection, or to add to it things that may come to you later. Some people find that the Unfolding Tapestry exercise is a good beginning for keeping a regular journal or diary. You may find too, that if you come back to this exercise after some time has passed, the chapters and titles in your life will be different as you look at them in light of new experiences. We hope you have enjoyed doing this exercise.

Appendix D cont.

The Unfolding Tapestry of My Life									
Calendar Year	Your Age	Place, Geographic & Soc-Economic	Key Rela-tionships	Uses & Directions of the Self	Marker Events	Events & Conditions in Society/World	Images of God	Centers of Value & Power	Author-ities

Appendix E

Stage-Aspect Scoring Sheet

Aspect and Interview Questions	Stages						Sum
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Form of Logic							
Breakthrough							
Crises							
Changes in self							
Decisions							
Perspective Taking							
Current relationships							
Past relationships							
Parents							
Form of Moral Judgment							
Right action							
Sin							
Evil							
Religious conflicts							
Social Awareness							
Marker events							
Changes in relationships							

Groups							
Locus of Authority							
Your life meaning							
Beliefs							
Always right							
Form of World Coherence							
Mature faith							
Purpose of human life							
Death							
Religious person							
Symbolic Function							
Image of God							
Harmony							
Symbolic, Rituals							
SUMMARY STAGE AVERAGE							

Appendix F

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
AT CHATTANOOGA

Institutional Review Board
Dept 5305
615 McCallie Avenue
Chattanooga, TN 37403-2598
(423)425-5369

MEMORANDUM

IRB #: 08-024

TO: Cathy Robbs Turner
           c/o Dr. Hinsdale Bernard

FROM: Lindsay Pardue, Director of Research Integrity

DATE: February 25, 2008

SUBJECT: The Utilization of Faith Development Theory to Shape a Christian
           Education Program

The Institutional Review Board has reviewed and approved your application and assigned
you the IRB number listed above. You must include the following approval statement on
research materials seen by participants and used in research reports:

The Institutional Review Board of the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga
(FWA00004149) has approved this research project (# 08-024).

Please remember that you must complete Form C when the project is completed or
provide an annual report if the project takes over one year to complete. The IRB
Committee will make every effort to remind you prior to your anniversary date; however,
it is your responsibility to ensure that this additional step is satisfied.

Please remember to contact the IRB Committee immediately and submit a new project
proposal for review if significant changes occur in your research design or in any
instruments used in conducting the study. You should also contact the IRB Committee
immediately if you encounter any adverse effects during your project that pose a risk to
your subjects.

For any additional information, please consult our web page http://www.utc.edu/irb or
email instrb@utc.edu

Best wishes for a successful research project.

VITA

Cathy Robbs Turner was born in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and attended public schools there. She graduated from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga in 1976 with a B.S. degree in Secondary Education: English. She served as an English teacher at Chattanooga Central High School from 1977 until 2003 when she became a Change Coach at the school working with the administration and faculty to become a school of Career Academies. While at Central, she also served as English Department Head.

Ms. Turner received a M.Ed. in Secondary Education in English from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga in 1990. She was also on the adjunct faculty at Chattanooga State Technical Community College for eleven years. She has served on the Tennessee Performing Arts Center Education Advisory Board since 1989 and has been a presenter at numerous local, state, and national education conferences. She has led students and adults in national and international travel for over twenty-five years.

She is the Director of Education at Christ United Methodist Church in Chattanooga and oversees educational programs for all ages, nursery through senior adults. She has authored the book *Looking Forward While Coping with Life's Difficulties: Disease, Divorce, Disappointment, and Death* and speaks on the issues in the book at church and community events.

She is currently an Ed.D candidate at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, and hopes to graduate in August, 2008. She looks forward to spending more time enjoying her passions of reading, writing, traveling, and singing.