EXPLORING TRAVEL AND SPIRITUALITY: THE ROLE OF TRAVEL IN FACILITATING LIFE PURPOSE AND MEANING WITHIN THE LIVES OF INDIVIDUALS

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To Mum, Dad and Scott: Thank you for your love and support always. I love you.

To my grandparents and all my family: I am privileged to have such a wonderful family and truly appreciate your love and support.

To Jenny: You are beautiful and such a great support. You have been there throughout the ups and downs of this process and have been my rock. I love you always.

To Joshua: The sweetest, most handsome boy in the whole world. You make me smile every day. Just thinking about you makes my heart feel warm. I love you and I always will. Daddy is so lucky to have you.

To the child that is about to enter my life: I cannot wait to meet you. Daddy loves you. I will see you soon.

To Keith, Julie, Latisha, Shaun, Matt and Jack: Thanks so much for your support throughout this time. I love you.

To my friends: Thanks so much for your support, and the laughs we have.

To Angel, Aslan and Rosemary: You three are beautiful and are so loyal and loving. I love you all.

To God: For all that is good in the world.

CONTENTS.

LIST OF TABLES.

LIST OF FIGURES.

ABSTRACT.

This thesis is a phenomenological study of individuals who engaged in tours provided by Hands Up Holidays, a tour operator marketing their travel as 'spiritual'. Hands Up Holidays views spirituality as being a broader concept than religion and attracts both religious and non-religious individuals who are seeking personally meaningful experiences. With the exception of the religious tourism literature, there is a paucity of research exploring 'spirituality' within a tourism framework and, specifically, what role travel plays in the search for meaning and life purpose within the lives of individuals. Spirituality is presented by scholars as conceptually representing every individual's personal search for meaning in life; in this way, although closely related, it is conceptually different from religion; while every person is argued to be spiritual, only some are religious. The thesis aims to explore spirituality and travel; specifically, the role of travel in facilitating life purpose and meaning in the lives of individuals. To inform this study, the thesis takes a journey through a range of conceptualisations and thinking about spirituality amongst scholars. This journey reveals that each description of spirituality comprises three core constructs, these being that spirituality involves a search for meaning and life purpose, transcendence and connectedness in life. This thesis thus bases its conceptual platform on these three core constructs of spirituality.

Through the analysis of 11 in-depth individual research portraits, research participants give their voice within this thesis; in addition to recounting their travel experience with Hands Up Holidays, individuals write themselves into the research in a manner that held significant personal meaning to oneself, such as through sharing one's reflective stories, photographs and/or diaries. Key research findings were drawn from thematic analysis of each of the 11 in-depth research portraits and from my personal reflections recorded throughout the research process. Four themes arose from thematic analysis. They are titled, 'spirituality as

the essence of being human,' 'spirituality experienced subjectively and objectively,' 'life-defining moments,' and 'search for meaning fuelled by modern frustrations'. Analysis of these themes yielded five main findings. Firstly, each person could be conceptually considered 'spiritual'; this has ramifications for how 'spiritual tourism' is conceptualised. Secondly, individuals do not separate their spirituality from their travel experiences (that is, their travel experiences are filtered through how they derive meaning and purpose in their life); this highlights the need for the travel experience to be explored within the wider context of an individual's life. Thirdly, an individual's spirituality is expressed subjectively and objectively. Fourthly, each individual experienced 'life-defining' moments, which influenced how one derives life meaning and the personal meaning one imbues onto one's travel experiences. Fifthly, certain individuals experienced significant frustration with contemporary, primarily Western World issues, that influenced one's travel motivations and experiences. Future research from different contexts will advance the understanding of the individual traveller that is provided through this thesis. This thesis concludes by purporting that spirituality is a worthwhile lens through which to explore the personal meaning religious and non-religious individuals derive from their travel experiences.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.

1.1: BACKGROUND TO THESIS.

Research suggests that, in the Western World in particular, increasing numbers of individuals are seeking to gain increased meaning and purpose within their life. This is argued to be spurred by a loss of meaning, or a longing for greater meaning within an individual's life caused by issues including excessive materialism, secularism, stress, global warming, poverty, terrorism and personal life experiences (Belk, 1985; Cushman, 1990; Elgin & Mitchell, 2003; Hartmann, 1999; Lengfelder & Timothy, 2000; Sharpley & Sundaram, 2005). Specifically, it is reported that increasing numbers of individuals in the Western World are frustrated with their lives; they may have succeeded financially, but still feel empty; they are searching to fill this emptiness through establishing meaning and life purpose (Cushman, 1990; Hartmann, 1999; Lengfelder & Timothy, 2000). Importantly for this thesis, scholars argue that many individuals are purported to be seeking spirituality through travel; specifically, they are using travel to search for greater meaning in life through understanding more about themselves as individuals (Sharpley & Sundaram, 2005; Timothy & Conover, 2006). Despite this claim, there is a paucity of research exploring spirituality, outside that of religious tourism, within a tourism framework and, specifically, what role travel plays within the wider lives of individuals. Traditionally, this thesis argues that scholars have viewed travel as being separate from one's wider life, and neglected to explore the personal meaning an individual derives from his or her travel experiences within the wider context of his or her life. This thesis seeks to address this research gap by aiming to:

- Explore spirituality and travel; specifically, the role of travel in facilitating life purpose and meaning in the lives of individuals.

Questions that guided the research aim were:

- What are the conceptual constructs of spirituality?

- What influences how an individual derives meaning and life purpose?

- How does an individual imbue their travel experiences with personal meaning?

- What role does travel play within the wider life of an individual?

From a cross-disciplinary review of literature, spirituality is conceptualised in this thesis as comprising three conceptual constructs. They are: firstly, that spirituality involves every human being's search for meaning and life purpose; secondly, transcendence; and thirdly, connectedness (these constructs are elaborated in Chapter 3). While potentially sharing the same conceptual constructs as religion, spirituality differs in that every person is argued to be spiritual, while only some are religious (Benjamin & Looby, 1998; Freeman, 1998; Hardy, 1979; Marra, 2000; McCormick, 1994; Miner-Williams, 2006; Oldnall, 1996; Zinnbauer et al., 1997). This thesis is a phenomenological study of 11 individuals who engaged in travel provided by Hands Up Holidays, a tour operator who attracts a broad range of individuals seeking meaningful travel experiences and allows individuals to tailor their travel experiences in a manner that is personally meaningful. Hands Up Holidays uses the word 'spiritual' in its marketing material but does not identify with any one specific religion or spiritual niche. In this way, Hands Up Holidays reflects the conceptualisation of spirituality adopted within this thesis and views spirituality as a broader notion than religion. The 11 individuals who participated in this research reflect this broad notion of spirituality; amongst them are Christians, atheists, agnostics and 'New Agers'.

Through the analysis of 11 in-depth individual research portraits derived through phenomenological investigation, research participants give their voice within this thesis research; they write themselves into the research in a manner that holds personal meaning to them, such as through sharing their stories,

photographs or diaries about their travel with Hands Up Holidays, wider life circumstances, and the importance of spirituality within their life.

1.2: RESEARCH CONTEXT.

The 11 research participants who took part in this research had travelled with Hands Up Holidays within the previous 12-month period. Hands Up Holidays are a tour operator marketing themselves as offering 'spiritual', 'meaningful', 'inspiring' and 'life-changing' travel that can be tailor-made to each individual's wishes (Hands Up Holidays, 2009). Hands Up Holidays is a company created by a New Zealander, Christopher Hill, who felt much contemporary travel was not meaningful to individuals; he saw an increasing market for travel that was 'enriching'; travel where tourists could 'give something back' to the world through voluntary activities, seek personal growth, find personal meaning and development through adventure, cultural, and/or heritage-based activities, and interact in an 'authentic' manner with locals. For example, travellers can choose to stay within the community of locals (Christopher Hill, pers. comm., 2009). Hands Up Holidays offers 'a taste of volunteering' blended with 'luxury sight-seeing'; tours generally last for between two to four weeks, and include approximately three to six days of voluntary activities (Hands Up Holidays, 2009). The tours aim to promote ethical, environmentally friendly, meaningful travel that is beneficial to everyone involved, including tourists and host communities. Hands Up Holidays offers tours to more than thirty countries, many of these Less Economically Developed Countries or developing nations throughout Africa, Asia, Europe, The Pacific and South America (Hands Up Holidays, 2009).

Hands Up Holidays was selected as the case study context organisation for this thesis research because, unlike much prior-packaged travel, it offers travel that can be tailored to the individual needs of travellers. In this way, individuals could select travel experiences that reflected the individual nature of how they elucidated personal meaning and purpose within their life. Through using words such as 'enriching', 'inspiring', 'meaningful', and 'life-changing' within their

marketing package, it could be surmised that people selecting this tour operator may be 'searching' for something within their life.

1.3: RESEARCH CONTRIBUTION.

This thesis aims to open a dialogue on the role of spirituality within tourism research. From a tourism studies perspective, there has been a paucity of research exploring spirituality, except that which looks at religious tourism, despite the argument that increasing numbers of individuals are seeking spiritual growth through travel (Sharpley & Sundaram, 2005; Timothy & Conover, 2006). Moreover, this thesis addresses the need to examine spirituality through a wider lens and to delve deeper into the personal meaning travel holds for individuals and situate this within the wider context of tourists' lives. Specifically, this research provides key insights into the means and extent to which tourists, as individuals, select travel with a certain type of tour operator with the potential to find meaning and purpose within their lives. Furthermore, this thesis provides insight into the influence of personal life circumstances on travel decision-making, experiences, and the personal meaning of travel to individuals; aspects that are reported as neglected in tourism research (Cohen, 1979; Crouch, 2007).

Through an exploration of the conceptual constructs of spirituality, the thesis also sheds light on the notion of spirituality. It has been argued that spirituality is a 'fuzzy', 'confusing' and 'obscure' concept (Spilka, 1993; Zinnbauer et al., 1997) and that there is an urgent need for clarification towards a conceptual understanding of spirituality (Miner-Williams, 2006). A multi-disciplinary review of the defining constructs of spirituality is explored in Chapter 3, leading to a conceptual platform on which future research may be based. The conceptual platform put forward in this thesis includes three core constructs of spirituality; that is, that spirituality concerns every individual's search for meaning and life purpose, transcendence and connectedness (see Chapter 3).

This thesis contributes five main conclusions that advance scholarly knowledge into the personal meaning an individual derives from his or her travel experiences (Chapter 7). Firstly, each person could be conceptually considered

'spiritual'. Secondly, an individual does not separate his or her spirituality from his or her travel experiences. Thirdly, an individual's spirituality is expressed subjectively and objectively. Fourthly, each individual experiences 'life-defining' moments which influence how one derives life meaning and the personal meaning one imbues onto one's travel experiences. Fifthly, certain individuals experience significant frustration with contemporary, primarily Western World issues, that influence one's travel motivations and experiences.

1.4: PERSONAL BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY.

As a phenomenological investigation, this thesis relates closely to my own life journey, and, thus, some background to how I shaped this study is warranted (Schmidt, 2005). Through personal experience, I have met a number of people who appear, from my perception, to 'have it all'; the expensive car and house, but they are missing something; they appear to be searching. I am still searching somewhat for meaning, inner peace and contentment within my life; and determining who I am, and what exactly I want to achieve from life are issues I often consider. Issues concerning growing materialism and secularism in the Western World also interest me; I want to know what is really meaningful to people, if this so-called materialistic lifestyle is problematic, and if travel is able to help them in their search for meaning in their lives.

Through this thesis I originally wished to explore the personal meaning travel to the Less Economically Developed Countries held for tourists. I found it interesting to ponder why people would want to use their hard-earned leisure time and money travelling to experience difficult and often desperate conditions. I have a strong life goal of sponsoring a child in Africa and going to visit them before I am 35 years old. As a 26 year old I am still developing who I am and what I am seeking from life; I ask myself, why is sponsoring and visiting an African child such a strong goal of mine? Where does it stem from? After perusing the literature, I discovered a research gap concerning the influence tourism plays in the wider life of people, and, particularly what role, if any, it plays in helping them find meaning and purpose in life. I found the concept of spirituality particularly relevant. In particular, I felt that most tourism scholars

5

who write about spirituality also relate it to religion, but potentially, from the readings, there seemed much more to the concept than this. I also found that many scholars use the concept of spirituality when discussing tragedy and difficulties within life. I, like most, have experienced personal difficulties in my life, and thus wanted to explore how spirituality gives individuals comfort during their own personal difficulties. While the concept of spirituality was stumbled across almost by accident through my literature search, at this point, my PhD direction was decided.

1.5: THESIS OUTLINE.

This chapter has outlined that this research is an important area of scholarly study, as well as for myself. It has provided a brief introduction to the context of spirituality as it is defined in this thesis; the reasons behind the renewed interest in spirituality will be expanded upon in Chapters 2 and 3. Though only touching upon the literature, it has highlighted potential gaps within the tourism literature. The following chapters serve to build upon the introductory information.

Chapter 2 presents a detailed literature review exploring the reasons behind the renewed interest in spirituality. This chapter also considers the conceptual nature of spirituality, the possible reasons behind the contemporary search for greater spiritual engagement, and why individuals may use travel to seek meaning and purpose in their life.

Chapter 3 presents an overview of the literature identifying the conceptual constructs of spirituality. This chapter begins with a discussion and comparison between the concepts of religion and spirituality. It then explores the conceptual constructs of spirituality from different academic disciplines and worldview lenses in order to provide a definitional platform for this thesis research.

Chapter 4 explains the research methodology. The philosophy of phenomenology is detailed, as is how this approach supports the thesis aim. The data collection and analysis processes are explained, along with a discussion of ethical issues and the limitations of this study. Background to the selection of Hands Up Holidays as the research context of this thesis, and the individuals

travelling with Hands Up Holidays who took part in the thesis research are also described in this chapter.

Chapter 5 presents each of the 11 individual portraits. Here, the reader comes to know each individual research participant, and the role of travel with Hands Up Holidays in facilitating life purpose and meaning in their lives. Following the principles of phenomenology, these portraits give each individual research participant a voice within this thesis research; their personal life circumstances, the importance of spirituality for them, and the role of travel in facilitating life purpose and meaning in their lives. These aspects are presented as individual portraits comprising the words, stories, music and photographs of the research participants that were most meaningful to them.

Chapter 6 presents the key findings and common themes that arose through analysis of each of the 11 individual research portraits. Specifically, data pertaining to the thesis aim is synthesised, and the findings of this research related to the wider literature. This chapter discusses the conceptualisation of spirituality and the role of travel in one's search for meaning and purpose in life as revealed from the research context studied.

Chapter 7 presents the conclusions of this thesis research. Specifically, this chapter argues that while scholars may need to move past the descriptive label of spirituality, exploration of its conceptual constructs offers rich insight into the individual traveller. Suggestions for future research and research limitations are offered alongside the conclusions. Specifically, this chapter calls for further research exploring spirituality from different worldviews in the context of tourism to build upon the findings presented herein.

CHAPTER 2: THESIS BACKGROUND: THE RENEWED SEARCH FOR SPIRITUALITY.

2.1: CHAPTER INTRODUCTION.

The concept of spirituality has received burgeoning interest from scholars and consumers in recent years (Bridger, 2001; Cushman, 1990; Meraviglia, 1999; Miner-Williams, 2006; Zinnbauer et al., 1997). Bridger (2001, p.7) argued that to speak about spirituality in the twenty-first century "is to ride the latest cultural wave" and that spirituality is now firmly on the research agenda in the Western World. This chapter seeks to discuss the reasons for the renewed scholarly and public interest in spirituality, and to consider why people in the Western World are now searching for meaning within their lives by engaging their spirituality. This chapter also explores spirituality and travel as it relates to the thesis aim: the role of travel in facilitating life purpose and meaning in the lives of individuals. Specifically, it considers the nature of spirituality, the possible reasons behind the contemporary search for greater spiritual engagement, and why individuals may be using travel to seek meaning or purpose in their life.

2.2: POSITIONING SPIRITUALITY WITHIN THE LIVES OF INDIVIDUALS.

2.2.1: Influences on an Individual's Search for Meaning and Purpose in Life.

It can be argued that there are myriad reasons why increasing numbers of people, particularly in the Western World, are seeking spiritual growth. It is suggested that the spiritual boom be thought of as a largely Western phenomenon because Eastern societies have never abandoned engaging the spirit, and do not face a number of issues that have negatively influenced individual spirituality, to the same extent as people living in Western societies (Belk, 1985; Cushman, 1990; Dorn, 2001; Hartmann, 1999; Kissman & Maurer, 2002; Miovic, 2004). It is

argued that modern life in the Western World has a number of societal problems (Elgin & Mitchell, 2003; Hartmann, 1999), including, for example, materialism, secularism, global warming, depression and anxiety. Some authors argue that, throughout history, this has led to people becoming spiritually empty (Elgin & Mitchell, 2003; MacCannell, 1973). MacCannell (1973, pp.589-590) argued, "The concern of moderns for the shallowness of their lives and inauthenticity of their experiences parallels concern for the sacred in primitive society". Torrance (1994) suggested that now, more than ever before, people are wishing to learn about their spirituality, and are increasingly embarking on spiritual quests for meaning and purpose. This chapter will, therefore, examine the main contributing factors leading to the revival of and interest in spirituality, and their connection to the growth in spiritually motivated travel.

Reportedly, the predominant reason why many people are now seeking to address their spirituality is that they feel discontented with modern society (Belk, 1985; Cushman, 1990; Hartmann, 1999; Lengfelder & Timothy, 2000; McIntosh & Mansfeld, 2006; Powers, Cramer, & Grubka, 2007). Many are reported to be fuelled by feelings of emptiness with modern life that is charateised by high stress, a lack of personal time, isolation, uncertainty, rising fuel prices, global warming, and feelings of depression caused by rapidly advancing technology and civilisation growth (Faulkner, 2008; Garner, 2008; Lengfelder & Timothy, 2000; Sharpley & Sundaram, 2005; Timothy & Conover, 2006a). These characteristics of modern life lead many to feel that their life is not 'balanced' and that the world has lost understanding of what is truly meaningful in life (ibid). Latham (2001, p.42) suggested, "in this time, many are facing a deep abyss, with feelings of emptiness and longing. Technology as an organising force is pulling us away from the essence, the centre of meaning".

Thus, due to the fast-paced nature of life, it is argued that few people in the developed world have time to relax, appreciate nature, develop their interests and improve their mental and spiritual health (Lengfelder & Timothy, 2000). Modern life issues such as terrorism, climate problems and diminishing natural resources are also argued to be creating a growing sense of purposelessness amongst many people, and people are seeking for better ways to live; in short,

they are searching for meaning and purpose in their lives (Elgin & Mitchell, 2003). The twenty-first century has also reportedly seen an increase in xenophobia and 'Islamophobia', which disconcerts certain people (Aschauer, 2008). Garner (2008) argued that trust amongst people also seems to be at an all time low; this can be evidenced from the sharp decline in hitch-hiker numbers, particularly in the Western World. To mitigate the perceived negative effects of society, significant numbers of people are said to be considering their spirituality, as spirituality is said to offer people a source of enduring meaning in troubled times (Heintzman & Mannell, 2003). There is thus a common opinion amongst scholars that spirituality represents an individual's search for meaning and purpose within life.

Notably, a number of scholars have observed that many people are so discontented with modern life that they experience strong nostalgia; a yearning for the past (Stern, 1992), or "a homesickness for a past era" (Prentice, Witt, & Hamer, 1998, p.9). Lowenthal (1989, p.28) observed that many people believe that life in the past was more favourable than the present, "[that] families were closer, that pollution was absent, that peace and order prevailed". Stokowski (2002) also claimed that for many people, the memories of the September 11th, 2001 terrorist attacks have led them to long for the past, or for places that seem slower and more peaceful, and where life appears to be "richer" than what is found in the fast-paced Western World. Mansfeld and McIntosh (2007, p.3) observed that increasing numbers of Westerners are yearning to 'escape' their fast-paced world and move to natural environments, often in countries or settings where "deprivation and poverty are rife".

2.2.2: Spirituality and Secularism.

Many people are also said to be yearning to return to a past that they believe was built upon sound religious values; an increase in interest in spirituality is argued to be caused in part by a possible backlash to the dramatic rise of secularism through the latter half of the twentieth century and beyond (Barnwell & Iggulden, 2007; Cushman, 1990; Fuller, 2001; John Paul II, 1998; Zinnbauer et al., 1997). The rise in secularism in the Western World is in stark contrast to much of the non-Western world, as Latin America, parts of Asia and Africa have

recently seen an upsurge in religious activity (Houtman & Aupers, 2007). Organised religion in particular is argued to be in a sharp decline in the Western World (Elias, 1991); this can be evidenced through falling church attendance in many Western countries, and in Britain for example, "Organised religion is in near terminal decline" (Barnwell & Iggulden, 2007). Some feel that secularism is so prominent that Elias (1991) observed that in the 1960's, there was an announcement that 'God is dead' in the United States. Thus, it appears that for some people, religion is no longer seen or encouraged as an avenue in which they can or would want to seek personal meaning or purpose in life. It may be, however, that increased secularism within parts of society is a result of the rejection of ritual rather than a decline of religiousness. Indeed, Bridger (2001, p.7) argued that, "Spirituality has long since ceased to be the preserve of the churches and has been appropriated instead by postmodernity". The postmodern characteristics of contemporary society emphasises individual thought and action. Individuals are represented as self-conscious manipulators of symbolic meanings that are attached to products or services (such as religious rituals); arguably, postmodern individuals select services with the specific intention of using them to create or maintain a certain impression, identity or lifestyle (Campbell, 2005; Featherstone, 1991).

It is difficult to determine the exact reasons for increased secularisation in Western society, but Bridger (2001, p.12) has argued that many see organised religions, "not as vehicles for the attainment of personal spirituality, but rather as obstacles to it. Their perceived ethos is one of social control rather than personal liberation". Thus, large numbers of people are turning away from organised religion, and looking to find meaning and purpose in life in ways that work for them personally (ibid). For this reason, Hamilton (2000) claimed that people are increasingly preferring to 'pick and mix' and find personally meaningful ways to engage with existential questions and the nature of existence. Others have suggested that celebrities (Sifuentes, 2008), or 'time' (Wheeler, 2008) have become the predominant religions of the Western World; many people are more interested in the lives of their favourite stars; or 'living in the now' than pursuing a relationship with God/Higher Power. In addition, Zinnbauer et al. (1997; 1999)

argued that some people choose to be spiritual but not religious because they have either lost confidence in church leadership, or have had previous experiences of being 'hurt', physically, sexually, and/or mentally by the clergy. It may also be that a number of people no longer feel that religion is an appropriate topic to discuss with others. For example, Mitroff and Denton (1999, p.1) wrote that all the managers they interviewed about spirituality in the workplace, "viewed religion as a highly inappropriate form of expression and topic in the workplace. They saw spirituality, on the other hand, as a highly appropriate subject for discussion". In recent times, there seems to be a greater splintering in meaning between the terms religious and spiritual; traditionally they were seen as synonymous (Zinnbauer et al., 1997). Further discussion concerning the conceptual constructs of both terms is found in Chapter 3.

The fast-paced, increasingly urban Western World has also been attributed to the rise in secularism. Smart (1983) argued that people are increasingly moving away from traditional religious practices because many people are now concentrated in cities and suburbs, rather than in rural villages and small towns, where traditionally, religion played a significant role. Smart (1983) suggested that greater mobility, combined with people moving from place to place to search for better work has made Western society as a whole more individualistic and less traditional. Belk (1985) felt that much of modern society could be labelled 'narcissistic'; that is, non-traditional and individualistic.

From a tourism viewpoint, it has been argued that travel too has become increasingly secularised. For example, Cohen (1979) cited Lowenthal's (1962) discussion of the thermalists who traditionally felt that the healing powers of thermal waters were created by supernatural forces. Now, tourists still believe thermal waters offer recuperative value, but they generally view this from a secular viewpoint. Rinschede (1992, p.52) suggested that a religious motivation to travel seems to be less important than in ancient times, and that "pilgrimages and other religious journeys are tied to other types of tourism, perhaps more closely today than ever before". Vukonić (1996) similarly argued that a large number of people who visit religious sites in modern times do so more for cultural or

historical reasons than for religious reasons. The evolving relationship between religion and tourism is thus worthy of consideration.

As a result of increased secularisation, the spiritual landscape has become increasingly complex (John Paul II, 1998; Zinnbauer et al., 1997). Thus, it could be asserted that spirituality in modern times is an even more confusing concept than in the past. Instead of engaging in organised, institutional, predominantly Christian-based religions, many people in the Western World "have begun turning to alternative forms of spirituality and health that rely heavily on nature and self transformation" (Timothy & Conover, 2006a, p.145). This movement is often referred to as the New Age movement (Aldred, 2002; Ivakhiv, 2003; Timothy & Conover, 2006a). Shimazono (1999) stated that a number of New Agers believe that they belong to a new spiritual movement that will naturally follow religion as it comes to an end. This movement has spread throughout many Western countries including the United States of America, Australia, and New Zealand (Brodin, 2003; Shimazono, 1999). The New Age philosophy "stresses the sanctity of nature, harmony of the cosmos, resurrection of ancient spiritual traditions, and self improvement in the realms of spirit, mind and body" (Timothy & Conover, 2006a, p.138), and although New Age believers come in many different varieties and engage in a range of activities, general New Age interests include "spirituality, metaphysics, yoga, natural healing, herbology and communion with nature" (Cogswell, 1996, p.80).

Many New Agers do find meaning and purpose through their beliefs, but in general, it is argued that secularisation has led to a large number of people having a lack of belief in God or any higher power (Barnwell & Iggulden, 2007). Indeed, Smart (1983, p.52) stated, "There are more and more 'religionless' (sic) people in modern society". Willis (1999, p.l4) purported that secularisation has resulted in many modern human lives lacking "fulfilment, significance, spirituality and a sense of belonging". Further, the inner emptiness associated with this can take the form of an absence of meaning, and this can lead to a hunger for spiritual growth or fulfilment (Cushman, 1990). However, there is still much to be learnt about the consequences of secularisation and the actions taken by people who feel alienated by society. Cohen (1979), for instance, noted that while it is accepted that many

modern people feel alienated from society, there are still many unanswered questions:

> "What about the spiritual centre of such alienated people?". They may feel their lives are lacking – but why? and how do they seek to address this? (p.181);

> "What happens when the disenchanted or alienated individuals become growingly aware of their state of alienation, and the meaninglessness and futility of their daily life, as many younger members of the middle class in the 'post-modern' society have become?" (p.186).

It may emerge that an increased focus on the individual's spirituality will eventually lead to a resurgence in interest in organised religion, although to date, "untested and simplistic assumptions have been made about the mission potential of the new spiritual quest" (Bridger, 2001, p.11).

2.2.3: <u>Spirituality and Materialism</u>.

A rise in secularism has been said to be met by a rise in materialistic values and living, particularly amongst younger generations in the Western World (Belk, 1985; Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1978; Singh, 2006). Belk (1985) observed this by noting that elderly people may be more likely to say that their favourite possession is something sentimental, and full of memories, such as a photograph. Conversely, children or young adults are more likely to say something functional, such as a stereo is their favourite possession. From a tourism viewpoint, he observed that there has been a, "Momentous and much heralded rise of materialism over the past few centuries" (p.266). Specifically, Belk (1985) commented that many individuals now base their personal worth upon the type of possessions they own, rather on, for example, their personal relationships, or strength of character or values. Further, Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1978) argued that some people are experiencing 'terminal materialism' whereby they are using possessions primarily to generate envy and admiration for using the product to achieve status. The proliferation of scientific research approaches throughout the twentieth century also reflects a materialistic

mindset as positivism is argued to be closely allied to materialism (Rohmann, 1999). Materialism "can be conceptualised as the consumption style that results when consumers perceive that value inheres in consumption objects rather than in experiences or in other people" (Holt, 1995, p.13).

The development of goods and services has certainly presented the current generation with many opportunities and choices that previous generations did not have (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1978; Lansley, 1993). Lansley suggested that a wealth of new products and possessions has enabled people to lead more diverse and interesting lives, and Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton purported that to some extent, materialism has been able to help people to strengthen their personal values or goals. However, Lansley (1993, p.29) suggested that the question to be asked is: "Despite the greater diversity and excitement of modern living, has it lead to more fulfilling lives for the individual and greater welfare for the society as a whole?". There is a view amongst scholars, that despite some positives, the materialistic consumption style that is evidenced throughout much of Western society does negatively impact on the spirituality of individuals (Belk, 1985; Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1978; Hartmann, 1999; Kitchen, 1994; Lansley, 1993). Kitchen, for example, argued that the emptiness and angst caused by materialism could be thought of as a new, subtle form of pollution. Belk (1985, p.266) also stated, "The materialistic traits of greed, miserliness, and envy can also be pathological and can lead to human misery". Similarly, Maritain (1947) argued that materialistic conceptions of the world and life can only end in failure because they cannot satisfy the requirements of the person.

Religious leaders have also lamented materialism. In The Bible, St. Paul stated that people who continually strive and desire to achieve better material possessions will end up miserable (Philippians 4:10-13), and Pope John Paul II similarly observed the problems of excessive materialism:

> "This superdevelopment, which consists in an excessive availability of every kind of material goods, easily makes people slaves of 'possessions' and of immediate gratification, with no other horizon than the

multiplication or continual replacement of the things already owned with others still better" (cited in Lansley, 1993, p.27).

It is argued that excessive materialism has become particularly prevalent since the end of World War II, when the Western World started to achieve unparalleled growth (Lansley, 1993). Since this time in particular, people have been trying to fill their 'empty selves' through a yearning to "acquire and consume" (Cushman, 1990, p.600). 'Keeping up with the Joneses' has become a central concern of many modern people, whereby they will purchase or become envious of goods simply because their friends, counterparts or neighbours have done so (Lansley, 1993). Elias (1991) argued that this is a reflection on a narcissistic society, and that the current prevailing culture is one of selfishness and harmful emphasis on self.

It is argued that this rampant materialism has trapped many people in a downward spiral of spiritual misery, as consumption is wrongly portrayed in many circles as being the answer to spiritual emptiness;

> "Modern advertising seeks to promote not so much self-indulgence as self doubt. It seeks to create needs, not to fulfil them, to generate new anxieties instead of allaying old ones. By surrounding the consumers with images of the good life… the propaganda of commodities simultaneously makes him feel acutely unhappy with his lot. By fostering grandiose aspirations, it also fosters self-denigration and self-contempt… it addresses itself to the spiritual desolation of modern life and proposes consumption as the cure. It not only promises to palliate all the old unhappiness the flesh is heir to; it creates or exacerbates new forms of unhappiness – personal insecurity, status, anxiety, anxiety in parents. Advertising institutionalises envy and its attendant anxieties" (Lasch, 1978, p.180).

Hartmann (1999, p.243) lamented the power of advertising by arguing that many people are sadly trapped in one of the world's great lies, "If some stuff will make you happy, then twice as much stuff will make you twice as happy, ten times as much will make you ten times as happy and so on into infinity". According to Hartmann (1999), this is clearly incorrect, otherwise only billionaires could be blissfully happy; he contends that some of the happiest people he has ever met

earn less than $US5 a week. Despite the significant influence that materialism has on society and individuals, Belk (1985) expressed amazement at the lack of research given to materialism. It is possible that a relationship between an individual's views of materialistic consumption and tourism preferences will be made in this research. Further, it is possible that the impact of materialism and secularism on research participants' spirituality will be explored. Certainly though, the exploration of the influence of these phenomena on an individual's spirituality and travel choices appears meritorious.

There is evidence to suggest that just as increasing numbers of people are becoming frustrated with secularism, increasing numbers of people are recognising the negative impacts that a materialistic lifestyle can have on their spirituality, and are trying to break free of this lifestyle (Elgin & Mithcell, 2003; Holt, 1995; Lansley, 1993). For example, Lansley (1993, p.32) suggested that, "There is evidence of a more enduring frustration with the stress associated with 'volume consumption'" and that, "There is also a sense that there are other more important and sustainable routes to happiness than through material wealth and that conspicuous consumption may be less a sign of success than a moral or spiritual vacuum". There is also reported to be a significant social movement occurring called voluntary simplicity, which describes a way of life signified by the balance between inner and outer growth (Elgin & Mitchell, 2003; Holt, 1995). These scholars suggested that voluntary simplicity could represent a major transformation in people's values, social movements and consumption patterns;

> "The essence of voluntary simplicity is living in a way what [sic] is outwardly simple and inwardly rich. This way of life embraces frugality of consumption, a strong sense of environmental urgency, a desire to return to living and working environments which are of a more human scale, and an intention to realise our higher human potential – both psychological and spiritual – in community with others. The driving forces behind voluntary simplicity range from acutely personal concerns to critical national problems" (Elgin & Mitchell, 2003, p.146).

This growing voluntary simplicity movement is argued to be the direct opposite of a materialistic lifestyle, and involves striving to live a life of material simplicity in order to pursue moral responsibility, spiritual growth, and self-actualisation (Elgin

& Mitchell, 2003; Elias, 1991; Richins & Dawson, 1992). Voluntary simplicity has also been compared to the social philosophy of such spiritual leaders as Jesus Christ (Elgin & Mitchell, 2003). Singh (2006) concurred that more people are engaging with their 'spiritual intelligence', and by doing so they understand that they currently live in a world of great material abundance and multiple external choices, but also great spiritual poverty, and impoverished internal states. The voluntary simplistic movement is similar to the 'slow movement' whereby adherents aim to address 'time poverty' through making connections and downshifting or simplifying their life. The slow movement encourages connecting with the earth and people through, for example, embracing organic food, spending time with nature and meeting regularly with loved ones (Footprint Choices, 2010). It could also be argued that some people, as a result of the current global financial crisis are being pushed towards or are willingly adopting the slow or voluntary simplicity movements. It may be that certain individuals are finding that a lifestyle built upon materialistic principles no longer works for them. Potentially, the financial crisis will lead many individuals to re-evaluate what is meaningful within life and turn their focus away from materialism, although more research is needed to explore this thought.

Elements of the Western World may be slowly adopting 'post-material' values, which according to American political scientist Ronald Inglehart, is an inevitable result of increased wealth and materialism; people eventually become increasingly concerned with the wider quality of life and with issues such as the environment, leisure and knowledge (Inglehart, 1990). This view was also shared by Lansley (1993, p.33) who suggested that, "What we may be witnessing is the emergence of the *discerning* rather than the glutted consumer – one with a higher awareness of environmental problems and an acceptance of the need for greater personal responsibility". Indeed, it is argued that in modern Western culture, a person who is engaging with their spirituality is unlikely to be interested in material possessions, and that the notion that there has been increased interest in spirituality provides a compelling explanation as to why there has been a strong increase in environmental activism (Daly, 1996; Goldberg, 1998). Whether this applies to tourist motivation and behaviour is an interesting question.

2.3: THE RENEWED INTEREST IN SPIRITUALITY WITHIN SCHOLARLY RESEARCH.

In addition to the factors discussed previously, one could argue that a significant factor in the renewed scholarly interest in spirituality has been a change in attitude in how to approach research. For much of the last two hundred years, most scholarly inquiry has been approached from a scientific, positivistic perspective. During this period, scholars have conducted positivistic studies that strive empirically and logically to prove hypotheses and concepts, and thus, ultimately they have sought to provide definitive answers to certain issues (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Patton, 1980). While science has undoubtedly generated a vast body of knowledge and provided the world with a wide range of important information, there appears to be an increasing backlash against science as the predominant form of knowledge-gathering within scholarly research (Denzin & Linclon, 2003). There appear to be two main reasons presented in the literature as to why there is a backlash to this science approach in the study of the humanities and social sciences.

Firstly, it is argued that science has not sought to address a number of questions and issues that are of significant importance to individuals, such as issues of spirituality, as these questions cannot be empirically or logically proven (Caldwell, 1982; Masters, 1993; Stockman, 1983). Science does not address issues of fundamental importance to people as human beings, or deal with the human person (Caldwell, 1982; Hinshaw, 2000; John Paul II, 1998; Masters, 1993; Stockman, 1983). Specifically, Pope John Paul II (1998) decried the inadequacy of modern philosophy, which he claims should be directly concerned with asking the meaning of life's questions. He observed that philosophy in Greek means 'love of wisdom', and praised Ancient Greek philosophers such as Aristotle and Plato for attempting to explore questions of being, and for stressing the importance of this. Masters (1993, p.6) similarly stressed the need to combine scientific and humanistic perspectives and suggested that, "The presumed gulf between fact and value needs to be related to the Western philosophic tradition and especially to the ancient Greek thinkers". Indeed, science is limited because it

does not explore questions of being, "Today, scientific explanations of the world often seem unrelated to the concerns of the average citizen" (Masters, 1993, p.vii).

It has been argued by John Paul II (1998) that science and technology do not have the ability to address issues of personal importance. For example, increasing numbers of people claim that science is not helping them with fundamental human questions such as How should I live? or What is my purpose? They thus decry science because it does not give them perspective on questions of existence, morals, values, and ethics (John Paul II, 1998; Masters, 1993). Within this view, increasing numbers of people also believe that science is not able to resolve global issues such as the threat of nuclear war, poverty, global warming, secularism and materialism (Belk, 1985; Gottschall, 2003; Masters, 1993).

Through exclusively exploring issues that can be empirically proven, as argued above, a number of scholars have argued that taking a predominantly scientific approach to gathering knowledge is conservative, and does not present a full picture of knowledge. Authors have stressed that science has heralded many significant achievements, but one need also to look elsewhere to expand knowledge (Fennell, 2006; Gottschall, 2003; John Paul II, 1998). Gottshcall (2003, p.257) used the analogy of a 'knowledge tree' to explain why science has not attempted to explore certain issues, but still traditionally has been revered as an approach to knowledge:

> The higher one climbs in the tree of knowledge, the more complicated things become. The trunk of the tree is smooth, straight, and broad, as are the laws of physics. But as one climbs higher, past the trunk and main boughs, branches twist, intersect, and slap against the face, leaves and creepers block the view. In the rioting life of the canopy, explanatory principles are more difficult to discern. Because of this wild complexity, disciplines at the apex of the tree of knowledge can probably never rival the muscular mutual consistency that is the power and pride of the natural sciences.

A second reason for an increased backlash against viewing science as the predominant ontology is that increasing numbers of scholars are claiming that science has dismissed the notion that there are alternative and complementary

ways to garner knowledge, and these scholars are disputing the notion that only scientific knowledge is reliable (Belk, 1985; Gottschall, 2003; John Paul II, 1998; Masters, 1993). Over the last two hundred years, many scientists have been lauded as 'heroes'; alternative approaches to knowledge have thus being viewed as inferior by comparison (Carper, 1978).

In recent times, however, there have been increasing calls to embrace alternative worldviews to science, and to integrate and embrace other forms of knowledge within scientific studies (Masters, 1993). According to Gottschall (2003, p.64), this would "increase the intellectual rigor of their [scientists'] contributions to the human quest for self-understanding". Indeed, Peck (1997, p.14) suggested, "Perhaps the single most important discovery of modern science has been that there are limits to scientific inquiry. With a few 'ifs', 'ands', and 'buts', there is no more real certainty to be found in science than in theology". Theologians, in particular, have been critical of science, not only because it has failed to address issues such as the spirit, but also because they perceive it has written God out of research (John Paul II, 1998; Smart, 1983).

Rohmann (1999) asserted that positivism is fundamentally opposed to theology, and Smart (1983, p.53) suggested, "There is no room in science for God or for nirvana". Pope John Paul II (1998) also lamented the positivistic approach common to scientific research:

> In the field of scientific research, a positivistic mentality took hold which not only abandoned the Christian vision of the world, but more especially rejected every appeal to a metaphysical or moral vision" It follows that certain scientists, lacking any ethical point of reference, are in danger of putting at the centre of their concerns something other than the human person and the entirety of the person's life. Further still, some of these, sensing the opportunities of technological progress, seem to succumb not only to a market-based logic, but also to the temptation of a quasi-divine power over nature and even over the human being.

Importantly, with the growing coming together of science, faith, reason, and revelation, MacDonald (2000) claimed that, "It appears that the study of

spirituality is currently viewed by the scientific and professional community as a more acceptable, and perhaps even more important, enterprise than it has ever been in any time" (p.155). The perceived backlash against the traditional view that scientific ontology is superior to all others, an increased acceptance of alternative approaches to knowledge, and increased yearning for greater understanding of the human person are important tenets of this thesis.

2.4: DISCIPLINE-SPECIFIC REASONS FOR THE RECENT INTEREST IN SPIRITUALITY.

Table 2.1 summarises some of the disciplines that have paid attention to the concept of spirituality, and discusses the key discipline-specific focus for exploring the concept of spirituality. This discussion provides greater insight into the potential for exploring spirituality within scholarly research to provide a possible conceptual platform for the study of spirituality and travel.

Based on a review of literature, Table 2.1 highlights that the theology literature has raised discourse about the level of secularism present in the Western World (Bridger, 2001; Yinger, 1967; Zinnbauer et al., 1997). However, theologians view the recent interest in spirituality, and the growing frustrations with materialism, and the ills of society as an opportunity for religion (in particular, Bridger, 2001; Zinnbauer et al., 1997). Much of the theology literature describes the close parallels between spirituality and religion, and expresses how religion can be an excellent avenue through which one can engage their spirit (Bollinger, 1969; Bridger, 2001; Winner, 2007; Zinnbauer, Pargament, & Scott, 1999). Theology "implies acceptance in broad terms of the truth of the tradition in which one is working" (Smart, 1983, p.34). Theologians are studying spirituality to explore how it relates to their doctrines, and what the Church can do to encourage people to find meaning and purpose in life with God (Bridger, 2001; Tilson, 2005; Zinnbauer et al., 1999).

Table 2.1. Approaches of Scholarly Disciplines/Fields to the study of 'Spirituality'.

Selected Discipline/Field	Key Focus of the Study of Spirituality	Selected References
Theology	Increased secularism has led to more people having no belief in God, or any 'Higher Power'. However, there is a boom in interest in 'spirituality'. Theologians wish to explore how this renewed interest in the spiritual fits in with traditional religious teaching. Theology has always explored matters of the spirit because the discipline has been inherently concerned with questions of revelation and of matters of central importance to human beings.	Bartholomew & Moritz, 2000; Bollinger, 1969; Yinger, 1967; Zinnbauer et al., 1997, 1999
Management	Management scholars have largely explored spirituality because 'spiritual workers' are seen to give firms a competitive advantage. They are happier, more productive, more loyal, ethical, and trustworthy. Much of the management literature has focused on the benefits of introducing spirituality to the workplace, and how workplaces can achieve this.	Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Burack, 1999; Butts, 1999; Marques, 2006; McCormick, 1994; Tischler, 1999
Health (including nursing, counselling, rehabilitation, and psychiatry)	It is argued that the 'spiritual lamp' in nursing is broken and thus, patients are not receiving optimal care. The research has found that most health workers do not understand what spiritual care entails. Increasingly, the health literature argues that to care for patients holistically, one must take into account their spirituality.	Barnum, 1996; Bradshaw, 1994; Martsolf & Mickley, 1998; Meraviglia, 1999; Miner-Williams, 2006; Spaniol, 2001; Tanyi, 2002; Vaillot, 1970
Leisure Studies	People are increasingly looking for a greater quality of life. As part of this, researchers have found that more people are using leisure settings to enhance their spiritual well-being. Scholars are thus placing emphasis on determining which settings facilitate spiritual well-being.	Heintzman, 2000, 2002; Lynch & Veal, 1996; McDonald & Schreyer, 1991; Schmidt, 2005; Stringer & McAvoy, 1992
Tourism Studies	People are increasingly looking to seek personal meaning and purpose in life through travel. However, there is a lack of understanding of spirituality from a tourism context; tourism research has generally explored spirituality from a religious or pilgrimage perspective.	McIntosh & Mansfeld, 2006; Sharpley & Sundaram, 2005; Timothy & Conover, 2006; Timothy & Olsen, 2006

In contrast to theology, the management literature has only recently begun exploring spirituality; largely because in many areas, the management literature has been slow in moving past positivism as the only way to reveal knowledge (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Management scholars have primarily sought to explore spirituality because a number of authors have argued that through fostering spirituality in the workplace, businesses can gain a significant competitive advantage over other businesses, and achieve long term enterprise stability, growth and profitability (for example, Marques, 2006; McCormick, 1994). Further, companies that are regarded as 'spiritual' are able to attract the highest quality employees (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000). It is also becoming increasingly evident that most workers want more than simply a pay-cheque from their job, and thus want to use work to find meaning and purpose in life (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Burack, 1999; McCormick, 1994). These findings may also reflect the growing discontentment with materialism. As a result, a number of management studies that have explored spirituality have sought to provide empirical evidence of the benefits of fostering spirituality in the workplace (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Burack, 1999; McCormick, 1994). For example, Ashmos and Duchon used factor analysis to analyse questionnaires in order to determine the extent to which employees felt their workplace fostered their spirituality.

For similar reasons to the management literature, the health literature (including nursing, counselling rehabilitation, and psychiatry) has largely explored spirituality in recent times because it feels their spirituality is an integral part of patients' well-being (for example, Bown & Williams, 1993; Marra, 2000; Martsolf & Mickley, 1998; Meraviglia, 1999). A healthy spirituality is also regarded as being an important part of rehabilitation programs (Piedmont, 2001; Schultz, 2005). The health literature has explored the relationship between well-being and spirituality for many years. Florence Nightingale, for example, saw spirituality as being an integral part of nursing practise because when one provides care spiritually, one is providing care for the person as well as the patient (Meraviglia, 1999). In the health literature, recognising a person as spiritual is to recognise the importance of delivering personal and flexible care to patients (Bown & Williams, 1993; Miner-Williams, 2006). The health literature has also noted that the rise of secularism has to some extent damaged the nature of care provided to patients, because it has de-emphasised the importance

of spirituality to an individual's well-being. For example, Bradshaw (1994) argued that the 'spiritual lamp', which from a religious perspective represents God as the light of the world, and from a nursing perspective, Florence Nightingale's holistic concept of nursing, has been broken because of secularisation. Spirituality is increasingly seen on the agenda in health-related disciplines because it is said to take into account the 'whole' person (Hinshaw, 2000).

The leisure studies literature has expressed similar motivations to the health literature for placing greater emphasis on studying spirituality. Specifically, leisure scholars have observed that people are searching for 'a greater quality of life', and are recognising that spirituality is central to their well-being (Heintzman, 2000; McDonald & Schreyer, 1991; Schmidt, 2005; Stringer & McAvoy, 1992). Within the leisure literature, there is much evidence to suggest that increasing numbers of people are choosing leisure as an avenue to find meaning and purpose in life and that leisure does indeed influence spiritual well-being (Heintzman, 2000; McDonald & Schreyer, 1991; Schmidt, 2005; Stringer & McAvoy, 1992). Consequently, much of the leisure research concerning spirituality has concentrated on exploring to what extent certain leisure settings facilitate spiritual well-being, and the nature of spiritual experiences gained by people in leisure settings (Heintzman, 2000; McDonald & Schreyer, 1991; Schmidt, 2005; Stringer & McAvoy, 1992).

The tourism studies literature is suggesting that growing numbers of individuals are seeking 'spirituality' through travel; specifically, they are using travel to 'search' for greater meaning in life (Sharpley & Sundaram, 2005; Timothy & Conover, 2006). Despite this, it could be argued that there is a paucity of research exploring 'spirituality' within a tourism framework, except that which explores spirituality in a religious context, and, specifically, a paucity querying the role travel plays in the search for meaning in the lives of individuals. Moreover, scholars who have explored spirituality within tourism have taken a particular approach, "That which is grounded in interpreting the motivations of the pilgrim visiting religious or sacred sites, or the journey or outcome of pilgrimage travel" (McIntosh & Mansfeld, 2007, p.5). Thus, while the literature acknowledges the emerging importance of spirituality in tourism, it does this predominantly through attention to religious

tourism and pilgrimage. The next section discusses this in more detail as a platform for this thesis research.

2.5: RECENT INTEREST IN EXPLORING SPIRITUALITY WITHIN TOURISM RESEARCH.

In recent times, it has been argued that tourism that is religiously or spiritually motivated has increased in scale and scope and represents an important sector of the international tourism market (Sharpley, 2009). It could be argued that religiously or spiritually motivated travel has always been significant; individuals have embarked on missions to worship Gods or fulfil personal religious responsibilities for thousands of years. As alluded to above, to date, most scholars who have attempted to discuss the relationship between tourism and spirituality have done so from a religious perspective, and often use the terms 'spirituality', 'religion', and 'pilgrimage' interchangeably (Chesworth, 2006; Mansfeld & McIntosh, 2007; Jackowiski, 1987; Zahra, 2006). The overlap between the study of spiritual and religious travel is illustrated through the work of certain scholars who have presented the term 'spiritual tourism' (Haq & Jackson, 2006; Jackowiski, 1987; McGettigan, 2003; Tilson, 2005). These scholars viewed 'spiritual tourism' as a niche form of travel that is religiously oriented. Spirituality has traditionally been explored within 'traditional,' 'spiritual,' 'religious,', or 'wellness' travel destinations, such as on yoga tours, spa escapes, wilderness experiences, or visits to shrines or holy places (Fredrickson & Anderson, 1999; Jackowiski, 1987; Lehto, Brown, Chen, & Morrison, 2006; Shackley, 2002; Sharpley & Sundaram, 2005; Stringer & McAvoy, 1992; Tilson, 2005; Timothy & Conover, 2006a). In recent times, however, certain scholars have recognised that the secularisation of notions of religion has widened scholarly interpretation of what constitutes sacred tourism places and experiences (Olsen & Timothy, 2006; Sharpley, 2009). It is likely, however, that certain scholars will continue to view sacred tourism places and experiences from a wholly religious viewpoint, as for them, 'sacred' must involve a connection with religion.

As the exploration of spirituality within tourism research has traditionally been framed around a religious perspective, and travel and religion share a close relationship in the context of traditional pilgrimage, there is a need to review the

religious tourism literature. A review of relevant literature firstly reveals that much has been written comparing tourism to religion or pilgrimage. In recent times, scholars argue that tourism has close parallels with religion, and holds as much personal meaning for some people as religion. For example, Dann and Cohen (1996) suggested that tourist journeys can come close in spirit to religious odysseys, and MacCannell (1973, p.589) argued that tourism absorbs, "Some of the social functions of religion in the modern world". Sharpley and Sundaram (2005) argued that tourism may be considered a religion as it is an outlet for people to reflect upon and cultivate their spirituality, and Graburn (1989) viewed touristic time as non-ordinary, and thus similar to sacred time in religious settings. Vukonić (1996, p.162) similarly claimed that tourism closely parallels to religion, because, like religion, it provides people with free time, and, "A space for the contemplative and the creative, a unity of thought and action", and thus, "an opportunity for human beings to recognise and cultivate their spiritual needs". MacCannell (1976), Vukonić (1996) and Durkheim (1912) also observed the close parallels between tourism and religion by arguing that just as religion contains symbolic rituals, tourism itself is a social ritual that people often undertake at regular intervals, or to mark a particular juncture in their lives. Graburn (1989, p.22) argued that, Tourism… is functionally and symbolically equivalent to other institutions that humans use to embellish and add meaning to their lives".

Modern tourism is conceptually argued by some scholars as being the contemporary expression of the traditional religious pilgrimage (Graburn, 1989; MacCannell, 1973; Sharpley & Sundaram, 2005). MacCannell (1973, p.593), for example noted that, "The motive behind a pilgrimage is similar to that behind a tour: both are quests for authentic experiences". In contrast to the above discussion, Cohen (1979) cautioned against comparing tourism with religion by arguing that the hedonistic desires expressed by many tourists are in direct conflict with the morals and ethics driving many religions.

In recent times, the terms 'religion' and 'pilgrimage' have arguably been imbued with secular overtones (Sharpley, 2009). Arguably, the religious and spiritual landscape is changing, and certain scholars have argued that scholars must reconsider what each of the terms entails (Dignace, 2006; Sin, 2009, Sharpley, 2009). The secularisation of 'pilgrimage' can be evidenced through the fact that one can engage

in a 'shopping', 'musical' or 'sporting' pilgrimage (Digance, 2006); there are also 'virtual pilgrimages' (Timothy & Olsen, 2006) which call into question whether pilgrimage must involve a 'physical' journey. There are, however, likely to be scholars who disagree that pilgrimage can be considered secular. For these individuals, pilgrimage would necessarily involve a religious connection. This assertion is wholly valid and reflects the personal and subjective nature of the concept. Insight into the arguably changing spiritual and religious landscape through travel may emerge within this thesis.

While it could be argued that little has been written specifically concerning 'spirituality' and travel as it is widely defined in this thesis (refer to Chapter 3), a closer examination of the tourism literature provides important support for this thesis. Traditionally, scholars viewed travel as being devoid of spiritual meaning. Early scholars such as Boorstin (1964) and Lowenthal (1962) viewed travel as wholly hedonistic, and shallow. They argued that people travel in luxury, stay in their tourist 'bubble' and gain nothing of any personal meaning. These scholars viewed tourists as 'rich' and 'selfish', and saw travel as of peripheral importance to the lives of individuals. Indeed, Boorstin (1964) socially criticised tourism as being a symptom of moral decay in modern capitalist societies. Tourists were seen as the, "Camera-toting foreigner, [an] ignorant, passive, shallow and gullible" individual (Cohen, 1994, p.527). Early conceptualisations of tourism thus essentially saw tourism as the quest for the superficial and unchallenging (Polkinghorne, 1989), and early conceptualisations of tourists' experiences emphasised their distinctiveness from everyday life (Uriely, 2005). For example, Boorstin (1964) saw travel and tourism as simply being recreation whereby people recuperated from the stresses of daily life, but found no deeper meaning, and that tourism attractions were, "of little significance to the inward life of people" (p.119). Further, Lowenthal (1962, p.124) argued that, "Despite the phenomenal increase of the tourist industry in recent years, the suspicion still endures that travel for its own sake is an idle pleasure". Some authors also questioned the motivations and sophistication of 'tourists', who were predominantly seen as privileged (Towner, 1985) and 'economically endowed' (Howe, 2001). That all tourists are 'economically endowed' is debateable. For example, many individuals who are not wealthy travel for necessity to attend family or religious commitments.

Conversely, recent scholars have sharply rejected the notion that tourism is simply an idle pleasure, devoid of meaning, and have argued that tourism holds significant meaning to most people, and as such, can form a significant part of peoples' lives (Franklin & Crang, 2001; MacCannell, 1973; Uriely, 2005). Tourism is viewed as not merely 'physical'; it includes an array of mental and spiritual experiences (for example, Dann & Cohen, 1996; McIntosh & Mansfeld, 2006; Seaton & Bennett, 1996; Smith, 2003; Timothy & Conover, 2006a). Travel is not seen as purely hedonistic and scholars have argued that travel is not an idle pleasure. Franklin and Crang (2001), for example, found that most tourists are likely to experience some degree of discomfort through their travels; travel makes people tired, they may get sunburnt or may get sick.

Further, tourists' experiences have conceptually developed within the literature from being seen as homogeneous, and separate from everyday life, to being seen as personal, subjective and inseparable from everyday life (Cohen, 1979; Noy, 2004; Uriely, 2005). However, researchers are increasingly recognising that travel experiences incorporate more than solely physical travel to a place; they can be spiritual, involve psychological and physical benefits, altruism, personal development and life change (Wilson & Harris, 2006). Tourists are viewed as active participants in the creation of experiences; they imbue them with personal meaning and situate them within their wider lives (Ateljevic & Doorne, 2005; McIntosh & Prentice, 1999; Selby, 2004).

A number of scholars have acknowledged that tourism can significantly assist people in finding meaning and purpose in their lives, and is imbued with personal significance (for example, Beeho & Prentice, 1997; Cohen, 1979; Crouch, 2007; McIntosh & Mansfeld, 2006; Noy, 2004; Palmer, 1999; Ryan, 1995; Uriely, 2005; Wilson & Harris, 2006; Zahra, 2006). Certain travel is also purported to be a rich setting in which the traveller can experience transcendence; that is to reflect upon their lives, and extend their capabilities. Indeed, Smith and Kelly (2006) suggested that tourists frequently seek destinations and activities that are transcendent. De Botton (2002) similarly postulated that people are attracted to sublime landscapes where they feel small and insignificant, but part of an infinite and universal circle; certainly, many wilderness and natural tourism settings would meet these criteria.

Fredrickson and Anderson (1999) also noted that people use wildlife and the wilderness to reflect upon their lives, and find solitude; more so they argued today, because in modern times many people do not take time to look at the stars. Indeed, there is strong evidence to suggest that wilderness, rural, and nature-based attractions contain a myriad of spiritual dimensions (for example, Fredrickson & Anderson, 1999; Hull, Robertson, & Kendra, 2001; Ivakhiv, 2003; Schanzel & McIntosh, 2000; Schmidt, 2005; Singh, 2006).

It could also be argued that researchers have seemingly been quicker to identify the connection with tourism that occurs in natural areas with the spiritual. For example, Singh (2006) noted that connecting with natural areas is said to nourish the spirit and Schmidt and Little (2005) argued that natural environments can provide tourists with a place for self whereby they can gain meaningful experiences, 'recharge', feel free, and experience inner growth. Bull (2006) similarly noted that one can feel nourished and 'return to the womb' through experiencing the sea.

A number of authors have evidenced that people can find connectedness with self (for example, Beeho & Prentice, 1997; Bruner, 1991; Daniel, 1996; Howe, 2001; Noy, 2004), God, (Cohen, 1979; Harris, 1996; Rinschede, 1992; Vukonić, 1996; Zahra, 2006) or 'others' through tourism (Curtin, 2005; Harrison, 2003; McCain & Ray, 2003; Relph, 1976; Schanzel & McIntosh, 2000; Trauer & Ryan, 2005). Some authors have contended that tourism presents an ideal situation for connectedness to occur. For instance, Craib (1997, p.160) argued that touristic connections can "reach across gender, age, race, class and other social realities if need be". Further, Harrison (2003) suggested that tourists encounter much of what Simmel (1910) calls the 'social ideal' while travelling; these are situations that meet the human need for connection, but the temporary nature of the association frees people from the need to seek ongoing attachment. Indeed, Harrison (2003) suggested that 'social ideals', such as travelling on a bus with people can in fact be deeply meaningful and memorable to people, and meet their needs for connection.

The above discussion has shown that discourse around the role of travel in deriving meaning and life purpose within the lives of individuals is evolving. The spiritual landscape is changing and it appears that there is a need to develop an

understanding of what 'spirituality' entails. Chapter 3 addresses this by exploring the core constructs of spirituality from a diverse range of worldviews and disciplines.

2.6: CHAPTER SUMMARY.

This chapter has provided evidence that there appears to be a spiritual boom within much of the Western World. It is argued that increasing numbers of individuals are finding much of modern society meaningless, and seeking to re-establish meaning through engaging their spirituality. This chapter has also noted that increased interest in spirituality is possibly fuelled by growing disenchantment with issues of materialism, secularism, technology, terrorism, global warming, and stress created through technological advancement. The academic world is also paying greater attention to spirituality; it is heeding calls to give greater attention to issues of importance to the human spirit and embracing alternative ways of gathering knowledge that are conducive to exploring spirituality, although in varying ways, depending on the discipline. There are also increasing references to spirituality in tourism research. However, confusion exists as to the core conceptual constructs of spirituality and the role of travel in facilitating life purpose and meaning in the lives of individuals. The following chapter seeks to address this gap by taking a journey through understanding the different conceptualisations and thinking about spirituality amongst scholars across different disciplines.

CHAPTER 3: CONCEPTUALISATIONS OF SPIRITUALITY.

3.1: CHAPTER INTRODUCTION.

To build upon the discussion on why there is a recent interest in spirituality presented in Chapter 2, this chapter aims to open a wider dialogue concerning the definition of 'spirituality' to inform the thesis aim, that is, to explore spirituality and travel; specifically, the role of travel in facilitating life purpose and meaning in the lives of individuals. It has been stated that presenting a definition of spirituality that is universally understood and accepted is an ultimately futile process (Kinjerski & Skrypnek, 2004; Maher & Hunt, 1993; Yinger, 1967). However, while each description of spirituality across the different disciplines varies, there are similarities in terms of how each view the conceptual constructs of spirituality. Currently, it is argued that while a number of researchers have revealed pieces of the 'spirituality puzzle', most have failed to put all these pieces together (Miner-Williams, 2006); there is thus a need to better identify and put together the conceptual constructs of this puzzle. This is the aim of this chapter.

To explore the dialogue concerning the conceptual constructs of spirituality, this chapter begins by comparing the concept of spirituality with the concept of religion. This is important, because it is argued that a major stumbling block into advancing scholarly understanding into spirituality is that it is often confused with religion (Zinnbauer et al., 1999). According to Dyson et al. (1997, p.1184), "One could contend that one of the major hindrances in defining spirituality is its relationship with religion". Thus, Zinnbauer et al. (1997, p.563) suggested that if one does not give careful attention to understanding the relationship between the two terms, they are in danger of studying "'narrow' religion and 'fuzzy' spirituality". This chapter then explores various conceptualisations of 'spirituality' across academic disciplines and also worldviews. The chapter then discusses conceptualisations of 'spirit' alongside 'spirituality', as the existence of the 'spirit' is said to facilitate one's 'spirituality'.

3.2: CONCEPTUALISING SPIRITUALITY AND RELIGION.

Conceptually, there is common agreement that religion and spirituality are closely related (Marra, 2000). As a result, many scholars within the published literature have used the terms synonymously (for example, Benner, 1989; Tart, 1983; Vaughan, 1991). Marra (2000, p.67) observed that, "For centuries, day to day language more or less equated 'spirituality' with 'religion' and Elias (1991, p.457) proffered, "The words spiritual and spirituality are today "used without apology in both religious and non-religious circles". The close relationship between the two concepts has arisen because the term 'spirituality' arguably arose from Christianity (Devereux, 2003), Thus, Maher & Hunt (1993, p.2) purported, "The traditionally rooted perceptions of most Americans is that the term spirituality has been inextricably linked with religious practice". Due to the arguable Judeo-Christian origins of spirituality, Dyson, Cobb and Forman (1997) argued that it is probably impossible to wholly separate religion from spirituality. The overlap of the two terms can be viewed by Tart (1983) and Benner's (1989) definitions of spirituality. Tart (1983, p.4), a psychologist, defined spirituality as, "That vast realm of human potential dealing with ultimate purposes, with higher realities, with God, with love, with compassion, with purpose", and Benner (1989, p.20), also a psychologist, defined spirituality as, "The human response to God's gracious call to a relationship with himself". While some authors argued that spirituality has its roots in religious traditions, Burack (1999, p.280) claimed that factors such as increased secularisation in the Western world has meant that, in recent times "spirituality has grown markedly beyond its anchoring in religious traditions". Indeed, this is the argument put forward in Chapter 2 of this thesis.

While spirituality and religion are related concepts within the literature, scholars have also identified differences between the two. In recent times, increasing numbers of scholars are purporting that spirituality is a much broader concept than religion (Benjamin & Looby, 1998; Hardy, 1979; MacDonald, 2000; Marra, 2000; Miner-Williams, 2006; Timothy & Conover, 2006a). These scholars argued that because spirituality represents the expression of being human, every human, regardless of cast, creed or religion is a spiritual being. Certainly, not all human beings are religious (for example, many people are atheist or materialist), but Timothy and Conover (2006,

p.270) argued that, "Even non-believers or atheists can experience something outside themselves that whispers acknowledgment of something beyond". Thus, everyone can experience 'transcendence', a sense of connection above and beyond ourselves; religious individuals are likely to experience transcendence through God (through for example, prayer or worship); non-religious individuals may experience transcendence through other 'sacred' things. Durkheim (1915, p.52) suggested, "By sacred things one must not understand simply those personal beings which are called Gods or spirits; a rock, a tree, a spring, a pebble, a piece of wood, a house, in a word, anything can be sacred". Similarly, Heelas and Woodhead (2005) argued that spirituality differs from religion in that it is a much more individualistic phenomenon; individuals do not need to believe in a deity or group of deities to be spiritual; rather, they can derive personal meaning from any object or phenomenon. Heelas and Woodhead (2005) argue that many individuals who view themselves as spiritual are wholly separate from the congregational world and are characteristic of postmodern society.

Further, Oldnall (1996) observed that every person has spiritual needs regardless of whether they are religious or not; spiritual needs represent the search for meaning, purpose and connection within life (ibid). Thus, people will often describe themselves as 'spiritual' even if they have no religious beliefs (Van Ness, 1996b). Moreover, as previously noted, when people are seeking for meaning and purpose in life, they may not be looking to engage with God or a higher power. Conversely, traditional religions such as Christianity, Islam, Judaism, and Hinduism primarily involve worship of a God or Gods (Rohmann, 1999; Zinnbauer et al., 1997; 1999). Being 'religious' involves rituals consisting of acts of devotion, adoration and sacrifice; there is piety involved in the act of being religious (MacIntyre, 1988). In conceptual contrast, spirituality is free of the necessity of piety.

A number of scholars have argued that spirituality is also differentiated from religion because of religion's institutional element (for example, Freeman, 1998). McCormick (1994) argued that spirituality is different to religion because it relates to life's deeper motivations, and an emotional 'connectedness' to oneself, God, or a higher power, which is free from any institutional structures. Conversely, according to Freeman (1998, p.7), religion often comprises belief systems and institutions that are, "More focused on their particular forms than on the spiritual reality to which they

point, but which transcends them". Religion has been said to further differ from spirituality in that it fundamentally consists of many traditions and symbols (Rohmann, 1999; Vukonić, 1996; Wordsworth, 1999). Certainly, one may assign their own symbols or traditions to represent their spirituality, but symbols and traditions are inextricably linked with religion. For example, in Christianity, certain believers will follow, amongst other traditions, attending mass, breaking the bread, praying, observing Lent, attending confession, being baptised, being married in a church, attending worship on a Sunday and not working on important days in the Christian calendar. Dozens of symbols are also used to symbolise religious faith; for example the Cross, the Star of David, the Islamic Crescent, the Wiccan pentagram, the Bahai Nine Pointed Star, and the Taoism Yin and Yang (Rohmann, 1999; Wordsworth, 1999).

Due to religion being conceptualised as 'institutional', certain recent scholars seem to see religion as predominantly 'bad' and spirituality predominantly 'good' (Zinbauer et al., 1999). Zinnbauer et al. (1999, p.563) noted that, "Currently, religiousness is conceptualised as 'narrow and institutional' and spirituality is increasingly recognised as 'personal and subjective'". The case for 'bad religion' is illustrated through the fact that certain people have turned their backs on religion because they have been hurt by it, feel excluded, or feel that it is too inflexible to meet their needs. To illustrate the traditionally institutional conceptualisations of religion, Argyle et al (1975, p.1) defined religion as, "A system of beliefs in a divine or superhuman power, and practises of worship or other rituals directed towards such a power", and Vaughan (1991) purported that religion is subscription to institutional beliefs and doctrines.

Also central to many religions is a strict moral code, and set of rules that believers are encouraged to follow (Rohmann, 1999; Wordsworth, 1999). While spirituality calls upon one to hold high morals, values, ethics, and to follow natural law, spirituality's moral code is arguably more subjective and less objective compared to religion (Rohmann, 1999; Argyle et al., 1975). Certainly, the three revealed religions, Christianity, Judaism and Islam, have a very structured moral code. For example, Christians have The Ten Commandments given by God to Moses, able-bodied Muslims are encouraged to make a hajj (pilgrimage) to Mecca at least once in

their lifetime, and Jewish people are forbidden to eat pork, and must ensure food is kosher. Religious moral codes could be argued to be more exclusionary than spiritual moral codes, because they make some people feel that they cannot identify with religion, and some people feel religion can be divisive and discriminating against people because of their lifestyle (Mitroff & Denton, 1999; Hill et al., 2000). For example, it is argued that homosexuals can feel shunned, and unable to participate in church life; they feel they cannot be religious but they can be spiritual (Rosser, 1992). While some religions have less prescriptive moral codes, the strict moral code of certain religions has also led to religion being classified as 'restrictive', and spirituality as 'flexible' (Hill, Pargament II et al., 2000). The 'flexibility' of spirituality can be illustrated through the notion that one's spiritual 'Higher Power' can be whatever inspires them (Bourne, 2005).

While a number of scholars have purported that spirituality and religion are different terms, Zinnbauer et al. (1999) argued that it is not accurate, or helpful to wholly polarise religiousness and spirituality. Indeed, Zinnbauer et al. (1999, p.563) stated, "It is our belief that spirituality, however it is defined and expressed in our pluralistic society, should have a home within a broadband conceptualisation of religion" (p.563). Moreover, Zinnbauer et al. (1999, p.563) argued that future conceptualisations of religion need to be broader in scope; "Religion in its broadband sense includes the personal and the institutional, the traditional and the progressive, the helpful and the harmful". Hill (2000, p.72) claimed that by treating spirituality and religion as different, researchers can, "Close the door to future opportunities to explore the similarities and differences between the two concepts". Hill (2000) also suggested that failing to recognise the concepts as interrelated is failing to recognise that many people classify themselves as both religious and spiritual. This was evidenced by Zinnbauer et al. (1997) who found that 74% of churchgoers they interviewed classified themselves as both spiritual and religious.

Importantly for this thesis, the literature demonstrates similarities between spirituality and religion, especially in relation to three common conceptual elements. The literature supports that the core constructs and outcomes of spirituality (i.e. one's search for meaning and life purpose, transcendence and connectedness) are also the core constructs of religion (Benjamin & Looby, 1998; Bown & Williams, 1993;

Bridger, 2001; Elias, 1991; Vaughan, 1991; Zinnbauer et al., 1997; Zinnbauer et al. 1999). However, Spilka and McIntosh (1996) suggested that spirituality seems to be the most popular word to describe transcendence and connectedness. The interconnected relationship between spirituality and religion has been observed by a number of scholars in recent times (Hill et al., 2000; Oldnall, 1996; Wright, 2000 Zinnbauer et al. 1997; 1999). Oldnall (1996), for example, argued that the two terms overlap because the spirituality of human beings is undoubtedly influenced by any religious, secular or agnostic beliefs they hold. Thus, "religion provides a channel for the expression of our spirituality" (Wright, 2000, p.23). For example, as previously mentioned, a Christian is likely to view their connectedness with God as being the driving force of their spirituality (Miner-Williams, 2006), while New Agers may find more connection with nature or the land (Pernecky, 2006). Certainly, all major religious institutions are inherently concerned with spiritual matters (Zinnbauer et al., 1999), and it could be argued that because spirituality is concerned with the search for the sacred; that is, it is concerned with the search for what one derives ultimate meaning, direction and purpose with (Vaughan, 1991), it is "The heart and soul of religion, and religion's most central function" (Zinnbauer et al., 1999, p.909). Spirituality, like most religions, also holds that physical life is a temporary journey, and is essentially a 'training ground' for something else that cannot be fully realised while experiencing physical life (Bourne, 2005).

Elias (1991), Bourne (2005) and MacDonald (2000) argued that by focusing on their spirituality, people are turning to what is most essential in religion, namely, the experiential dimension. Elias (1991, p.457) also argued that both spiritual and religious engagement help people in their needs for "Community, identity, order, meaning, direction, hope, as well as a sense for wholeness and a desire for clear moral standards". To illustrate that religion and spirituality's core concepts are similar, Hill et al. (2000) purported that both religion and spirituality involve a personal search to discover, articulate, and sustain that what is sacred (ultimate meaning, purpose and direction in life), and to ask questions of personal meaning, where the answers often lie in connecting to the transcendent. Additionally, there is much research to suggest that a strong religious faith helps people to, for example, be less likely to form a drug addiction, develop depression, or other mental illnesses, and to live longer (Hill,

37

Pargament II et al., 2000; Salsman, Brown, Brechting, & Carlson, 2005; Zinnbauer et al., 1997). Religion also strongly influences the morals, values and ethics of some people, through, for example, shaping one's attitudes towards premarital sex and abortion (Cochran & Beeghley, 1991). However, religion will not influence the attitudes of all individuals and similar morals, values and ethics may be held by non-religious individuals.

Certain aspects of one's religion and spirituality, it is argued, may be hereditary and can be developed across one's lifespan (D'Onfrio, 1999; Gaarder, 1999; Hill et al., 2000). To illustrate, D'Onfrio (1999, p.93) purported, "Behavior genetic studies have demonstrated that genetic factors play a role in the individual differences in some religious traits". These traits include religious denomination, attitudes, church attendance, practises, and attitudes to, for example, sexuality. One's spiritual makeup could also be argued to be partly hereditary, due to the influence of genetics and environmental factors. Further, at certain points in their lives, people may change the intensity to which they pursue religion or spirituality (Bridger, 2001; Cochran & Beeghley, 1991; Peck, 1997). For example, Peck (1997) discussed that there are many 'Sunday morning Christians'; these people will go to Church on Sunday and believe that God is the creator, but they will have no qualms working for a company during the week that pollutes rivers and lakes. Further, at different stages of their lives, people may differ in the strength of their spiritual and/or religious expression, and the way they express their religious beliefs or spirituality (Bridger, 2001; Peck, 1997). For example, in many cases, church attendance is comprised disproportionately by elderly people (Bridger, 2001).

Due to the common conceptual constructs between spirituality and religion, the religious community is also largely (but cautiously) welcoming the renewed interest in the spiritual (Bridger, 2001; Zinnbauer et al., 1997). Zinnbauer et al. (1997, p.563) suggested, "Spirituality currently reflects new developments in individual and cultural religious expression, and could inject a great deal of excitement and interest into our discipline" (Theology). Bridger (2001) also argued that the Christian community could legitimately give 'one and a half shouts' (but no more) to the spiritual movement. Ultimately then, while the discourse comparing religion and spirituality continues, in recent times, spirituality has largely been thought of as a lens through

which one's religion is guided, and as an interrelated, but broader concept than religion (Benjamin & Looby, 1998; Bown & Williams, 1993; Mitroff & Denton, 1999). For example, from a nursing perspective, it is argued that to treat people in a spiritual, rather, or in conjunction with, a religious manner is to provide greater holistic care (Bown and Williams, 1993). This was well articulated by counselling scholars Benjamin and Looby (1998, p.93), who suggested that, "Religion takes a slant, a different shade of color for each culture and for each tradition. Spirituality surpasses them all. This understanding allows for the experience of a relationship with a higher power, independent of religion". Figure 3.1. summarises the above discussion by highlighting the similarities and differences between the terms 'spirituality' and 'religion' that are found within many modern scholarly articles based on a review of the published literature.

Figure 3.1: Conceptualisations of Spirituality and Religion.

Sources: (Benjamin & Looby, 1998; Hardy, 1979; MacDonald, 2000; Marra, 2000; Miner-Williams, 2006; Timothy & Conover, 2006a).

<u>**Specific aspects of Spirituality**</u>	<u>**Specific aspects of Religion**</u>
Everyone is spiritual	Some people are religious
Not linked to institutions	Largely institutional
Subjective moral code seen as largely inclusive	Objective moral code seen by some as exclusionary
Largely based on philosophy and reason	Largely based on reason, faith and revelation
Associated with few symbols	Highly symbolic
Generally an individual action	Collective ritual

<u>**Shared aspects of Spirituality and Religion**</u>

Multidimensional

Three common conceptual elements:
Search for Meaning/Purpose
Transcendence
Connectedness

Concerned with the sacred, ultimate values, and ultimate realities

Emphasis on experience

Expression may be hereditary and/or developed across one's life

To understand the three conceptual constructs of spirituality further, we must first understand the 'spirit' because the existence of the spirit facilitates one's spirituality (Davies, 1992; Gaarder, 1999). To help clarify the difference between the terms 'spirit' and 'spirituality', Goldberg (1998) noted that 'spirituality' is regarded as an abstract noun, whereas 'spirit' is a concrete noun. Casaldaliga and Vigil (1994) compared friendship and friend to help explain the difference between spirit and spirituality. Friends have the quality of friendship. However, the way in which they live their friendship affects the type of friendship they have, and the degree of intensity or sincerity of the friendship. Thus, spirituality is the way in which people live with and express their spirit.

Much of the literature exploring the spirit has been based upon the foundations of philosophers and theologians. Many philosophers and theologians over hundreds of years, and from a wide variety of worldviews have explored the spirit. Plato (428–348 B.C), Aristotle (384-322 B.C), St. Augustine (354-430 A.D), St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274 A.D), Rene Descartes (1596-1650 A.D), and Immanuel Kant (1724-1804 A.D) in particular are widely referenced by scholars as being important philosophers who have explored the spirit (for example, Braine, 1992; Davies, 1992; Gaarder, 1999; Kretzmann, 1993; Rohmann, 1999; Van Ness, 1996b). Most of these philosophers share similar views concerning the spirit. Figure 3.2 (overleaf) illustrates the consensus of how these philosophers have conceptualised 'spirit'.

Figure 3.2: Consensus of Philosophers' Views of the Soul and Spirit.

Soul   Spirit
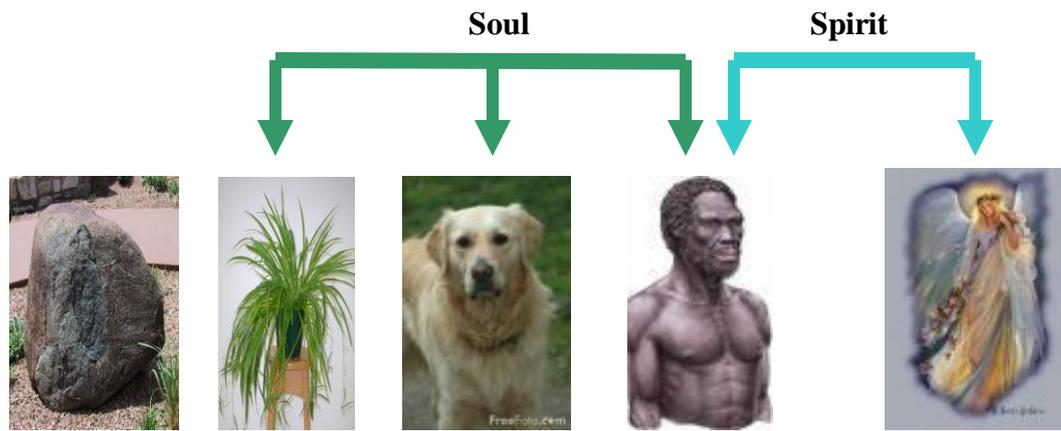
Inanimate Objects (e.g. Rock)	Plants	Animals	Human Beings	Purely Spiritual Beings: E.g. Angels, Gods, Spirits
Corporeal	Corporeal	Corporeal	Corporeal and Incorporeal	Incorporeal
No Soul	Nutritive Soul	Nutritive and Sensory Soul	Nutritive, Sensory and Rational Soul	Wholly Spiritual
Non-living	Living and can sustain life	Living and can sustain life. Higher animals have imagination, perception, emotion and perception	Living and can sustain life. Humans have imagination, perception, emotion, perception, intellect and will. The incorporeal side of humans is immortal	Immortal
No Spirit	No Spirit	No Spirit	Spirit	Spirit
			Seek the 'spiritual' e.g. meaning/transcendence	
			Follow moral laws	
			Express their spirit through their 'spirituality'	

Figure 3.2. illustrates that many philosophers have made distinctions between *soul* and *spirit*, although the two terms are similar. Plato, Aristotle, St Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas and Descartes viewed the soul as being the essence of life. Therefore, to them everything that was living and could sustain its life (such as all plants, animals, insects, and human beings) had a soul. Certain substances like coal or a fire could be said to be living when they are lit; they can sustain life to an extent through, for example, fuelling themselves through oxygen, but these philosophers did not view these substances as having a soul because they could not actively sustain life (Gaarder, 1999; Kretzmann, 1993). These philosophers saw spirit as being the essence and life-force of being *human*, although, as will be discussed later, certain immortal beings, such as angels, are also seen as having a spirit. That spirit is conceptually the essence of being human has also been argued by a number of theorists from the disciplines of health (for example, Meraviglia, 1999; Miner-Williams, 2006; Taylor, 2001; for example, Vaillot, 1970), management (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; McCormick, 1994; Tischler, 1999), theology (for example, Bridger, 2001; Zinnbauer et al., 1997) and psychology (for example, Piedmont, 1999; Vaughan, 1991), amongst others.

Historically, it is argued that 'spirit' is derived from the Latin word *spiritus*, meaning human breath, courage, vigour and life (Kretzmann, 1993; Marra, 2000; Zinnbauer et al., 1999). Similarly, the Hebrew word for spirit (ruach) means wind, breath and spirit (Delbane & Montgomery, 1981; Goldberg, 1998) and the Greek word for spirit (pneuma), also means breath (Roth, 1990). Philosophically, Kretzmann (1993) argued that breathing is a key symbolism of human life, and thus, these translations support the notion that 'spirit' is the essence of being human and 'spirituality' is the expression of being human. Counselling scholar Marra (2000) suggested that the modern day translation of *spiritus* concerns the life-giving force or animating principle; it is what makes one human; one's spirit allows one to seek the spiritual and express one's *spirituality*. These scholars and philosophers believed that every person, regardless of age, culture, gender, religion etc. is a spiritual being (for example, Gaarder, 1999; Hardy, 1979; Kretzmann, 1993; Meraviglia, 1999; Zinnbauer et al., 1997). Thus, as spiritual beings, it is arguably impossible for humans not to take their spirit wherever they are; every second of the day, human beings are

43

spiritual creatures (Davies, 1992; Gaarder, 1999; Kinjerski & Skrypnek, 2004; Kretzmann, 1993; Rogers & Baird, 1981). This, then, takes the definition of spirituality broader than religion. It effectively means that all human beings express spirituality.

To further support the notion that all human beings express spirituality, Figure 3.2 illustrates that a number of renowned philosophers have argued that a human being's spirit distinguishes them from animals. Certainly, all animals are living, breathing entities, but most philosophers, including Aristotle, Aquinas, Kant, Descartes and Plato, did not see animals as being spiritual (Gaarder, 1999). These philosophers, as noted, viewed every living thing as having a *soul* (life-giving force), but only humans as having a *spirit* (life-giving force that is immortal) (Davies, 1992; Field, 1969; Gaarder, 1999; Kretzmann, 1993). According to Plato, a human being's spirit not only makes them a human, it also gives one their unique personality, values and outlooks on life (Field, 1969). Thus, for Plato, every person has a unique spiritual make-up that is influenced by his or her worldview.

St. Thomas Aquinas, a metaphysicist, and arguably one of the greatest medieval philosophers (Gaarder, 1999; Kretzmann, 1993), expanded further on how the human spirit differentiates humans from animals. According to Kretzman (1993), Aquinas saw some things such as trees, cats and stars as being exclusively corporeal (consisting of matter), and some as being exclusively incorporeal (consisting of spirit), such as angels. Angels are also seen as incorporeal in the Christian and Islamic religions (Wordsworth, 1999). Aquinas did agree that both humans and animals have 'souls', which he considered to be the essence of life. However, he did not see animals as being spiritual in any way. He thus saw human beings as unique because they contained both corporeal (matter) and incorporeal (spirit) elements.

Aquinas took his philosophical thoughts further by purporting that the soul of a plant is nutritive (it sustains the life of the plant), the soul of the animal has nutritive and sensory principles (e.g. sight, hearing, cognition), while the soul of the human, because a human being has a spirit, has nutritive, sensory, and rational principles (intellect) (Kretzmann, 1993). Thus, Aquinas saw the human soul as being the 'rational soul', and human beings' souls as being different from other animals because

of the presence of the intellect that had spiritual faculties (Kretzmann, 1993). Plato, Aristotle, Descartes and the Aristotelians also viewed intellect as being the distinguishing characteristic of human beings (Bourgeois, 1995); eastern philosophers such as Aurobindo (1872-1950) similarly agreed that humans have a higher degree of consciousness than other animals (Miovic, 2004).

To further the discussion that all human beings express spirituality, a number of modern philosophers have also purported that human beings illustrate spirituality when they express rational and intellectual properties (Bolton, 1994; Braine, 1992; Gaarder, 1999). Braine (1992) for example, argued that human beings have certain things in common with animals, such as imagination, perception, emotion, and perception, but it is intellect where humans differ from animals. Bolton (1994) similarly observed that only humans have the free-will and intellect needed to guide them, develop values and seek meaning. Existentialist Jean-Paul Satre shares a similar view by stating that plants and animals are alive but do not necessarily question what it means to be alive; a human being's freedom compels them to question (Gaarder, 1999). Existentialists differ from many ancient and theological philosophers in that they do not believe in a God. Thus, for them the human spirit is free from any religious associations (Rohmann, 1999).

Jean Paul Satre built upon Immanuel Kant's work who stated that because animals do not have a spirit, they can only follow their needs and natural inclinations, and cannot follow moral laws like humans (Gaarder, 1999). Kant also explained that only human beings have the law of causality in their makeup. Gaarder (1999) explained what the law of causality means by noting that if you roll a ball past a cat, it will probably simply chase it; if you roll a ball past a human it will question the cause of the event, because human beings, "Exert ourselves to the fullest to find answers to all the deepest questions" (Gaarder, 1999, p.254). Similarly, Descartes argued that only human beings have minds, and that animals belong wholly to extended reality; their living and actions are thus undertaken almost mechanically. Conversely, according to Descartes, human beings can craft a more meaningful life, that is greater than merely existing (Gaarder, 1999). As will be discussed later, many scholars regard the quest for meaning and purpose in life as being a core component of spirituality.

Table 3.1: Worldviews with Alternative Views of the Spirit and Spirituality.

Worldview.	Views Concerning the Existence of the Spirit.	Specific Views of the Spirit and Spirituality.	Selected References.
New Age.	Human beings, animals, and nature are spiritual.	Traditional Western thought that only human beings are spiritual is damaging. Human beings are no superior than anything else and are not differentiated by their spirit.	Aldred; 2002; Hartmann, 1999; Shimazono, 1999.
Romanticists.	Human beings, animals and nature are spiritual.	People and nature are part of an interconnected 'world spirit'.	Gaarder, 1999; Garrard, 1998.
Pantheism.	Everything is spiritual.	God is everything and everything is God. Thus, everything, including inanimate objects is spiritual.	Levine, 1994; Owen, 1971.
Animism.	Everything has a soul. Objects and ideas are expressions of living spirits.	There are living spirits that can take over the human spirit. Inanimate objects also have souls.	Harvey, 2006; Wordsworth, 1999.
Materialism.	Nothing is spiritual. Everything is pure matter.	The only reality is physical matter. Materialists dismiss the existence of the spirit.	Kretzmann, 1993; Rohmann, 1999.
Indigenous Cosmology	Everything has a spirit.	Human beings have a spirit and are a part of nature.	Furbish & Reid, 2003; Harvey, 2006.

It is important to observe that there are certain theorists and philosophers who hold differing and often opposing views regarding the spirit and soul to those discussed above. This diversity of thought represents a challenge to those seeking to research spirituality. Table 3.1 illustrates worldviews that hold alternative views concerning the conceptualisations of spirit, and consequently, spirituality to the philosophers discussed above. The key differences in thoughts are discussed further below.

People with 'New Age' beliefs differ from the conceptualisations of the spirit provided by many ancient philosophers because they view all of nature as spiritual (Hartmann, 1999; Raschke, 1996; Rohmann, 1999). Hartmann (1999) argued that for the first 194,000 years of humanity's 200,000-year history, people viewed the world, and all of its inhabitants as being equal, and having spirits; thus a person that caused harm to the world was deemed insane and banished from their tribe. Hartmann (1999) contended that the consensus view of spirituality as being the thing that makes humans distinct and seemingly superior from animals has caused the planet great suffering. Hartmann also found it inconceivable to think that an animal could not know G-d (A term he used for 'Higher Power'), and recounted his mentor Gotfried Muller telling him that to look into the eyes of an animal is to look into the eyes of G-d: "There in the eyes of a cat or a dog, in the eyes of a fly or fish, in the eyes of a friend or enemy, you are looking into the eyes of G-d" (Hartmann, 1999, p.261). Thus, Hartmann (1999) treated the argument that animals could not question the meaning of existence, and have immortal spirits with disdain. Many 'New Agers' are driven by a belief that certain parts of Western society are evil, and that there is something wrong with traditional Western thought; they question whether man is indeed at the top of nature, or the 'master of nature' (Gaarder, 1999; Raschke, 1996). To New Agers, humans are no different from animals or plants, and must therefore act in harmony with all of nature.

There are further worldviews that do not believe that only human beings are spiritual. Romanticists argue that they feel an extended reality in nature, and that nature is part of a 'world spirit' (Gaarder, 1999). Romanticism flourished particularly in Europe from the late 18th century to the mid 19th century, and emphasised individualism, expression of emotion, and connection with nature (Rohmann, 1999). The leading Romantic philosopher, Schelling (1775-1854) argued that the human soul and mind are simply part of a world spirit; thus, all of nature shared the same spirit as man (Gaarder, 1999). Hegel (1770-1831) also proffered

that there is a world spirit, but argued that only man can partake in this world spirit (Gaarder, 1999).

Certain cultural and religious groups also believe that the land and nature has a spirit; for example, the New Zealand Maori have a close bond with the earth because of their belief that everyone and everything has a wairua: a physical body and a spirit. Everyone and everything are therefore connected and must be treated with respect (Furbish & Reid, 2003). The Maori concept of 'wairua' has no definitive meaning but the concept generally refers to the wholeness, and interrelatedness of all aspects of the world (Furbish & Reid, 2003). Furbish and Reid (2003, p.190) explained how Maori view the world as a combination of interrelated spirits,

> "A pervasive concept for Maori is a holistic worldview in which even contrasting elements are seen as unitary. This inclusive philosophy can be recognized in the Maori account of creation. The Maori ancestor Rangi, the sky father, and Papa, the earth mother, were locked together in an embrace, casting darkness and night onto the universe. The children of Rangi and Papa sought a way out of the darkness into the light. Each of these children is a source for, and is identified with, a particular area of the universe: the wind and storm, the sea, the forest and birds, vegetation and people. According to this conceptualisation of the universe, humans are called to identify themselves with the different spiritual powers and to take part in the whole movement of the universe".

Some cultures view certain parts of nature as being spiritual. For example, in Chiang Mai, Thailand, there once stood a large banyan tree; today, although the tree is no longer present, there stands a spirit shrine that honours the tree's spirit (Forbes, 2002). Those who follow pantheism also have particular views regarding the spirit. Pantheism is a popular movement that takes on religious and metaphysical positions (Clark, 1998; Levine, 1994). People with pantheistic views believe that God is everything and everything is God (Clark, 1998; Owen, 1971); thus, they believe there is a God, but their God is contained in the divine unity that is contained in everything (MacIntyre, 1967). Therefore, to many pantheists, everything has a spirit.

Animists also hold alternative views to many philosophers concerning the spirit. They believe that even inanimate objects have souls and that the human spirit can be 'taken over' by external 'evil spirits' (Wordsworth, 1999). Thus, animists view people with mental illnesses as possessing evil spirits. Animists also believe that animals are no different to

people, and indeed, should be thought of as people too because they, "breathe, consume, excrete, reproduce, are sentient and possess genomes composed of nucleic acid" (Harvey, 2006, p.100). Animists also view animals as persons because they relate, feel connection with their peers and human beings and communicate; thus for a number of animists, eating animals is a moral issue because they ask 'how can we eat persons?' (Harvey, 2006). For animists, certain animals are believed to participate in 'religious ceremonies' and experience the transcendent. For instance, Harvey (2006) explained how animists believe that actions of wolves howling at the moon is intentional, and symbolises some form of connection with nature and a 'higher power'. Harvey (2006) also explained that animists view certain animals as having 'spiritual power'; for example, one animist interviewed by Harvey (2006) discussed how a red squirrel came to see a baby, just minutes after the mother had told her she dreamed about red squirrels during her pregnancy. This form of belief is said to be prevalent today within many primitive tribes, and is important to a number of religions, most predominantly the Eastern religion of Shintoism (Brohm, 1963; Wordsworth, 1999).

Animals are also treated as sacred or spiritual by certain religions and cultures. For example, although not viewing the animal as spiritual, for Hindus, the cow is sacred, must not be killed, and is often treated like a member of the family (ReligionFacts, 2007). In historical times, the Ancient Egyptians viewed cats as spiritual, and believed that their Gods took the form of a cat. When a cat died, Egyptians would shave their eyebrows in mourning (David, 1982). In parts of the coastal Solomon Islands, tribes believe that how well they have kept their traditions can be measured by the number of shark attacks on members of the tribe (Harvey, 2006). Tribes on the island of Malaita, Solomon Islands, pray and present gifts to the sharks as Gods (Rivers, 1909; Panakera, C., 2008, pers.comm.).

In addition to one's worldview, the literature purports that there are a myriad of factors that influence how one expresses their spirituality including, perhaps, culture, age, gender, past experience, sexuality, religious beliefs, life events, physical condition and personality (Clark, 1996; Hartmann, 1999; Pedersen, Draguns, Lonner, & Trimble, 2007; Ramaswamy, 1997; Schultz, 2005; Taylor, 2002; Watts, 2003; Zinnbauer et al., 1999). To illustrate, it has been widely purported that one's lifestyle can influence one's spirituality (Clark, 1996; Hartmann, 1999; Peake, 1989; Rosser, 1992). For instance, Clark (1996, p.335)

argued that being a gay man or lesbian woman, "Constitutes a whole mode of being-in-the-world" and thus one's sexuality influences one's spirituality.

One's gender is also said to influence how they express their spirituality (Levitt, 1996; Pedersen et al., 2007; Ramaswamy, 1997). Pedersen, Draguns, Lonner and Trimle (2007, p.354) claimed that, "The spiritual development of women may be influenced by a myriad of factors that differentiate the process from men's spiritual development". Pedersen et al. (2007) expanded on this by suggesting that some women may find spirituality aligned to religious practise difficult because, apart from revered figures such as the Virgin Mary, they have few female religious leaders to connect to. Further, Pedersen et al. (2007) suggested that it may be seen by some as more acceptable for men to leave home to 'find themselves'; thus, certain women may have to develop their spirituality while remaining more connected to home. Levitt (1996) suggested that feminists also have a particular view of spirituality; one that seeks to recognise and empower themselves as women.

The above discussion highlights that, despite differences in worldviews, and a myriad of other factors such as one's gender or sexuality, each description of spirituality contains three core conceptual constructs. That is, spirituality involves a search for life meaning and purpose, transcendence and connection. *Spirituality* is conceptualised as being the expression of one's spirit; that is, how one expresses oneself as human beings (Braine, 1992; Casaldaliga & Vigil, 1994; Davies, 1992; Gaarder, 1999). As such, this thesis conceptualises spirituality in the same manner. To inform the research aim, of exploring spirituality and tourism; specifically the role of travel in facilitating meaning and life purpose in the lives of individuals, these three conceptual constructs and outcomes of spirituality are discussed in the following section.

3.4: CORE CONSTRUCTS OF SPIRITUALITY: THE PERSONAL AND OFTEN TRANSCENDENT QUEST FOR MEANING, PURPOSE AND CONNECTION IN LIFE.

3.4.1: The Personal Quest for Meaning and Life Purpose

A number of philosophers argue that because spirit is the essence of being human, and one's spirituality is incorporeal, essentially spirituality concerns a human being's individual search for meaning in life, which inevitably will be undertaken by all humans (Bahm, 1974; Hardy,

1979; McIntyre & Roggenbuck, 1998; Meraviglia, 1999; Miner-Williams, 2006; Tanyi, 2002). Human beings have thus been thought of as 'the questing animal', as the search for meaning in one's life, or 'the spiritual quest', is arguably rooted in humans' biological, psychological, linguistic and social nature (Hardy, 1979; Torrance, 1994).

It is proffered that there are always certain triggers that awakens one's spirituality and motivates them to begin or continue with their personal 'spiritual quest' for meaning and life purpose (Bourne, 2005; Marques, 2006; Marra, 2000; Schultz, 2005; Torrance, 1994; Wright, 2000). Generally, one will only address their spirituality because they feel a 'deep prompting' to do so (Bourne, 2005). There are a large number of life experiences or situations in life that may facilitate spiritual awareness (Marques, 2006; Marra, 2000; Schultz, 2005; Torrance, 1994; Wright, 2000). For example, many people are said to become spiritually aware when they have developed an illness, or lost a close relationship (Torrance, 1994). A person with a disability interviewed by Schultz (2005) noted that they began asking spiritual questions after the death of their father. Similarly, Marra (2000) discussed that for her, moving back to her childhood home to care for her mother was a particularly spiritual experience. Other, prominent life-events such as getting married or divorced are also said to alter how people view their spirituality (Marques, 2006).

One's search for meaning and life purpose is also argued to be influenced by one's personal fears or anxieties (Bourne, 2005; Ramaswamy, 1997). For many people, engaging with their spirituality through seeking meaning or life purpose can be cause them to feel vulnerable, and they are thus content to focus on their material sides. Freeman (1998, p.13) explained this by purporting that, "We can relate to the world of material, body and history by analysis and manipulation, but the world of soul and spirit is where control and management stop and awe, attentiveness and openness begin". Certainly, to find meaning and purpose in one's life, one often has to 'step outside their comfort zone', and may, for example, change jobs, or seek further education (Bourne, 2005). Some people will not leave their comfort zone even if it will improve their lives. To illustrate, some people living in abusive situations will feel that escaping the situation would enrich their spirituality; however, they do not do so because of the fear associated with the resulting changes in their lives (Walker & Browne, 1985). Conversely though, there are people that do find spiritual strength during this time. For instance, one battered woman interviewed by Walker and Browne (1985, p.186) stated that, "He can't break my spirit like he does my bones".

From the above perspective, one will experience, express, and address their spirituality in a subjective manner. For example, people are said to have experienced their spirituality and found meaning through, amongst other activities, sex (Van Ness, 1996b), arts (Happel, 1996), sports (Thomas, 1996), video games, music, scientific inquiry (Van Ness, 1996a), and a large variety of other non-material things (Hardy, 1997). Appreciation of wine, food, and humour are also said to reflect one's spirituality (Dyson, Cobb, & Forman, 1997). Essentially though, anything can be imbued with personal meaning, and what may be considered mundane to someone may be highly spiritual and meaningful to another. For example, a number of Kenyan village elders talk of fishing as being a particularly spiritual and personally meaningful experience (Peake, 1989). Conversely, there will be many people who will find no spiritual dimensions or personal meaning in fishing. Hill et al. (2000) similarly argued that anything could be considered spiritual to someone, but imposed a caveat on this statement. Hill et al. (2000) argued that one expresses their spirituality when they are incorporating the sacred (e.g. transcendence, connection, ultimate values and meaning). To illustrate, Hill et al. (2000) suggested that one could only correctly state they express their spirituality through gardening if this action was connected to the sacred. Gardening may be spiritual to someone because it helps him or her to connect with nature, to reflect upon life questions, or to find God. Hill et al. (2000) also provided the example of a person who expressed 'my spirituality is vegetarianism'; for Hill et al. (2000), this could only be correct with vegetarianism for that individual was connected to the sacred. For example, if one feels their vegetarianism pleases God, and strengthens their connection with God, it is an expression of spirituality. To summarise, Hill et al. (2000, p.64) suggested, "When the term spirituality is invoked to describe ideologies or lifestyles that do not invoke notions of the sacred in one way or another, they are not spiritualities at all, just strongly held ideologies or highly elaborated lifestyles". Thus, within this research, the importance of both subjective and objective perspectives of spirituality are important. While, objectively, this thesis views spirituality as consisting of three core constructs; a search for meaning and life purpose, transcendence and connectedness, it seeks to also understand how these constructs are expressed subjectively by individuals.

3.4.2: <u>Transcendence</u>.

Further to the above discussion, to achieve meaning or purpose in one' life, a number of scholars have argued that human beings may have to experience transcendence. This

transcendence, (or self-transcendence; spiritual transcendence), is therefore seen by many scholars as being an integral part of any conceptual discussion of spirituality (Butts, 1999; Emmons, 2000; Freeman, 1998; McCormick, 1994; Miner-Williams, 2006; Piedmont, 2001; Tanyi, 2002). Freeman (1998, p.7), a Christian theorist, argued that spirituality, "Represents concern with the transcendent dimensions of life", and psychologist Piedmont (1999, p.988) comments that spiritual transcendence concerns, "The capacity of individuals to stand outside of their immediate sense of time and place to view life from a larger, more objective perspective". Christian educator Fisher (2001, p.48) also proffered that spiritual transcendence involves, "Faith toward, adoration and worship of the source of Mystery of the universe". From a psychological viewpoint transcendence also involves going past the ordinary confines of the body (Emmons, 2000).

The transcendent dimension of a person can be seen through a focus on growth, such as that described by Torrance (1994), or through Abraham Maslow's self-actualising person, who seeks to improve him or herself and increase knowledge of themselves and people around them (Piedmont, 1999). Indeed, Maslow's work is closely paralleled to the study of spirituality, and has been cited by a number of authors, particularly from the management and psychology disciplines who have explored spirituality. For example, management scholars Ashmos and Duchon (2000), Burack (1999), Butts (1999), and Mitroff and Denton (1999) argue that spirituality concerns the higher levels of Maslow's Hierachy of needs; thus, self-actualisation is regarded as being the level at which one seeks meaning and purpose in life. Other psychologists and counsellors purport that spirituality is the personal expression of ultimate concern, which is often the meaning of life, or essence of being that is closely paralleled to Maslow's work (Emmons, 2000; Marra, 2000). Marra (2000), writing from a counsellor's perspective explained that people move through the ultimate concerns of food, sex, water, shelter, and will find them temporarily satisfying; however they are not able to quench the desire of human beings to determine who they are, and their purpose and ultimate meaning in life. Marra (2000) therefore suggested that as one moves higher up the scale of ultimate concerns, they are moving from matter, to body, to mind, to soul, to spirit. As with Maslow's Hierachy of needs, one will still concern themselves with needs such as eating and sleeping, but when people are concentrating on spiritual concerns, these basic needs are no longer their ultimate concern (Marra, 2000).

Transcendence has also been similarly compared with the work of psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, who described optimal human experiences as 'flow', whereby people are challenged, experience a loss of self-consciousness and time (Van Ness, 1996b). Psychological scholar Piedmont (1999; 2001) further argued that people seek to transcend themselves because they are aware of their own mortality and that physical death is inevitable; people thus strive to find and construct meaning and purpose in their life. Piedmont (1999, p.5) contended that answering existential questions, "Help us to weave the many diverse threads of our lives into a more meaningful coherence that gives us the will to live productively".

Transcendence is widely discussed within the management literature. Specifically, it is purported that increasing numbers of businesses are moving towards people-centred management styles, and attempting to provide a personally meaningful working environment that allows employees to experience transcendence (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Burack, 1999; Butts, 1999; Simsen, 1988; Tischler, 1999). Some would argue that achieving transcendence in the work environment is difficult because they view transcendence as best fostered in situations that present people with free, 'extraordinary time' (Cohen, 1979; Graburn, 1989; Vukonić, 1996, refer to Chapter Three for further discussion). Nonetheless, according to management scholar Burack (1999, p.84), "When the inner self connects to ones work, work and the inner self seem to know no limits, the highest work is spiritual". Simsen (1988), writing from a nursing management perspective concurred by commenting that employees who view their jobs as being spiritual are likely to approach their work differently, and more positively to those that do not. Butts (1999) also argued that people work more energetically, enthusiastically, and creatively when they believe they are contributing to a higher purpose. One also wishes to express many parts of one's being when at work, and not just exclusively complete intellectual and physical tasks (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000). As such, increasing numbers of businesses are now introducing human potential programs, which may include activities such as team building, yoga, meditation, and motivational speakers (Butts, 1999). Achieving one's potential and expanding one's boundaries is a central component of transcendence within the management literature (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Burack, 1999; Kinjerski & Skrypnek, 2004; McCormick, 1994 Tischler, 1999). Businesses are discovering that work constitutes a substantial part of many peoples' lives, and thus, they can substantially enrich one's spirituality (Burack, 1999). Further, Tischler (1999) argued that in

the Western World, people are tending to move away from a strict focus on money, and are increasingly demanding that their work is meaningful, inspiring, and allows for personal, intrinsic growth (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Burack, 1999; Kinjerski & Skrypnek, 2004). This trend may mirror the growing frustration with materialistic, 'empty' lives, as described within Chapter 2. Equally, it may more positively reflect a proactive move towards individuality or identity.

3.4.3: Connectedness.

A further core construct of spirituality found across the disciplines is connectedness. Many people find meaning and purpose within their life and the answers to their personal spiritual questions through experiencing connectedness. Connectedness can be seen as being a harmonious relationship or 'oneness' with self, 'other' (including other people, animals, the earth, nature e.t.c.) and/or God/Higher Power (Dyson et al., 1997; Meraviglia, 1999; Piedmont, 1999; Zinnbauer et al., 1997). A significant proportion of literature across a wide range of disciplines acknowledges connectedness as being an integral part of any conceptualisation of spirituality. Connectedness has been widely cited in, amongst others, the nursing (for example, Meraviglia, 1999; Miner-Williams, 2006), theology (for example, Bridger, 2001; Zinnbauer et al., 1997), psychology (for example, Piedmont, 1999; Vaughan, 1991) and management literature (for example, Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Burack, 1999; McCormick, 1994). Some scholars contend that connectedness represents the very core of spirituality. For example, management scholars Mitroff and Denton (1999) argued that if one word represented the meaning of spirituality, and its importance to one's life, it is 'interconnectedness'. Connectedness is certainly a core component of spirituality in the health literature; Schultz (2005, p.4) purported that, "Based upon a review of literature from occupational therapy and other health professions, spirituality was defined as, "Experiencing a meaningful connection to our core selves, other humans, the world and/or a greater power as expressed through our reflections, narratives and actions".

A common word used to describe connectedness is relationship (Dyson et al., 1997 Schultz, 2005; Spaniol, 2001). This is illustrated by Spaniol (2001, p.321), who wrote from a health and rehabilitation perspective:

"Spirituality involves relationship – a relationship with someone or something beyond ourselves; someone or something that sustains and comforts us, guiding our decision making, forgiving our imperfections, and celebrating our journey through life. This someone or something can be another person, a spiritual guide, a belief in the goodness of human nature, and/or a belief in God. Our deepest spiritual encounters are experienced in and through our relationships – relationships that are intimate, mutual, and have the capacity to move us deeply".

Different disciplines and worldviews concentrate on specific types of connectedness. The theological literature, for instance, obviously concentrates on connectedness with God, "Encompassing both the relationship of the divine to the world and the human response to God" (for example, Meraviglia, 1999, p.19). Conversely, the psychology literature focuses on internal motivations and desires associated with the self rather than God (for example, Pargament et al., 1999), and the sociology literature generally discusses spirituality, and connectedness in the context of groups of people (Cohen, 2004; Sallnow, 1981). As with the quest for meaning and purpose and transcendence, the subjective, as well as objective elements of connectedness is regarded as important (Miner-Williams, 2006; Schultz, 2005; Zinnbauer et al., 1999). Spirituality thus can involve connections with self, others, and God/Higher Power or having an exclusive connection with God/Higher Power, or self, or 'other' (Miner-Williams, 2006; Schultz, 2005). Certainly, within Christianity for example, connection is likely to be viewed as the relationship with God. Zinnbauer et al. (1997) explored the difference between religion and spirituality amongst Christians and found that most definitions of spirituality given by their research participants included reference to a connection with God or a higher power, belief or faith in a higher power of some kind.

One's stage of life, physical condition, or specific religious beliefs can also affect the type of connection they seek. Schultz (2005), for example, suggested that a number of people with disabilities find connection with God or a higher power, to find comfort and meaning about why they live with a disability. Many others seek a connection with God or a higher power when they are experiencing difficult times, such as being incarcerated, or dealing with the loss of a loved one. Dorn (2001) purported that Buddhism and Hinduism asks individuals to find particularly strong connections with self; many Buddhists and Hindus thus seek to find inner harmony, purity and peace within themselves. For example, Buddha asks followers

to be vigilant and guard their minds against negative thoughts (Baird, 2002). Dorn (2001) acknowledged that The Bible contains a number of verses related specifically to connection with self, but argued that perhaps seeking connection with self is more ingrained within certain Eastern religious practises.

Other people may hold a particularly strong connection to the Earth, nature or certain geographical locations. Finkel (2007), for example, noted that in Bethlehem, many Christians feel unsafe amidst the violence in the region; Finkel (2007, p.72) told the story of Seth Mandell, a Christian whose child had been stoned to death; his murderers were never found. However, "His connection to this land is spiritually, emotionally, and culturally profound. "Leaving," he says, "would be like leaving a part of myself behind". One's culture is also likely to influence the type of spiritual connectedness they hold. New Zealand Maori, for instance, find deep connection with certain geographical locations because, "The physical and spiritual well-being of Maori is linked to the land that you belong to and relate to" (Pere, 1982, p.18). Many Maori also feel ancestral spirits are connected to landforms and they can feel, hear and see the wairua (spirit) from them (Furbish & Reid, 2003). Others will find strong connection to God or self through nature. For example, one Catholic man interviewed by Rosser (1992, p.130) commented, "The closest I felt to God was with a certain configuration of clouds with the sun shining through and at a particular place on our farm". This illustrates that connections, like spirituality generally, are highly subjective.

It has been purported that being in a state of connectedness is an important part of one's life, because it is natural for human beings to be in a state of connectedness (John Paul II, 1998; Spaniol, 2001). As it is a natural way of being, Spaniol (2001, p.322) suggested, "It is one of our deepest yearnings and most satisfying experiences". Pope John Paul II (1998) similarly claimed, "Human beings are not made to live alone. They are born into a family and in a family they grow, eventually entering society through their activity". According to Spaniol (2001), everybody needs to feel connected to something because everyone needs something outside of themselves to anchor their lives and give them meaning; people may have strong values, religious beliefs, a commitment to family, humanity, community; these are all ways people can find connection and something to guide their lives. Some people will have a strong connection to self; that is they have a number of values, needs, or questions that they are consciously expressing, or addressing. Common needs that are related to self may

include the need for meaning and purpose, vision, hope, dignity, and to transcend life challenges (Taylor, 2002). One is attempting to connect with self when they address their needs or act upon their values, and as previously discussed, there are a myriad of ways in which one may feel connection with self; for example, one may physically challenge themselves in order to grow mentally, or gain personal confidence. Although each person will experience different types of connection, as human beings are social creatures, many people will feel strong connections with other people; for example, their spouse, family, friends, or church group. People engaging with their spirituality are also likely to believe that they are connected to a larger human reality that cuts across generations and age groups; they thus share a connection with people that came before them and will come after them on this earth (Piedmont, 1999). Ashmos and Duchon (2000) highlight the importance of social connections for human beings by suggesting that part of being alive is connecting with others.

Connectedness may be physical or mental (Goldberg, 1998), and thus, one can feel connection with someone who has passed away, or is far away; thus someone's love, or the memory of someone's love can provide strong spiritual support to people (Schultz, 2005). The management literature also stresses the importance of connecting with others; for many people, the workplace provides their only consistent link to people, and therefore, to their needs of connection and contribution (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000). Indeed, 'belonging' is an important part of workplace spirituality (Burack, 1999); people need to feel that they are contributing to a higher good, share a common purpose with others, and belong to part of a community (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Dyson et al., 1997; Kinjerski & Skrypnek, 2004).

The notion of connectedness is considered particularly important in the health and disability literature. For example, Spaniol (2001, p.321) argued that the onset of a psychiatric disability is often experienced by, "A person as a profound disconnection from him or herself, from others, from living, learning and working environments, and from a larger sense of meaning and purpose", and thus, an important part of recovery from psychiatric illness is reconnecting with oneself, others, "To our living, learning, and working environments, and to larger meaning and purpose" (p.322-323). Writing from a nursing perspective, Taylor (2002) noted that patients often have needs related to connection with self (for example, the need for personal dignity, hope, meaning and purpose, to express feelings), others (for example, the need to forgive others, or for community), and a Higher Power (for example, the need to

experience God as loving and present). Indeed it is argued that reconnecting with oneself, and having a new focus in life are important factors in many rehabilitative programs, as people that are not connected to anything often feel deplete of energy and powerless (Kinjerski & Skrypnek, 2004). Connectedness is thus a concept of core importance to all human beings. If this thesis is to explore spirituality and travel; specifically, the role of travel in facilitating life purpose and meaning in the lives of individuals, exploring the role of travel in establishing and influencing connections of personal importance to individuals is likely to provide valuable insight into the personal meaning individuals derive from travel.

3.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY.

This chapter has explored the conceptualisations of spirituality across a range of worldviews and disciplines. This chapter shows that descriptions of spirituality appear to share three common conceptual constructs. Specifically, the literature illustrates that spirituality involves the personal and often transcendent quest for meaning, purpose and connectedness within life. The literature argues that every person has a need for meaning, purpose and connection in life and all human beings will, to a certain extent, engage in a personal journey in which they seek this. For some, seeking meaning, purpose and connection in life can be a fearful exercise, and thus, they may not progress far with their personal journey. This chapter has also evidenced the need to explore spirituality from the perspective of individuals; each person will have different views of their spirituality, ways of expressing it, influences on their spirituality, and their quest for meaning will be deeply personal and perhaps be guided by the doctrine of their chosen religion or worldview. Thus, both subjective and objective perspectives of spirituality are important. The following chapter discusses how phenomenology forms the methodological underpinning of this thesis research and how it is able to gain rich insight into the spirituality of individuals that is grounded in the realities individuals themselves describe.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH CONTEXT AND METHODOLOGY.

4.1: CHAPTER INTRODUCTION.

This chapter introduces the context of this thesis, details the philosophical and methodological assumptions that underpin the thesis and explains the methods used to gather and analyse data. It includes a discussion of the key philosophical underpinnings of phenomenology and how they have informed the thesis aim, that is, to explore spirituality and travel; specifically the role of travel in facilitating life meaning and purpose in the lives of individuals. This aim is framed within the context of 11 research participants who engaged in travel with Hands Up Holidays, a tour operator offering 'spiritual travel'. The research participants are also introduced in this chapter. Issues of ethics, research limitations and presentation of results are also discussed.

4.2: PHILOSOPHY OF PHENOMENOLOGY.

To meet the thesis aim, a phenomenological approach was adopted. The phenomenological movement has made a number of important contributions to scholarly research and is seen as one of the most important philosophical movements of the twentieth century (Moran, 2000). To understand the philosophical underpinning of phenomenology, it is important to understand its history (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Moran, 2000). The renowned German philosopher, Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), is widely regarded as being the founder of phenomenology; formally introducing it in 1900-1901 (Bahdra, 1990; Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Hammond, Howarth, & Keat, 1991; Moran, 2000; Moustakas, 1994; Schmidt, 2005), although, precursors to phenomenology have been found historically in the work of, amongst others, Kant, Hegel, Mach and Merleau-Ponty (Hegel, 1949; Jamal & Hollinshead, 2001; Moran, 2000; P. Willis, 2001). Kockelmans (1967) reported that the term 'phenomenology' appeared in philosophical writings as far back as 1765. However, it did not gather significant momentum and attention until Husserl's work in the early 20th century (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Moran, 2000). The phenomenological movement largely arose from a growing disenchantment with scientific philosophy (Bahdra, 1990; Burrell & Morgan, 1979;

Hammond et al., 1991; Hegel, 1949; Moran, 2000; Moustakas, 1994; Pernecky, 2006; Schmidt, 2005). Indeed, Moran (2000, p.4) argued, "Phenomenology is best understood as a radical, anti-traditional style of philosophising". This discussion relates back to Chapter 2, where the frustration with the scientific philosophy was detailed.

Phenomenology is particularly critical of positivism and scientific philosophies because they are seen to exclude consciousness, which is deemed to be the very source of knowledge and value (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Hegel, 1949; Moran, 2000). Husserl, who became disenchanted with applying scientific measures to understanding human issues (Laverty, 2003), came to believe that scientific methods were, "Constitutionally unfit to settle questions of value and hence questions of meaning for personal existence" (Bahdra, 1990, p.19). This criticism was also made by Tanyi (2002) who argued that scientific based approaches are incapable of addressing many fundamental human problems. Husserl claimed that scientific approaches, "Ignored the fact that psychology deals with living subjects who are not simply reacting automatically to external stimuli, but rather are responding to their own perception of what these stimuli mean" (Laverty, 2003, p.4). As such, Husserl argued that there is no such thing as 'pure knowledge', as claimed in positivism, and we can only have pure access to that which is, through ourselves (Moran, 2000). In this respect, phenomenology can be seen as a movement away from the Cartesian view that reality exists 'out there' and completely separate from the individual (ibid, 2000). Thus, it could be argued that phenomenology arose out of a desire to delve more deeply into the subjectivity of individuals, and to explore values and concepts of importance to one's life, such as spirituality. Phenomenology, then, allows for the subjective and objective elements of spirituality to be explored. Specifically, the three core constructs of spirituality; the search for meaning and life purpose, transcendence and connectedness are explored from the subjective perspective of the individual within the phenomenological investigation of this thesis.

Ontologically, followers of phenomenology believe that the world constitutes a stream of consciousness which is experiential; the subjective being the source of all objectivities (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Hegel, 1949; Moran, 2000). Phenomenological researchers also believe that existing in the world is an integral part of being human, and therefore, to understand people, researchers must understand their contexts and the way they live (Hegel, 1949; Moran, 2000; Schmidt, 2005). The task of epistemology is thus to explore and reveal the essential types and structures of experience; "Phenomenology studies essences

and clarifies the relationships between them; it seeks to delve into experiences and clarify the very grounds of knowledge" (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, p.233). As phenomenology rejects positivistic and scientific paradigms, it is not concerned with generating concepts, abstracts and theories (Hegel, 1949; Moran, 2000; P. Willis, 2001). All knowledge is considered subjective and related to the person viewing the world (Moran, 2000; Schmidt, 2005; P. Willis, 2001). Thus, according to Kant, one cannot know for certain what the world is like in itself and therefore one can only know what it is like for individuals (Moran, 2000). Phenomenology thus asks scholars to explore a phenomenon from the perspective of the experiencing person (Hegel, 1949; Moran, 2000; P. Willis, 2001).

While all followers of phenomenology concur with its epistemological and ontological underpinnings, definitions abound as to what phenomenology actually is (Barnacle, 2001; Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Hammond et al., 1991). Hammond, Howarth and Keat (1991) argue that it is virtually impossible to accurately answer 'what is phenomenology?' and in a lecture conducted in 1927, Heidegger purported that, "There is no such thing as *the* one phenomenology", because of the varying ways in which scholars have implemented phenomenology in their studies (Moran, 2000, p.4). This emphasises the notion that phenomenology presents researchers with flexibility; they may apply its principles in a manner that is most appropriate to their research question(s) (Schmidt, 2005). Indeed, Laverty (2003) purported that there will never be 'one' phenomenology because our understanding of phenomenology is not stationary, and even today, is evolving. Thus, phenomenological theories need to be viewed as dynamic, and will likely continually change over time.

The evolving nature of phenomenology can be evidenced through the development of different branches of phenomenology, including, existential phenomenology, transcendental phenomenology, hermeneutic phenomenology, and interpretive phenomenology (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Schmidt, 2005). The evolution of these types of phenomenology are discussed below. While there are different 'branches' of phenomenology, there are core commonalities between all approaches. These include:

> "A focus on understanding the lived experience; acknowledging the self as a researcher in the research process (some through efforts to set aside the self – bracketing; some through efforts to embed the self - journaling); selecting co-researchers who are unique, diverse and willing to talk about their experiences; collecting data that is based on open dialogue and participants'

own words; and a belief in the need to remove 'knowing' from the Cartesian duality of reality as being something that is remote or separate from the individual" (Schmidt, 2005, p.83).

Transcendental phenomenology attempts to understand the world as a phenomenon; not to grasp it as object, but as pure meaning (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Schmidt, 2005). Every assumption of everyday life is discarded in search of the transcendental (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). This approach is closest to Husserl's work in that it asks researchers to step aside from preconceptions of what we think and focus on what is present in the world of the experiencer (Kockelmans, 1967; Polkinghorne, 1989; Schmidt, 2005). Husserl (1907) believed that it was possible to completely 'bracket' oneself out of the research process and to experience a state of pre-reflective consciousness. As such, bracketing is a fundamental principle of Husserl's early phenomenological philosophy. Husserl purported that it is imperative that researchers 'put in brackets,' "All our concepts and in this way all the models we have to understand the things, animals, people we meet in the world" (Moran, 2000, p.104). According to Husserl, 'bracketing' involves researchers suspending their beliefs and discounting all prior knowledge, biases and assumptions concerning the phenomenon (Ingram, 2002), and asks researchers to step away from their usual view of the world and explore a phenomenon from an unbiased manner (P. Willis, 2001). Crotty (1996, p.20) adds, "Bracketing is a sincere endeavour not to allow one's beliefs and assumptions to shape the data collection process and a persistent effort not to impose one's own understandings and constructions on the data".

In recent times, aspects of Husserl's early philosophy, and specifically whether one can actually bracket him or herself wholly out of the research process, and whether indeed this is desirable has been questioned by phenomenological researchers (for example, Moran, 2000; Laverty, 2003; Schmidt, 2005). In particular, while recent scholars have argued the need to be open about one's worldview, and any potential biases they may bring to the research, increasing numbers of scholars have claimed that instead of bracketing oneself out of the research, phenomenological scholars should seek to bracket oneself in to each stage of the research (Bahdra, 1990; Baranacle, 2001a; Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Hammond, Howarth, & Keat, 1991; Moran, 2000; Moustakas, 1994; Schmidt, 2005). In this way, recent phenomenology philosophy tends to mirror the trend within qualitative research to write oneself into the research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Harris, Wilson & Ateljevic, 2007). Denzin & Lincoln (2003) for example, commented that all researchers bias their work, and rather than viewing this as a negative, writing oneself into the research can add richness to

the data. Wholly bracketing oneself out of the research process is seen as futile; for example, Moran (2000) asked, how can one bracket out of any research the doctrine of religion? Can one really discard their deeply held religious faith when approaching research? This has implications for my research because I identify myself as Christian. It is thus important that I consider the implications of my faith, and I share this with the reader in Section 4.5.

With transcendental phenomenology being increasingly questioned, existential, interpretive and hermeneutic phenomenologies have received greater attention in recent times (Moran, 2000; Schmidt, 2005). These latter phenomenological approaches were proposed by Heidegger, a student of Husserl who began to question aspects of transcendental phenomenology. Specifically, the complexities and appropriateness of attempting to wholly bracket oneself out of the research process was seen as an anathema to Heidegger who alternatively emphasised the need to embed the researcher in the research, and not try and step aside (Schmidt, 2005). Heidegger promoted existential phenomenology which is opposite to transcendental phenomenology in that it concerns the world of everyday experience compared to the transcendental (Burrell & Morgan, 1979), hermeneutic phenomenology; a branch of inquiry related to philosophical hermeneutics and is primarily concerned with understanding existential issues (Annells, 1996; Thompson, 1990), and interpretive phenomenology which emphasises the subjective experience of the individual (Schmidt, 2005). Hermeneutic, existential and interpretive phenomenological approaches also differ from transcendental phenomenology because whereas transcendental phenomenology sought universal truths, these forms of phenomenology seek essential aspects of an experience through an exploration of the thematic meanings or common structures of the experience (Schmidt, 2005). As phenomenology evolves, Burrell & Morgan (1979) and Moran (2000) purported that phenomenology should not be seen so much as a particular method but as a particular approach that has been adopted and modified by a series of authors; it is, due to its flexibility, seen as a *practice* rather than a system.

4.3: PHENOMENOLOGY AND THE STUDY OF SPIRITUALITY.

Many previous studies of spirituality have been informed by phenomenology (for example, Eliason, Hanley, & Leventis, 2004; Hegel, 1977; Hyde, 2005 Schmidt; 2005; Stephenson, Draucker & Martsolf, 2003; Wright, 2002). Specifically, phenomenology has formed an important philosophical underpinning of spirituality research particularly within psychology

(Colaizzi, 1973; Valle & Halling, 1989), management, (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Burack, 1999; Butts, 1999; Marques, 2006; McCormick, 1994; Tischler, 1999) education, (Elias, 1991; Furbish & Reid, 2003; Jurin & Hutchinson, 2001) theology (Bartholomew & Moritz, 2000; Bollinger, 1969; Yinger, 1967; Zinnbauer et al., 1997), leisure (Heintzman, 2000; Schmidt, 2005) and counselling, rehabilitation, and nursing research (Crotty, 1996; Jasper, 1994; Miner-Williams, 2006; Spaniol, 2001). Further, the use of phenomenology within tourism research has been gaining momentum in recent times (Hayllar & Griffin, 2005; Ingram, 2002; Li, 2000). With the exception of tourism studies, previous studies have sought to explore the positioning of certain life experiences or relationships within the spirituality of individuals. For example, much of the health literature has explored the positioning of debilitating or terminal illnesses within the spirituality of individuals, and particularly, how individuals find meaning and connection within their lives despite these illnesses (for example, Crotty, 1996; Miner-Williams, 2006; Spaniol, 2006). Much of the management, leisure, and theological literature has similarly explored the positioning of, for example, work, sports and relationships with God within the spirituality of individuals (for example, Ashmos & Duchon, 2003; Schmidt, 2005; Zinnbauer et al. 1999).

Within tourism research, scholars have traditionally used phenomenology to gain insight into the deeper meaning individuals derive from tourism experiences but not from the perspective of one's spirituality. For example, Ingram (2002) studied the experiences of farm tourism hosts and guests, and found that phenomenological interviews allowed for deeply personal accounts of what farm hosting meant to individuals, and the nature of experiences gained by guests emerged. Similarly, Pernecky (2006) applied phenomenology to study the 'New Age' tourism experience and found rich accounts of the personal meaning of this travel to the New Agers. However, Pernecky's study views spirituality as a phenomenon only within the New Age belief. This thesis argues that a broader view is necessary and may deem other types of travel 'spiritual' if viewed from the broader definitional platform put forward in Chapter 3.

The studies mentioned above support that phenomenology is well suited ontologically and epistemologically to exploring the phenomenon of spirituality; specifically, they demonstrate that phenomenology helps researchers to understand the spirituality of individuals through allowing research participants to express this phenomenon through the lens of their own worldview and life experiences. There are four key reasons in the literature

that illustrate the appropriateness of phenomenology in gaining rich insight into spirituality. Firstly, phenomenology allows the voices of research participants to be heard within studies; in this way descriptions of spirituality are grounded in the realities individuals themselves describe (Hegel, 1977; Moran, 2000; Prentice, Witt & Hamer, 1998; Schmidt, 2005; Smart, 1983). Phenomenology thus allows researchers insight into the lived world of others, respects the viewpoint of individuals and essentially allows researchers to 'walk in the shoes of others' (Moran, 2000; Smart; 1983). As discussed in Chapter Three, one's perception of spirituality can be largely dependant upon one's own worldview. For example, a materialist is likely to wholly discount the existence of the spirit, a Christian is likely to view their spirituality as inextricably linked with God, and a 'New Ager' may view nature as being spiritual (Clark, 1996; Hartmann, 1999; Pedersen et al., 2007; Ramaswamy, 1997; Schultz, 2005; Taylor, 2002; Watts, 2003; Zinnbauer et al., 1999). Further, within these particular worldviews, individuals are also likely to have their own subjective as well as objective views. For example, two individuals who identify themselves as Christian may have different ways of nurturing their faith in God. By allowing research participants' voices to be heard within the research, these subjective views are acknowledged (Moran, 2000).

The spirituality of the primary researcher will also likely influence studies of spirituality (Moran, 2000; Schmidt, 2005; Willis, 2001); for example, researchers who view God as being at the centre of their spirituality may conceptually approach spirituality from a predominantly religious angle. There are, in addition to one's religious beliefs, numerous other ways in which a researcher can influence their research, such as one's age, gender, race/ethnicity, life experiences, political persuasion and biography (Li, 2000). By asking a researcher to bracket him or herself into the research, the researcher's voice is also heard. Where appropriate, I write myself into this research by sharing personal insights about aspects of, for example, my faith, biography and observations during the research process.

Secondly, phenomenology is purported to allow complex phenomena such as spirituality to emerge naturally in a manner that is personally meaningful to individuals (Jamal & Hollinshead, 2001; Moran, 2000; P. Willis, 2001). Individuals will often have difficulty coherently discussing issues concerning their spirituality; often they will not be able to describe the phenomenon in words (Crotty, 1996; Schmidt, 2005; Zinnbauer et al., 1999). They may, for example, wish to express how they derive personal meaning within their life in the form of a picture, poem, diary entry, or collage, rather than in words (Crotty,

1996). Certain individuals may also not respond to the notion of 'spirituality' and describe it in other ways' they may, for example, prefer to use words such as 'meaning' or 'intuition' to represent their intangible experience (Fredrickson & Anderson, 1999). Importantly, phenomenology gives research participants 'the lead'; they are viewed as the expert on their own 'spirituality', and thus, phenomenology holds that any manner in which an individual seeks to express their spirituality (or a concept that holds more meaning) is valid (Hammond, Howarth, & Keat, 1991; Moran, 2000; Moustakas, 1994; Schmidt, 2005). Through doing this, phenomenology allows spirituality to be explored through a 'layered' approach (Maher & Hunt, 1993; Miner-Williams, 2006, 2006; Valle & Halling, 1989). A layered approach involves exploring spirituality from the 'light of many lamps' such as through textual and non-textual means (Maher & Hunt, 1993); in this way the multidimensional richness of spirituality can be clearly seen (ibid).

Thirdly, phenomenology facilitates the gaining of a rich insight into human experience and the personal meaning of these experiences through delving deeply into the lived world of research participants (Elliason, Hanley, & Leventis, 2004; Hegel, 1977; Hyde, 2005 Schmidt; Stephenson, Draucker & Martsolf, 2003; Wright, 2002). It is argued that, "The main contribution of phenomenology has been the manner in which it has steadfastly protected the subjective view of experience as a necessary part of any full understanding of the full nature of knowledge" (Moran, 2000, p.21). Chapter 3 argued that at the heart of spirituality is experience; one often derives purpose, meaning, and connection in life through a series of subjective and personally meaningful experiences and it may be an experience which leads to their search for meaning within life (Bourne, 2005; Elias, 1991; MacDonald, 2000). There are many definitions of 'experience'; however, all definitions note that experiences are subjective, personal, multi-dimensional, and of significance to the life of people (Bigne & Andreu, 2004; McIntosh, 1997). From a tourism viewpoint, Uriely (2005) argued that in previous research studies, the exploration of tourists' experiences have been put into restrictive categories, and there is a move to become more open and less restrictive in the study of tourists' experiences involving the adoption of qualitative research approaches. Phenomenology is chiefly a qualitative approach. It is argued that a qualitative approach holds significant advantages over quantitative approaches in exploring experiences (for example, Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Oppermann, 2000; Patton, 1980). It is argued that a purely quantitative methodology, "Rarely captures the subtleties of the tourism experience"

(McIntosh, 1998, p.121). It could be argued that a phenomenological study of the spirituality of individual travellers takes tourism research into the most personal picture of their experience than captured to date as it reveals the subtleties of personal meaning and life purpose derived from the tourism experience.

The fourth reason for the appropriateness of phenomenology in researching spirituality is that it allows research participants to express themselves in a manner that holds personal meaning to them, and it views the research participants as the research 'expert', it is argued that a strong rapport can be built based upon empathy, and trust (Moran, 2000; Smart, 1983; Willis, 2001). Smart (1983) suggested that a better term for phenomenology is 'structured empathy' because one gains insights into the worldview of others; therefore, researchers are able to empathise with research participants and help share their story in a way that is appropriate. Under phenomenology, researchers are asked to respect the worldview of individuals, as without respect, it is argued that a phenomenon cannot be truly explored (Moran, 2000; Smart, 1983; Willis, 2001). Smart (1983) noted that even if phenomenological researchers do not agree with a person, they must still feel empathy; for example, one can feel what it may be like to have a Christian-based relationship with God, while not agreeing with any part of a Christian philosophy. Researchers are asked to place themselves in the world of the individual and consider how they would feel about the experiences of the research participant (Smart, 1983; Willis, 2001). When research participants feel they are not being judged, they are given a 'voice' in the research and are able to express their spirituality in a manner that holds personal meaning to them, they are more likely to feel at ease with the researcher and offer a greater richness of personal insight into the research (for example, Elliason, Hanley, & Leventis, 2004; Hegel, 1977; Hyde, 2005 Schmidt; Stephenson, Draucker & Martsolf, 2003; Wright, 2002). For this reason, phenomenology has been widely used when researching potentially 'sensitive' topics such as addiction, terminal illness, sexual abuse, life tragedies and spirituality (for example, Elliason, Hanley, & Leventis, 2004; Hegel, 1977; Hyde, 2005 Schmidt; 2005 Stephenson, Draucker & Martsolf, 2003; Wright, 2002).

Allowing research participants to express themselves in a manner that holds personal meaning to them, phenomenological researchers are presented with flexibility (Hegel, 1977; Moran, 2000). Phenomenology does not see research as being a rule-bound process, and understanding spirituality is said to be easier through insightful invention and flexibility (Van

Manen, 1990). The absence of any definitive phenomenological methods is argued to be a positive for researchers, as it presents an opportunity for researchers to acknowledge their self, search for meaning, and to emphasise discovery, meaning and description within their studies, rather than control, hypothesising and evidence (Schmidt, 2005). It is argued, however, that to secure a significant description of spirituality and the personal meaning individuals derive from experiences; conversations based upon phenomenological principles are largely inevitable (Moustakas, 1994; Pollio, Henley and Thompson, 1997). These such conversations were used in the thesis research.

4.4: RESEARCH CONTEXT: PROFILE OF THE SELECTED TOUR OPERATOR.

This thesis involved research with individuals who had travelled with one tour operator, Hands Up Holidays, within the previous 12 months. Hands Up Holidays was chosen as the research context to the thesis because it is a tour operator that does not view 'spirituality' as being equated wholly with religion. Rather, the operator believes it offers 'spiritual' travel because individuals can engage in a type of experience founded on their personal search for meaning and life purpose (Christopher Hill, pers. comm., 2008). In this way, Hands Up Holidays' view of spirituality is consistent with that discussed in Chapter 3 and adopted within this thesis. Christopher Hill, the founder and owner of Hands Up Holidays, believes that for some, deep meaning will be derived primarily through religious encounters; others may find, for example, elements of volunteering, adventure, culture, heritage, or nature-based tourism personally meaningful (Hands Up Holidays, 2009). The operator thus seeks to offer a diverse range of tour options and travel experiences within their tours (ibid). As such, Hands Up Holidays views spirituality as the expression of being human. The views of Hands Up Holidays towards spirituality were considered important because I wished to explore the research aim within the context of a tour operator that embraced the idea that spirituality is a broader concept than religion and that spirituality is expressed personally and subjectively. In this way, I believed a significant contribution to the literature would be made because personal accounts and expressions of spirituality that moved beyond the religious foundations commonly expressed within the tourism literature would emerge. That the individuals involved in this research included Christians, New Agers and agnostics illustrates that

through the selection of Hands Up Holidays, the broader conceptualisation of spirituality presented in Chapter 3 was supported.

As Hands Up Holidays allows individuals to personally tailor their travel preferences and experiences, I believed the personal and subjective expression of spirituality would emerge. In this way, this research would move beyond exploring only one specific form of spiritual expression; for example, through yoga, meditation or wilderness escapes. Only one tour operator was selected for the thesis context because introducing further tour operators would have held disadvantages for this research. Specifically, different 'variables', such as differing tour circumstances and the views and attitudes of other tour operators towards 'spirituality' would have entered this research and made comparison difficult. Through engaging with individuals who travelled with the same tour operator, I was able to gain insight into the lived experiences of individuals who each shared a particular type of travel experience. In this way, I ensured that an emphasis was placed on the individual and their personal story, rather on the characteristics of multiple tour operators. In addition, finding another tour operator that reflected the broad conceptualisation of spirituality as presented in Chapter 3, and allowed individuals to tailor their travel experiences in a personally meaningful manner was very difficult. A cross-operator perspective should, however, be recognised as an important avenue for future research.

Christopher Hill, a New Zealander, created Hands Up Holidays because he felt much contemporary travel was not meaningful or 'spiritual' to individuals (Christopher Hill, pers. comm., 2008). He saw an increasing market for travel that was 'enriching'; travel where tourists could 'give something back' to the world through voluntary activities, seek personal growth and development through adventure, cultural, and/or heritage-based activities and interact with locals. Travellers can also choose to stay within the community of locals (ibid). I established a rapport with Christopher Hill through numerous conversations, primarily through e-mail. He is based in England and sells tours with Hands Up Holidays through certain travel agents within New Zealand, the U.S.A. and parts of Europe. We communicated regularly over two years and he has continually given his support for this thesis.

Hands Up Holidays offer 'a taste of volunteering' blended with 'luxury sight-seeing'; tours generally take between two to four weeks, and contain approximately three to six days of 'voluntary activities' (Hands Up Holidays, 2009). The aim is to promote ethical, environmentally friendly, meaningful travel that is beneficial to everyone involved, including

tourists and host communities (ibid). The business offers tours to more than thirty countries, many of those Less Economically Developed Countries or developing nations throughout Africa, Asia, Europe, The Pacific and South America. The tour operator is marketed towards the 'high-end market'; key words such as 'luxury' are used within their marketing package (Hands Up Holidays, 2009). Hands Up Holidays views their travel as 'high-end' because individuals can select premium accommodation, and experience tailor-made travel (ibid). Tours cost from approximately $1000 US to $34,600 US excluding airfares (ibid). Originally, Hands Up Holidays was marketed specifically towards young professionals, but now Christopher Hill states his market is much broader, and includes, for example, families, honeymooners and young-at-heart retirees (ibid). While the terms 'ethical' and 'luxury' may sound contradictory to some, Hands Up Holidays operates towards the 'high-end' of the travel market so that local labour and businesses receive safe working conditions and a fair wage (Hands Up Holidays, 2009). Christopher Hill believes that many individuals are prepared to pay a premium to ensure any exploitation of the local people or environment is avoided (Christopher Hill, pers. comm., 2008). This separates Hands Up Holidays from some other tour operators who are seen as 'greenwashing' tourists by marketing their tours as ethical but not supporting this marketing with action (Medina, 2005).

Two further reasons why Hands Up Holidays was selected was because it offered travel that could be tailored to the individual needs of tourists and was marketed as 'spiritual' (Hands Up Holidays, 2009). Through using words such as 'enriching', 'inspiring', 'meaningful', and 'life-changing' within their marketing material (see Appendix 1), it was deemed possible that people selecting this tour operator may be 'searching' for something within their life. It was also thought that insights into the effects of contemporary issues such as secularism and materialism on the lives of individuals might also result from this research given the high-end nature of this tour. Specifically, it was believed that certain individuals embarking on Hands Up Holidays' tours may wish to 'escape' the effects of materialism discussed in Chapter 2. It was thought that travellers engaging in this type of 'high-end' travel may have achieved financially in life, but may now be 'searching' for something else within their lives. It was also important to select a tour operator that offered tours not wholly based on volunteering, religious pilgrimage or yoga tours, as has been discussed in other tourism studies (for example, Pernecky, 2006; Wearing & Wearing, 2001) as these activities

are just one form of spiritual engagement as put forward by the definitional platform offered in Chapter 3.

A further reason for selecting Hands Up Holidays as the research context was that they only offer 'small-group' tours of up to eleven people (Hands Up Holidays, 2009). Thus, it was felt that individuals would be likely to gain a significant richness of experience, and be able to potentially deeply interact with their environments compared to other tours. It is argued that 'mass tourism' often puts tourists in a 'bubble'; they stay in their comfortable hotels, and do not experience the 'real' culture (Bruner, 1991). Some may argue that because Hands Up Holidays offers 'high-end' tours, tour participants would also be put in a 'bubble' through being 'protected' from the 'harshness' of their travel destinations. However, Hands Up Holidays offers individuals the opportunity to stay in traditional accommodation offered by locals, and thus, experience the 'real' destination (Hands Up Holidays, 2009). Keeping the tour group small and focused around a particular motive/objective and catering to the demands of individual travellers serves to engender a particular personal or intimate style of travel; one that can be marketed as 'meaningful'.

4.5: RESEARCH CONTEXT: PROFILE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS.

Eleven research participants were involved in this thesis research; a number comparable to many other studies that employ the principles of phenomenology (Jennings, 2001; Li, 2000; Schmidt, 2005; P. Willis, 2001). It is argued that a 'modest' sample size of between six to eleven research participants be used within phenomenological research in order to gain sufficient insight into the personal meaning of a particular phenomenon (Jennings, 2001; Valle & Halling, 1989). Specifically, it is purported that if phenomenological scholars sample a larger group of individuals, it will be difficult for them to give sufficient voice to every individual and to understand in depth the personal meaning of the phenomenon at question to them (Jennings, 2001). Essentially though, phenomenological researchers are required to ultimately make a decision about the sample size near the end of the data collection phase, and halt proceedings when they feel they have achieved a sufficient richness of data (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998).

Research participants were recruited using convenience-sampling techniques. The Director of Hands Up Holidays was contacted and informed about this thesis; he, Christopher

Hill, gave me permission to sample tourists who had travelled with Hands Up Holidays and he sent e-mails to recent customers notifying them of my research and asking whether they would like to participate in the research. Individuals could then choose to self-select themselves to participate in this research by contacting me directly. Convenience sampling is, "The selection of participants for a study based on their proximity to the researcher and the ease with which the researcher can access the participants" (Jennings, 2001, p.139). While it is argued that convenience sampling does not produce representative findings (Robson, 2002), it was felt that convenience sampling was the most appropriate sampling method to use due to the limited number of tourists travelling with the selected tour company who were willing to participate in this research. Some may argue that because individuals self selected themselves to participate in this research, they had a specific agenda or story they wished to share, or they viewed themselves as particularly spiritual. Thus, it could be argued that the individual participants within this research do not represent 'average' individuals. However, as will be revealed within Chapter 5, the individuals within this research each held very different views as to how spiritual they were. Further, while each individual held particularly emotional personal stories; many of which are shared in Chapter 5, it generally took a significant amount of time and relationship building before these stories were shared with me; thus, it could not be argued that the sharing of these personal stories were the primary reason individuals participated in this research. Indeed, as will be discussed in Chapters 6 and 7, it is likely that every individual has a number of personal stories that shape who they are, and thus, the reader of this research is likely to be able to relate to many of the life experiences expressed by the individual research participants.

Convenience sampling has been widely used in spirituality studies because of the need for strong rapport between the researcher and participant; for example, Brown (2007) recruited tourists through family and friends, and Zahra (2006) interviewed tourists who were friends. More generally, convenience sampling has been widely used and accepted within the tourism literature (for example, Turley, 2001; Lau & McKercher, 2004; Morgan, Moore & Mansell, 2005).

As evidenced within Figure 4.1, through this phenomenological investigation, I was presented with a wealth of data from each research participant in various forms, including interview transcripts, photographs, music and diaries. On one occasion, a research participant, Charlotte, asked me to withhold certain information she had presented to me,

which I respected. I deemed that the data that I was presented with from these 11 research participants was so rich and deep that I would not be able to give enough attention to a larger sample size and I particularly looked for a point of 'saturation' where I felt no new data was being reported to me and consistency of key themes became apparent. Specifically, I was seeking to understand the lives and perspectives of each research participant, and thus, I was required to spend significant time coming to know each individual. Generally, my involvement with these 11 research participants continued across eighteen months of data collection; by this time I felt no new data was forthcoming, and a number of research participants believed they could not offer me anything further to discuss; I too felt confident that I understood their perspective. Nyla, for example, ended data collection by saying, "I think we've done everything to death really and in tedious detail!"

Table 4.1 profiles the 11 research participants. The participants were aged between 17 and 66 years (the mean average age was 41 years). They were all Caucasian and resided in English speaking countries. The average mean length of travel with Hands Up Holidays was 17 days per individual. Eight research participants travelled alone and three travelled with family. Five research participants noted that their Christian faith played a central part in their lives; it shaped their worldview, approach to life, and was at the foundation of their spirituality. No other foundational faith (for example, Islam or Judaism) was reported by these individuals. This was not deliberate but is not surprising given that the research participants resided in countries (specifically, New Zealand, England and The United States of America) where Christianity is the predominant faith. The other six research participants either declared that they were Christian, but this did not feature predominantly within their life, held no religious belief, were undecided on the matter of religion or practised New Age beliefs. Each research participant had different life circumstances; their life stories all differed. Most noted they were financially 'well-off' but some, including Nyla, Amber, Amy and Sharen noted that it was not easy for them to afford their travel.

All the research participants, with the exception of Amy, discussed how they had experienced significant defining moments within their lives, which had influenced their travel. For example, Sharen, Laura, Rhys and Charlotte discussed how losing a close family member or friend changed the direction of their life, while others similarly discussed the personal impacts of facing personal mortality, changing relationships, or moving home. Most research participants were therefore using travel through Hands Up Holidays to 'search' for

something within their lives; whether it be healing, self-fulfilment, to develop identity, to honour the memory of a loved one, or to grow in their faith. Lana noted that, "The kids arguing in a backseat" was a defining moment for her; she explained that her children were attempting to determine which expensive toy they wanted for Christmas, and for her, "What they were talking about was just fundamentally wrong, the values I was trying to impart were not working". Laura, Sharen, Rhys and Lachlan, all devout Christians, reported that they were 'asked' by God to travel to their respective locations to do His work; Amber, Nyla and Brendon were seeking personal healing or questioning their identity, and Karen had become disillusioned with her country of origin and sought to experience the 'real' her in India. Amy and Rhys identified with a Christian worldview; they believed that God worked through them, and ultimately, it was He who would shape their lives. Chapter Five provides detailed research participant 'portraits' that provide the stories of each research participant's specific life situation, and portrays the meaning they derived from their travel with Hands Up Holidays and the position of spirituality within this.

4.6. BRACKETING MYSELF INTO THE RESEARCH.

This chapter to date has observed that phenomenological philosophy purports that the values of all researchers can influence their studies; they thus have an obligation to share their values, potential influences and life circumstances with the reader (Moran, 2000; Schmidt, 2005). However, this chapter has noted the evolving nature of phenomenological philosophy, and particularly, the emerging trend to embrace one's biases and write oneself into the research (for example, Schmidt, 2005). As such, I have presented a brief discussion of 'who I am' in Chapter One by describing my personal background, beliefs and motivation to undertake this thesis, and the theoretical nature of my results and discussions section will be complemented by personal thoughts, insights and impressions. In this way, I have stayed true to certain traditional phenomenological principles, as well as embracing the evolving nature of the philosophy; specifically, because spirituality and indeed one's search for meaning and purpose in life is a personal phenomenon, I felt it appropriate to also include 'myself' within this research. I have thus attempted to embrace, rather than hide myself within this thesis.

Table 4.1: Profile of Research Participants.   ***At the request of research participants, all names used in this thesis are pseudonyms**

Name*	Age	Destination /Approx Length of Travel	Self-View of Spirituality	Self-Stated Defining or Formative Life Moments	Occupation	Personal Data Shared
Amy	25	Vanuatu 14 days	Involves finding life purpose through God. Linked to Christian belief	I haven't yet had any	Engineer	Music and Photographs Face to Face and Telephone Conversations Written information
Laura	48	Peru 16 days	Achieving meaning in life through God; it involves the meaningful aspects of life. Linked to Christian belief	The passing of my sister, reaching Peru and moving city	Doctor (General Practitioner)	Personal Story Face to Face and Telephone Conversations Written Information
Lachlan	18	Peru 16 days	Involves my relationship with God and my purpose. Linked to Christian belief	Moving to university	Student	Telephone Conversations Written Information
Charlotte	51	Peru 16 days	Intuition/listening to the bird on your shoulder and being at one with nature	The death of my husband and sickness of my brother	Semi-retired hotel operator	Face to Face and Email Conversations Written Information
Rhys	21	Vanuatu 14 days	It relates to my faith in God but the word 'faith' means more to me. Linked to Christian belief	My brother's death and my fiancée's cancer diagnosis	Engineer	Biblical Passage, Telephone and Email Conversations Written Information
Karen	53	India/ Morocco 18 days	I hate the word spirituality, it is so kooky	Travelling to India	Mother/ Homemaker	Emails, Blog Entries and Telephone Conversations Written Information
Lana	46	Borneo 21 days	No thoughts towards the word. It means nothing to me	My kids quarrelling in the back seat	Environmental Policy Engineer	Telephone Conversations Written Information
Sharen	37	Borneo 21 days	Involves finding meaning and for me that's through God. Linked to Christian belief	Passing of a good friend	Music Director	Telephone Conversations Written Information
Nyla	66	Vietnam 15 days	I am not spiritual, definitely not!	Surviving breast cancer and a conversation with my father	School Cleaner	Travel Diaries, Face to Face and Telephone Conversations Written Information
Amber	53	Peru 16 days	It involves finding inner peace and contentment	Marrying young and raising children, and the children's illnesses	School Bus Driver	Photographs, Face to Face and Telephone Conversations
Brendon	30	Morocco/Egypt 21 days	Involves finding out about myself and what really matters to me. Christian, but do not necessarily adhere my life to Christian beliefs	Moving to college and the travel I've done	Marketing Executive	Photographs and Telephone Conversations Written Information

To understand who I am, how I influence and can add personal insight into this research, I continually explored my personal beliefs, and questioned myself about what it means to 'be me' throughout the entire phenomenological research process (Edwards, 2001). I kept a personal diary throughout the three years of the research process (refer to Appendix 2 for a sample diary entry). The use of a personal diary is said to force the author into a reflexive attitude, and to write themselves in a deeply collective manner (Schmidt, 2005; Van Manen, 1990). In line with other phenomenological studies, I made notes during all stages of this research reflecting on, for example, methodological and ethical issues, thoughts about myself and personal thoughts during the research process (Davis & Butler-Kisber, 1999; Janesick, 1999). For example, one diary entry read, *"The conversation today with my supervisor has challenged me to consider my positioning within this research. I am Christian and I need to think about what my faith means to me, and how this has influenced my research. I should not try and hide it, as I cannot hide who I am, and why should I?"* The lengths of my diary entries varied but were compiled weekly and particularly after each conversation with the research participants. I read my diary entries on a weekly basis and share some of my entries throughout this thesis. The style of writing within my diary stays true to the phenomenological style of writing oneself into the research. Specifically, I have written myself into this research through making an untiring attempt to gain an understanding of who 'I' am (Van Manen, 1990).

The benefits of compiling personal diaries to complement research have been advocated by a number of scholars; specifically, they allow the researcher uninterrupted time in which they can be reflective and the writing of a diary captures researcher thoughts as they occur, and allows for the recording of personal emotions (Davis & Butler-Kisber, 1999; Janesick; 1999; Maxwell, 1996). Maxwell (1996) commented that not compiling a reflective diary, "Is the research equivalent of having Alzheimer's disease; you may not remember your important insights when you need them" (p.12). Importantly for phenomenological research, compiling a diary is argued to help a researcher consider and articulate their deepest beliefs and assumptions and thus, consider their role in the research (Maxwell, 1996; Schmidt, 2005). Further, Davis and Butler-Kisber (1999, p.4) purported that the use of diaries can advance qualitative research generally. These scholars commented that diaries, "Can capture how the researcher is thinking (often unconsciously) about what is happening, and as a result (sometimes manifested in a sudden moment of insight), push the analysis further". Diary

keeping also ensures rigour within the research process (Glaze, 2002). Specifically, the keeping of a reflexive diary promotes an internal dialogue for analysing and understanding important issues in research (Glaze, 2002; Smith, 1999).

4.7: RESEARCH METHODS.

To achieve the thesis aim, I sought to build rapport and understanding with my research participants through a series of phenomenological conversations. I use the term conversation because the term 'interview' is an overly formal term and does not fit with an open-ended, comfortable, free-flowing discussion required for phenomenological investigation. I viewed the individual research participant as the 'expert' and wanted him or her to largely shape the flow of discussion. Specifically, I sought a grounded approach (Glaser, 2001) to exploring the research aim that was grounded in the realities that each individual described; an inflexible, rule-driven interview is regarded as being the antithesis of what phenomenology stands for because it imposes impositions on how a phenomenon may emerge (Moran, 2000; Schmidt, 2005; Welch, 2001). I thus wished to 'give voice' to each of my 11 research participants, and help present their personal story highlighting their spirituality, and the role of travel with Hands Up Holidays within this.

I held at least two in-depth conversations with each research participant; most research participants were happy to converse four or five times throughout the course of this thesis research. In addition, most research participants would continue their communication with me through the form of e-mail or sessions on MSN Messenger, an instant real-time messenger service. Most conversations lasted for approximately 60-90 minutes and were tape-recorded and transcribed by myself for accuracy and to familiarise myself with the data. Where possible, all conversations were conducted face-to-face, although as discussed in Section 4.2, three research participants lived abroad and thus I could not meet them personally. Conversations with these research participants were held by telephone and email and recorded and transcribed in the same way. Generally, conversations were held in the homes of research participants, but on certain occasions research participants asked, to meet at, for example, a café for convenience. Although when conversing with individuals by telephone, I could not maintain eye contact or make observations of body language, I felt I achieved strong rapport and, in certain instances found that conversing via telephone held

advantages over face-to-face communication. In particular, I felt that I could concentrate on the tone and emotion in an individual's voice and believed certain individuals felt at ease on the telephone and gave rich insight into issues of personal importance because they felt a level of protection on the telephone. Specifically, it is argued that individuals may feel more comfortable discussing personal issues over the telephone rather than face-to-face because, as they cannot see the interviewer, they do not feel they will be judged for sharing their views (Patton, 1990).

During the first conversation, I had very few prepared questions; rather, I attempted to let conversation arise naturally, and without presupposition. Questions I asked during these conversations sought to provide me with an introductory understanding of each research participant and to begin to understand the positioning of their travel with Hands Up Holidays within their lives. Questions I asked during these first conversations included, '*Can you describe yourself to me?* '*What has your travel with Hands Up Holidays meant to you?*' and '*What gives you meaning within your life?*' These broad questions would often result in a number of follow-up questions to further my understanding, such as, '*Can you tell me a story about the event you've described?*' or '*What did that experience mean to you*'? My approach of asking very few questions mirrors many phenomenological studies (for example, Ingram, 2002; Pernecky, 2006; Schmidt, 2005). Crotty (1996, p.21), for example, observed that in the phenomenological pieces of research he studied, "Beyond the opening question or two, further questions are asked only to gain clarification or encourage the respondent to keep talking". However, there are questions that are common to most conversations, and Crotty (1996) suggested that questions such as, 'What does something mean to you? and, 'What was something like for you? can be considered *the* phenomenological questions as they attempt to reach the essence of what a particular phenomenon means to the lives of individuals. I used these probing questions throughout all conversations with research participants to enrich responses.

Immediately after each conversation, I wrote in my diary thoughts about the conversation, answering questions such as did I establish rapport with this person? How did I project myself? What was their body language telling me? After each transcription I read through the transcript looking for issues that could be explored further or areas I felt I needed to find greater understanding on before the next meeting. I asked myself whether I truly understood the story of each research participant and the role of the travel in facilitating life

purpose and meaning in their life. If I did not, I sought clarification during the next conversation with the research participant.

The issues of spirituality, faith and life circumstances were only explored when a research participant broached the subject, or, I felt sufficient rapport had been achieved. I was mindful that in order to explore the research participant's spirituality, a high level of trust and rapport would have to be established. Indeed, Zahra (2006, p.183) claimed that, "Religion and spirituality in Western societies is very much in the realm of the private", and nursing scholar Meraviglia (1999, p.818) contended, "Few people are able or willing to discuss with an impersonal stranger such matters as values, beliefs and spirituality"; thus the researcher must show a genuine interest in the person. Good rapport is said to play a crucial role in the outcome of any interview (Sandoval & Adams, 2001) and it is argued that in-depth accounts of one's spirituality can be facilitated only if research respondents feel at ease with the researcher and the style of the questioning (Miller & Glassner, 2004). Further, the establishment of rapport can help to minimise constrained answers given by research participants (Li, 2000). Often, research participants will answer in short sentences but have much more to add about particular issues; they will not 'open up' however if rapport or trust has not been established (Li, 2000; Sandoval & Adams, 2001)

To achieve rapport and build trust with research participants, I always disclosed the nature of my research and talked politely with each research participant at the start of our meetings. This was done so that research participants could build a level of familiarity with me. I would tell research participants about myself and hold 'icebreaker' discussions about, for example, sports, or something in the research participant's home. It is purported that to ease research participants into the research process, it is generally favourable to ask simple, descriptive questions at the start of a conversation, before moving into more personal and difficult questions (Li, 2000; Schmidt, 2005). The fact that all conversations were conducted in a location of the research participant's choosing and at a time requested by them was also likely to increase their comfort. I was also mindful that research participants might be hesitant in answering questions if they viewed me as being 'an expert' and if they felt there were right and wrong answers to the questions I was asking (Riley, 1993). To counter this, I often employed 'self-exposure' techniques to reduce the perceived power between myself and research participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). For instance, I would sometimes share personal stories with each research participant if I felt it appropriate. For example, one

research participant talked about her chronic insomnia. I shared my own experiences of anxiety and insomnia and the research participant commented, *"It's really neat to know someone that can empathise with me!"* Additionally, I was particularly mindful of the way I worded questions; for example, Patton (1980) argued that the 'why?' question should be used with caution, as it can lead to protective responses and make respondents feel that they need to justify their views. Generally, I only used the 'why?' question as a probe in order to find out, 'Why is that important to you? I also did not pass judgement on certain comments, even those that I strongly disagreed with. I believed if I did so, rapport would be lost.

I felt I established rapport well with all research participants. It is difficult to determine the extent to which rapport has been achieved between two people; however, with most research participants I knew intrinsically when I felt I had developed a type of bond. Sometimes, this would come when research participants would share jokes with me, open up about certain issues that they had not previously been forthcoming about, or commented that they were enjoying the conversation.

Generally, the concept of spirituality was broached by myself at opportune times. For example, if a research participant talked about a life-changing experience, I then asked, *'Would you call this experience spiritual*? *Why/Why not?"* I then asked him or her, *"Can you define and describe spirituality as you understand it for yourself?"* and *"Given your description of spirituality, do you feel you are a spiritual person? Why/Why not?"* If research participants stated that they did not identify with the term 'spiritual', I asked them, *"Would there be a term that holds more personal meaning to you?"* Alternative terms given by research participants included 'meaningful' and 'faith'. I conversed about spirituality (or a word that held greater personal meaning) within their lives generally; by asking questions such as, *"How do you foster your spirituality?" "How do you express your spirituality?"* and, *"Have you felt there have been times in your life that were particularly spiritual?"* I also conversed about spirituality within the context of research participants' travel with Hands Up Holidays, by asking questions such as, *"Can you describe to me what your travel with Hands Up Holidays has meant to you personally"* and, *"Were there any aspects of your travel with Hands Up Holidays that you would consider spiritual? Why/Why not?"* By doing so, I was able to gain an understanding about an individual's spirituality and how they derived personal meaning within their life and the positioning of their travel with Hands Up Holidays within this. Often, research participants would discuss their search for meaning in

life without specifically using the word 'spirituality'; I would then ask clarifying questions such as, *"Can you comment further on the personal meaning this holds to you?"* On three occasions, research participants broached the concept of spirituality before me, and I thus naturally probed further on this topic. For example, Lana commented that she travelled to India to escape the, "Religious fundamentalism and hokey spirituality" of the U.S.A. Lana was then asked, *"What do you mean by hokey spirituality?"* and the follow-up conversation ensued.

Conversations ceased when research participants felt they had shared with me all they could about their spirituality and the role of their travel experiences in facilitating life purpose and meaning in their life. This point came when there was repetition evident in the responses of each research participant with similar worldviews and they felt they had nothing further to offer. For example, when Nyla was asked whether she would like to meet again, she commented, "I really think we've done everything in such detail, it's been done to death really". Originally, 13 research participants agreed to participate in this research. However, two withdrew after the first conversation and no longer wanted to be involved in the research. One of these research participants text messaged me saying, "Sorry I really don't have any time to help you anymore", and another stopped replying to my emails and text messages. I understood that both these individuals had significant events happening within their lives and were allowed the opportunity to opt out of the research. I felt I gained sufficient insight into the role of travel in facilitating life purpose and meaning in their lives of most research participants due to the common themes occurring in later conversations. However, I wished for a further discussion with Nyla, who ceased discussions with me prematurely in my opinion, and Charlotte. Charlotte, however, experienced a family tragedy and I understood her decision to cease her participation in this research.

4.8: Expressing Spirituality in a Personally Meaningful Manner.

While each research participant participated in a series of conversations that were framed by phenomenological principles, a number of research participants wished to tell their story in a manner that held personal significance for them. Certain research participants chose to do so because they felt it difficult to express their spirituality through words. For example, Amy, being a talented musician, asked to express the personal meaning of her relationship with God through music, and Laura chose to share a personal reflective story about her 'transition'

phase of life. Thus, in addition to the series of face-to-face and telephone conversations, emails, and MSN Messenger conversations, rich insight was revealed through analysis of the participant's travel diaries, reflective stories, photographs, objects of personal significance, biblical passages and composed pieces of music. The means of expression were chosen by research participants as representations of themselves.

The approach of allowing research participants to select how they wish to convey information is aligned to the principles of phenomenology; specifically, it places the individual at the forefront of the research, allows their voice to be written into the research and ensures the phenomenon of spirituality is revealed naturally (Hegel, 1949; Moran, 2000; Spiegelberg, 1959). This approach also ensures the thesis aim is 'layered'. Specifically, tools such as music and photographs provide richer insight into a phenomenon than conversations alone because they provide different ways of knowing and can encourage research participants to access a different and deeper level of thinking (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). For instance, Amy asked me if she could share her music with me; she explained that God was the central driving force behind all aspects of her spirituality and that it was difficult to explain in words what her relationship with God meant to her. She felt the personal meaning of her relationship would be illustrated more comprehensively through music. Amy played a song to me on a keyboard, and provided me with a compact disc of her recordings. Phenomenologists view all aspects of music as holding important insight to the creator. These include impressions of duration, intervallic and melodic space, movements, feelings of attraction and repulsion, and the moods evoked from the music (Pike, 1972). Through studying the pace, tone, lyrics, stories, and other characteristics of each piece of music, I was able to develop a deeper understanding of the personal meaning Amy held with her relationship with God. As I am not an expert in the theory of music, I shared Amy's music with a music theory professional to seek advice during analysis on the composition, pace and personal meaning of music. The music professional informed me about the beats associated with Amy's music, the type of instruments being used, the lyrics, and theoretically, what these told her about the composer. I listened to Amy's music a number of times myself and made notes on what the lyrics were telling me, and the story behind the music. I then combined my notes with Amy's initial layer of interpretation and the notes of the music professional, and then asked further questions based on this to Amy and shared my interpretations with her. Specifically, I asked about the stories behind the music, what the

instruments and beat were illustrating; what Amy feels when she is playing her music, and how she feels it expresses her relationship with God. I also asked Amy whether the analysis of the music professional was accurate and she agreed with the interpretation that had been made. Further, I used probing questions to gain a deeper richness of data. Specifically, I used probes such as, *"Why is the story you've told me important to you?"* and, *"Can you explain this further?"*

Music as a research tool has been largely overlooked in terms of its contribution to the understanding of spirituality. Moreover, it has received a paucity of attention within tourism research. However, Zinkhan & Polly (1994) noted that music is a form of poetry which can help to provide deeper insight into a phenomenon, and to provide thick descriptions and a way of knowing; it has also been advocated as a valuable research tool because it is able to imbue a text with personal meaning and allows an individual's voice to be heard within the research (Sherry Jr. & Shouten, 2002). As was found with Amy, music is regarded as being a vehicle for allowing emotion to flow (ibid). Specifically, it allowed Amy to 'open up' emotionally to me and effectively recall her thoughts, physical feelings and emotions with regards to the positioning of God within her spirituality. In this research, I found that music played an important role in establishing rapport between Amy and myself. Specifically, I observed that Amy became much more confident in conversing with me once she had shared her music with me. I noted in my diary, *"Amy has just 'lit up' since playing that song to me, she is more enthusiastic and offering me greater richness in our conversations"*. I found we shared a 'similar' layer of meaning and language after this.

Music and its associated poetry is purported to be closely related to phenomenological research in that, "It attempts to represent the uniqueness of human experience in a manner which is empathetic to the human actors who feel it or live it" (Zinkhan and Pollay, 1994: III); it also asks research participants to consider aspects of their lives introspectively (Wallendorf & Brucks, 1993). This is perhaps why poetry and music has been employed widely in studies exploring the experiences of people with illnesses (for example, Platt, 1996; Poindexter, 2002). For example, Platt (1996) discussed the case of a doctor who asked a patient to explain their symptoms. The patient went away and composed a poem that, in the doctor's opinion, described her experience, "Better than any doctor-patient interview ever could" (p.219). Poindexter (2002) studied the experiences of a couple

living with HIV in the family and found that through reading a poem compiled by the couple, she gained a valuable narrative tool that increased empathy and understanding of the illness.

Further insight into the research aim was gained through the exploration of travel diaries presented to me during the phenomenological conversations. Nyla wished to provide a richer account of the personal meaning of her travel experiences of travelling with Hands Up Holidays to Vietnam by sharing her travel diaries with me. Contained in the travel diaries were postcards, pamphlets, photographs and other material. Written entries were also made daily; these varied in length; each entry contained personal feelings about Nyla's travel experiences and a list of activities participated in. I made a copy of the travel diaries, and with her permission analysed their contents. Specifically, I looked at each entry contained in the diaries, and wrote notes about the key points of discussion within the diaries identifying the common 'themes'. During subsequent conversations and email discussions with Nyla, we conversed about the contents of the diaries and, using probing questions, I gained greater insight into the positioning of Nyla's travel with Hands Up Holidays within her spirituality. For example, Nyla noted in her diary that this is my **me** holiday; the 'me' emphasised in bold and underscored in Nyla's diary. I asked Nyla, "*Can you please explain to me what you meant by this is my me holiday?*" Nyla then discussed at length a number of personal issues that had led her to, "*Escape from the world and find myself again*".

Exploring tourists' travel diaries has been advocated by researchers as they can help to explore the deeper and more subjective meaning of one's travel experiences (Davis & Butler-Kisber, 1999; Janesick, 1999; Singh, 2006). For example, Fredrickson and Anderson (1999) analysed the travel diaries of tourists to explore their experiences and attitudes towards different aspects of the wilderness environment. They found that travel diaries were able to successfully elicit rich accounts of the personal meaning different aspects of the environment had for respondents. Exploring travel diaries is argued to be a powerful research tool in much the same way as researcher-composed diaries. In particular, when one compiles a diary, they are arguably acting in a deeply reflective manner. Singh (2006) argued that a diary is, "A wonderful tool for nurturing the reflective process that can help you understand things beyond the level at which they happen" (p.75). Janesick (1999, p.506) also claimed that, "Journal writing is a powerful heuristic tool and research technique" and, "Journal writing has a long and reliable history in the arts and humanities, and qualitative researchers may learn a great deal from this activity". Travel diaries can encapsulate experiences as they

happen, assisting with affective recall and thus, allowing the writer to more accurately present the personal meaning of their travel (Fredrickson & Anderson, 1999). Key diary entries are presented within Nyla's portrait in Chapter 5.

Brendon, Amy, Amber and Nyla chose to express their travel experience by sharing with me certain travel photographs that they had taken. Brendon showed me more than 200 photographs that he had taken from his travels to Morrocco and Egypt; from these, he related a number of narratives to me about the 'stories' behind the photographs and selected four photographs that held particular personal meaning to him. Similarly, Amy presented more than 50 photographs of her travel experiences in Vanuatu, and discussed stories behind the photographs, and the photographs that were most meaningful to her. Nyla compiled a booklet of more than 40 images of her favourite photographs taken from her travel to Vietnam. Amber showed me just one photograph; that of a weave purchased during her travel that held significant personal meaning. Amber commented, "That weave was made by a Sally in Peru, so I just had to have it". During her travel with Hands Up Holidays, Amber's granddaughter, Sally, was at the forefront of her mind and this weave allowed her to connect with her even though they were separated. As with the phenomenological conversations, I allowed each research participant to shape the discussion concerning their photographs; interruptions were only made to ask for clarification about what a certain photograph contained, to gain greater insight into the personal meaning of the photograph or to hear the story behind the photograph. For example, Amy showed me a photograph that she noted was one of her favourites from Vanuatu; a group of children were smiling at Amy as she sat on the back of a utility vehicle. To situate this photograph and to explore its personal meaning to Amy, I asked, *'Can you tell me a story about what is happening is this photograph?'* and, *'What is it about this photograph that holds personal meaning to you?'*

Asking for clarification of what a photograph contains, and the way a research participant views the photographs is imperative in ensuring that context is given to the images and misunderstanding is minimised (Fairweather & Swaffield, 2001; Prosser, 1992). Researchers must ensure they do not assume anything about what a photograph is showing; it is for the research participant, and research participant only to personally interpret. Indeed, Prosser (1992) argued, "One of the problems associated with 'found' photographs is lack of context at the time of taking. When we view a photograph we have not taken or been party to, we perceive it from our own experience and knowledge, lending it a past, a present and a

future" (p.398). For validity reasons, research participants must therefore interpret the photograph. As such, I always asked research participants to describe to me what each photograph was showing me.

Increasing numbers of tourism scholars are finding that the exploration of tourists' photographs provides a rich insight into their lived experiences and pays credence to the predominantly visual nature of tourism (Albers & James, 1988; Burns, 2004; Fairweather & Swaffield, 2002; Garlick, 2002; MacKay & Fesenmaier, 1997; Markwell, 1997; Waitt & Head, 2002). For example, Garlick (2002) purported, "When we look at a photograph we open a particular space of experience; there is a relation existing through both time and space to the moment encapsulated in the picture" (p.297), and that the photographing of 'others' plays an important role in how people see themselves. Photographs are also said to provide insight into the spirituality of individuals because they can assist people with determining how they differ from 'others' and because "Tourists select the objects to be photographed according to the particular narrative they wish to construct about their holiday, their life and, in the end, their 'world'" (Garlick, 2002, p.297).

Additionally, like poetry, the use of photographs is said to reveal a 'different' type of knowledge to traditional research methods (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Garlick, 2002; Groves & Timothy, 2001). They thus help the exploration of spirituality to be 'layered'. Moreover, photographic images are central to the experiences of tourists, and it has been advocated that when tourists look at photographs, they are triggered into re-opening particular experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Fairweather & Swaffield, 2001; Garlick, 2002). Thus, photographic images have been argued to, "Play an inescapable part in the way the world is experienced for most people today" (Garlick, 2002, p. 290). As a result, Denzin and Lincoln (2003, p.50) claimed that photographs are, "Often called the mirror with a memory" because they take, "The researcher into the everyday world". Utilising tourists' photographs also stays true to the phenomenological principles of giving voice to each research participant; the camera gives shape to tourists' experiences and allows them the opportunity to become a voyeur, and active participant in the research process (Sontag, 1977).

Insight into the thesis aim was also provided by personal stories shared by Laura, Rhys and Karen. Laura and Karen composed their own stories while Rhys shared a Biblical passage with me. During conversations with Laura, she mentioned she was undergoing a 'life defining' transitional phase of her life; she was moving from Taupo, where she had lived

most of her life, to Wellington; both cities in the North Island of New Zealand. This event led Laura to reflect upon the personal meaning she had derived from her life in Taupo, treasured memories, and her thoughts concerning her future. Specifically, Laura reflected upon what was personally meaningful within her life. Laura compiled a personal story about this, entitled *'The Party'*, which is reproduced within Laura's portrait (Chapter 5). This story was deeply reflective, personal and meaningful to Laura, and, led to much discussion about how Laura derives personal meaning within her life and where travel with Hands Up Holidays was positioned within her spirituality. Through a story such as this, researchers can learn much about an individual's spirituality and their relationship or attachment to things; specifically, researchers can gain insight into what is personally meaningful to the story writer (Levy, 1981; Noy, 2004). Exploring individuals' stories also provides rich insight into the identity and biography of individuals. Through considering the tone, emphasis and subject matter of the story, researchers can learn much about the story writer which can then be explored further (Gergen, 1991). Through reading Laura's story, I understood the importance of God, family, friends and work to Laura; follow up questions, such as, *"Can you discuss your relationship with God with me?"* and, *"What role does your faith play in your life?"* were facilitated by Laura's story. I also gained insight into key events within Laura's life and, through the words of the story; I empathised with the emotions attached to these events. I subsequently explored these events and the personal meaning of them with Laura through probing.

Rhys shared a Biblical passage that he felt represented his spirituality. When Rhys was asked, *"What gives you meaning within your life?"* Rhys answered, "There is a Biblical passage that is my favourite; it's what I base my life on and how I like to live; it really sums up everything about me". The passage of particular importance to Rhys is Psalm 51; David's prayer after he strays with Bathsheba. Rhys and I read through the Psalm together, and we discussed the importance and personal meaning of each line to him. This discussion formed an important part of Rhys' portrait, and led to increased rapport between us. Specifically, Rhys found that I hold Christian values and was familiar with the Psalms; he thus said he felt comfortable discussing his faith. The analysis of Biblical passages as a tool to understand the spiritual identity of individuals has received a dearth of attention within tourism research; however, because this passage was important to Rhys, accordant with the principles of phenomenology, it was a valid and important tool for discovery.

Karen's stories related to the personal meaning she derived from her travel with Hands Up Holidays. Karen noted she was feeling 'very effusive' about her travels with Hands Up Holidays; for her, it was a life-changing experience. Karen asked me if she could share some emails and blogs she had written for her friends; she explained, "When I came back from my holiday I was so excited about it, and I recommended the travels to all my friends, and wrote emails and blogs about it". Through reading and discussing Karen's emails and blogs, I gained a greater insight into the role of travel in facilitating life purpose and meaning for Karen. Karen's stories also represented an 'immediacy of experience'; that is, they were able to capture Karen's thoughts emotions immediately after her holiday experience. Within tourism research, growing numbers of scholars are realising the potential of analysing, for example, tourists' blogs and social network sites (Collins-Kreiner & Gatrell, 2006; Pudliner, 2007).

4.9: METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS.

After each conversation between a research participant and myself, the interviews were transcribed immediately for accuracy and were compared for the common themes emerging from each interview and those themes incorporated into subsequent conversations where appropriate, until saturation was reached (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Once the data had been collected, I compiled 11 individual research 'portraits' which were based on and brought together data from the conversation transcripts, observations noted in my reflective diary, and the additional data sources such as music, stories, scriptures and photographs presented to me by the research participants. The portraits are thus a synthesis of the data for each individual research participant; that is, a personal narrative of the individual (much like a portrait painting) that seeks to encapsulate their life, who they are and what is important to them. In the context of this thesis, through these portraits, the personal meaning of the travel experience gained through Hands up Holidays' tours are explored within the wider contexts of the individuals' lives. As each conversation with the research participants revealed different data forms and a rich subjective narrative true to phenomenological investigation, it was felt that presenting only common themes emerging from the data would lose much of the individual's own voice; thus, it was deemed important to present each individual's rich story in addition to the common themes emerging from the data analysis. In this way, the portraits

served to allow the richness of each individual's story to be given voice within the relative confines of a PhD thesis, as well as provide a platform on which further thematic analysis could be based.

Research participant 'portraits' have formed the basis of other phenomenological studies because they stay true to the principles of giving voice to research participants, (Rosser, 1992; Schmidt, 2005). Specifically, through the compilation of individual portraits every research participant is given a voice within this research; their story is shared and the research aim is grounded in the realities tourists themselves describe (Prentice, Witt & Hamer, 1998). Importantly for this thesis, portraits allow for the objective and subjective elements of spirituality to be explored.

Portraits also stay true to the style of phenomenological writings; it is purported that phenomenological scholars should seek to produce a report that, "Is a systematic, rigorous search for truth, but does not kill off all its touches" (Reason & Rowan, 1981, p.xiii) and avoid generalising or analytic writing styles to let the phenomenon present itself (P. Willis, 2001). Specifically, it is purported that phenomenological writing styles remain germane to the phenomenon being studied rather than being reduced to a 'classic' report text (ibid). Phenomenological scholars must thus aim, "To construct an animating, evocative description (text) of human actions, behaviours, intentions and experiences as we meet them in the life world" (Van Manen, 1990, p.19). In contrast to positivistic research, when writing up their research, phenomenological researchers must thus attempt to balance academic rigour while allowing for the personal and subjective to surface (Van Manen, 1990; Willis, 2001). The research portraits present each research participant's voice but also build a platform for academic discussion (Chapter 6) and were thus deemed an appropriate method of presenting the results of this research and a basis for the subsequent analysis.

Thematic analysis was further undertaken on every portrait. Thematic analysis, "Is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.79). Thematic analysis is advocated when exploring how and what tourists derive personal meaning from as it can determine dominant themes that are meaningful to tourists, and affirm subjective experience; thus, it is also closely aligned with the principles of phenomenology (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Groves & Timothy, 2001; Schmidt, 2005). Thematic analysis is also recommended with regards to the study of spirituality because it aids in the development of rich, critical and complex results that are derived from the words

of individuals (Schmidt, 2005). It organises and describes a data set in rich detail (ibid). The coding system applied in this research involved key quotes pertinent to the research aim being highlighted, and then, on a second and subsequent reviews of the data, being grouped together under common headings and then into common themes. This process ensured that I did not impose themes upon the data; rather, that themes arose from the data itself (Crotty, 1996; Schmidt, 2005). In this way, I took mainly an inductive, rather than deductive approach to thematic analysis. The themes that arose revealed patterned response or meaning within my data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The appropriateness of the themes were not dependent upon quantifiable measures; rather, on whether they captured something important related to the thesis aim, that is, whether aspects of the three constructs of spirituality defining the thesis aim were commonly revealed, as well as additional common themes important in understanding the individual's search for purpose in life through their travel. In this way, I deemed that content analysis was not appropriate, as some of its principles are closely paralleled to quantitative analysis (Patton, 1990). I then sought to interpret the significance of the themes and their broader meanings and implications in discussion with the wider literature (Patton, 1990). The four themes and their categories that arose from thematic analysis are presented in Table 4.2 overleaf. The purpose of this table is to add clarity as to the nature of thematic analysis adopted for this research.

4.10: ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS.

This thesis research was reviewed and approved by The University of Waikato Human Research Ethics Committee prior to the commencement of data collection. Research participants were offered an information sheet prior to data collection explaining the purpose of the study, their involvement, that all participation was voluntary, they could withdraw from the research at any time, and request a copy of results when they were available (refer to Appendix 3). My name, email, telephone number and postal address were provided to give research participants the opportunity to regain contact with me should they so wish, even though a process of rapport and continuing dialogue was established with all research participants. During the research design stage I considered how important building rapport and trust between each individual research participant and myself was to the richness of data I would be able to unearth, and considered how I could ensure I was respectful to each

individual involved. Specifically, I was aware that through following a phenomenological approach I needed to ensure that an individual's subjective and personal view of reality was given paramount importance. As such, I was conscious of the need to avoid being judgemental of any comments made by individuals; it was their story, not mine, that needed to be told.

Upon reflection, at the time of seeking ethical approval, I did not foresee many of the ethical considerations that arose during data collection. In particular, I did not anticipate the depth of emotional responses that would be elicited from certain individuals and the personal toll much of this discussion had on me personally. Certainly, I understood that phenomenology seeks to delve deeply into the lived world of individuals and that through discussing how they derived meaning or purpose in life, a number of issues of personal importance to the individual would arise. However, discussion topics focusing on mental illness, death and other personal tragedies arose frequently and this was unexpected. I found the use of my reflective diary important during these times because through taking quiet time to reflect and write down my feelings, I was able to keep myself out of the emotion of data collection. For example, one particular conversation with an individual was troubling because it reminded me of a painful experience within my own life. Through writing down my feelings I was able to minimise any personal stress that arose from this discussion. Further, at times I believed both myself and certain individual research participants experienced a degree of healing through our conversations. For example, on two occasions, Amber talked with me for nearly an hour after our taped conversation had ended about issues of personal importance to her. I believed that through simply listening and sympathising with Amber's story, I was allowing her to reduce some of her personal stress. In hindsight, to prepare myself more for these discussions and to ensure high ethical standards within my research, I could have studied the counselling and life-coaching literature to improve my skills as an ethical qualitative researcher. This will be a on-going learning process and it is something I will seek to address throughout my research career. Further discussion concerning the ethical considerations that arose during this research will be discussed in Chapter 7.

Table 4.2: Themes and Categories Derived from Thematic Data Analysis.

Name of Theme and Categories Derived From Data	Illustrative Quotes
Spirituality as the essence of being human Personal search for meaning and purpose Experiences of transcendence Experiences of connectedness Imbuing the travel experience with one's spirituality	"I think we're all blessed with intuition… That assisted me a lot in South America through that hard time" (Charlotte) "It was special because my Sally wasn't there and she should have been… My head just keeps coming back to there" (Amber) "At the airport I just broke down because this was what my life's all about" (Laura)
Spirituality experienced subjectively and objectively Shared objective value sets or life philosophies Personal expression of objective value sets or life philosophies	"I challenged God and thought he's not a very nice person really" (Laura, after her sister's passing) "I was definitely feeling a lot closer to God then" (Rhys, after his brother's passing) "I attend spiritual connection at the church each month" (Laura explaining the importance of her church to fostering her spirituality) "You can have a spiritual connection in the bush while having the tuis (New Zealand native birds) around you" (Sharen)
Life defining moments Spiritual expression challenged through life-defining moments Travel as life-defining Defining moments influencing the travel experience	"That changed me, I think it has to doesn't it?" (Nyla discussing her breast cancer battle) "My eyes were definitely opened by that" (Amber discussing her experiences of Peru) "I used to have a number of goals but they have been put on hold" (Charlotte discussing the impact of recent difficult times within her life)
Search for meaning and life purpose fuelled by modern frustrations Materialism, secularism, poor morals and values	"It is the responsibility of parents to show their children that there is another way to live" (Lana discussing why she travelled with her children to India) "I needed to shock them and I couldn't do that in New Zealand" (Sharen sharing similar sentiments to Lana) "People here are so braindead, it's frightening" (Lana discussing the need to be with her 'comrades' in India)

4.11: RESEARCH LIMITATIONS.

All research has limitations and these must be acknowledged as these limitations offer research opportunities for future scholars. The participants in this research were all Caucasian, English speaking and located in three Western nations, New Zealand, England and The United States of America. Future research could seek to expand upon the knowledge yielded in this thesis by exploring spirituality and travel among individual travellers, from, for example, different nations, particularly those in the developing or Less Economically Developed Countries, life-circumstances, and in different settings. Further, six of the 11 individuals sampled within this research identified as Christian. While it could be argued that this blurs the distinction between faith and spirituality in a travel context, the faith of the individuals sampled was incidental. Further, it could be argued that because the other five research participants were either not of a particular faith or shared an alternative worldview, the broad conceptualisation of spirituality as discussed in Chapter Three, was supported. Certainly though, results may be different amongst individuals of different faiths. Additionally, each research participant travelled with only one tour operator, Hands Up Holidays, and engaged in this research after their travel experience, rather than before or during it. While these factors reduced the number of variables influencing this research, there is a need for further research exploring spirituality and travel within different travel contexts, such as through different tour operators and/or at different stages of the travel process. Additionally, while I developed a relationship with research participants over a period of 12-18 months, it would be of interest to further explore the influence of one's travel with each research participant in, for example, one to two years time, to further add richness to the data set and examine the longer lasting impact of 'spiritual' travel.

A further limitation of this research was that individuals were recruited using a convenience sampling approach. While appropriate for this thesis due to the limited number of individuals travelling with Hands Up Holidays who were willing to participate in this research, a convenience sampling method arguably does not produce representative findings (Robson, 2002). As such, future studies

exploring spirituality and tourism could seek to recruit research participants through a different, more random sampling method. Additionally, the phenomenological approach I adopted, of allowing an individual's voice to be heard, required significant skills on behalf of the researcher. Specifically, the skills of listening, knowing when to speak and building rapport were paramount. I am still developing these skills, and more seasoned researchers may have been able to elicit an even greater richness of data than I could.

Whilst it is important in a phenomenological study to write oneself into the study, inevitably my worldview influences the research. As a young, middle-class, white, heterosexual Christian, I view and shape my research in a certain way. For example, I predominantly read theological literature based on Christian principles and written in English; different researchers (those of different faiths, non-English speaking, of different sexuality, gender and age) would have shaped this thesis in alternative ways. Hence, critical perspectives in future tourism research of this topic are important (Wilson & Harris, 2006).

4.12: PRESENTATION OF RESULTS.

The results of this research are divided into two chapters. Chapter 5 provides rich, personal accounts of the role of travel undertaken with Hands Up Holidays in facilitating life purpose and meaning, or spirituality, for the individual research participants. These accounts are presented as individual 'portraits' as defined in section 4.9 above. Each portrait presents discussion of each research participant's life circumstances, view on spirituality and how they choose to find meaning and purpose in life, reasons for travelling with Hands Up Holidays, and the personal meaning they derived from their travel. Ultimately, the portraits provide individual accounts of the role of travel with Hands Up Holidays in facilitating life purpose and meaning. Chapter 6 presents a discussion and synthesis of the key themes revealed through analysis of the research participant portraits. The contribution of knowledge to the published literature is discussed in this chapter.

4.13: CHAPTER SUMMARY.

This chapter has set the research context for this thesis and outlined the key research methods and form of analysis. The thesis aim is explored within the context of 11 individuals who had engaged in travel with Hands Up Holidays, a tour operator marketing their travel as 'spiritual' but not aligned to a particular religion. This context aimed to move scholarly research in tourism away from just a focus merely on religious tourism in understanding the relationship between travel and spirituality. This chapter has determined that phenomenology was an appropriate philosophical approach to examine the research context. Specifically, giving voice to each individual, allowing flexibility in ways to express their responses and bracketing myself in to the research theoretically underpin the methodological approach of this thesis. Thus, this chapter has discussed how research participants played an active part in the research process, through, for example, presenting data in a manner that held personal meaning to them, and validating their portraits which form the presentation of results in the following chapter. Importantly, given the importance of subjective as well as objective perspectives of 'spirituality' as determined in the review of key literature in Chapter 3, this chapter justifies phenomenology as an appropriate theory to guide the study of travel and spirituality.

CHAPTER 5: RESULTS: RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS' PORTRAITS.

5.1: INTRODUCTION.

This chapter presents the 11 research participant's 'portraits', each presenting personal accounts of the individual's spirituality, and the role of their travel with Hands Up Holidays in facilitating life purpose and meaning. The portraits were derived from an individual's quotes, taken from the in-depth conversations with each research participant, which were then transcribed, the key story synthesised and then the data was validated by returning the portraits to each research participant for comment and further discussion or elaboration if required. Within the portraits, I make no judgement towards the validity of comments made by individuals; this chapter seeks to present their story and viewpoints. In this way, the phenomenological principle of giving research participants 'voice' was closely adhered to (Schmidt, 2005). Interpretation of the portraits also includes observations taken from my personal diary entries. Specifically, in some instances, I comment upon what I felt an individual was potentially not saying, as expressed through their tone, body language and evident emotions. The research participants did not validate my personal diary entries. In this way, I helped to 'layer' the research by adding context and depth to the portrait results (Schmidt, 2005).

To introduce each portrait, some background demographic data and description of the individual concerned is presented in order to locate the 'voice behind the story'. To protect the identity of the research participants, where necessary, changes have been made to identifying elements. To develop an interpretive narrative, portraits are grouped where research participants were found to share similar views towards the concept of 'spirituality'. For the purpose of this analysis, building on the conceptual platform of spirituality presented in Chapter 3, the portraits are divided into three groupings in this chapter; research participants who derived life meaning and purpose primarily through their personal faith (Laura, Sharen, Amy, Rhys and Lachlan); through a connection

with self, others, and/or nature (Charlotte, Amber, Brendon and Karen); and those who, although, holding no connection to the word 'spirituality', evidenced through their portraits that they have sought meaning and life purpose (Nyla and Lana). At the end of each section, a summary of the grouped portraits is included, noting key similarities and differences between the portraits within each group and key points of discussion, which will be expanded upon in Chapter 6.

__Research Participants Who View Their Spirituality as Inextricably Linked with their Faith (Laura, Sharen, Amy, Rhys and Lachlan).__

5.2: LAURA'S PORTRAIT.

Laura is a 48 year old woman who describes herself as, "Energetic, loving, a mother of three, a wife of one, a doctor, a citizen of the world". She notes, "My family and faith are the most important things to me and making positive change in the world". Laura has travelled extensively to, amongst other countries, Thailand, Cambodia and East Timor. Generally her travel has involved volunteer work in the form of offering either her medical services, or assisting with community projects. In January 2008, Laura travelled with Hands Up Holidays to Peru. She organised every aspect of her own travel and led a group of eleven people to Peru. Laura's portrait will explore her spirituality and evidences why she views the travel to Peru, Thailand, Cambodia and East Timor as forming an integral part of her "purpose in life".

During the research process, Laura and her family were going through what she described as, "A defining moment in our lives". They were moving from Taupo to Wellington (both in the North Island of New Zealand) to follow a job opportunity Laura had been presented with. Taupo formed a substantial part of Laura's life, and moving away from it led Laura to write a reflective story upon her life in Taupo, and the things that are personally meaningful to her. Laura's story provides rich insight into her spirituality, and is thus included here in its entirety. The last paragraph reflects the notion that the family were entering a

new, exciting period of their lives, but were also touched by sadness at leaving behind the gifts contained within Taupo. Laura's story is entitled 'The Party'.

THE PARTY.

The angels looked around delighted. It was just as they planned, the preparation took an eternity but it was worth it, parties always are.... "It is time," He announced. "The Taupo party will begin".

The crowds of angels watched on as the family began the fun task of un-wrapping the five gifts before them. First was the big one. The family tore the paper away revealing a lake, a beautiful pristine lake full of trout with a snow capped mountain at its end – "great for walking" said Mum; "skiing" said the kids; "mountain biking" smiled the Dad. "The scenery will restore you", the Creator promised. "Many adventures will happen as a result of those mountain bike tracks, those walk ways, those mountain slopes. Watch and enjoy" he smiled.

What else is there?" asked the inquisitive youngest. "Can I open the next one?" "Sure can" everyone agreed. As the paper fell away she watched the present take on faces- people who came for a season then faded, people who were there at the start and more vibrantly there at the end of the scene and others who grew slowly from what seemed little more than a smudge, to take shape and become strong to be almost tree like in proportions. The friendship gift is forever, the Creator promised. "Some will be there in the next scene. Some will not, but that is OK. The ones who came and faded have changed you, shaped you, made you who you are, prepared you for your next adventure. That is how it is meant to be", the Creator finished.

"It is getting better" the family agreed, "What is there yet to unwrap"? "I bet there are holidays in one", Lachlan presumed, "yep but they aren't part of the Taupo gift" Kim corrected, "It has to be Taupo". "Well what about school?" Esther asked, "Is that a gift'?

Before Lachlan could challenge the concept the Creator said, "Work is always a gift if you let it be". So out from the paper tumbled Laura and Paul's work places with all their machinations, and the children's' schools. The Creator understood Lachlan's reluctance to believe it – all gifts come with many layers. "If you hold them as a gift, even when it seems too hard, too dull, too irrelevant the gift can live and grow and create change inside. Let this one grow, watch and see. You'll like it". Lachlan did and he did. The others didn't doubt it.

The fourth gift the parents shied from. They suspected its contents and stood away as the kids pulled at the paper not noticing. Out fell a Church; a large messy body of faith, not tidy like the gifts before, not even colourful like the mountains or the Lake. "No, I don't want it!" announced the mother ungratefully. The father more respectful agreed silently but still hoped. The kids grabbed it and saw faces they knew they would grow to love. The parents were yet to be convinced. But slowly friends stepped forward and taught the parents it was safe to live with this imperfect gift. That was at first but a thousand years was as a moment and in a twinkling of an eye that changed. Hope was birthed,

Faith was rekindled.   The parents stood whole and loved, challenged and accepted. They held the gift tenderly, grateful that the Creator had crafted it with such love. They drew the gift closer reluctant to let it go.

But they knew to open the last gift they had to loosen their grip on the familiar and trust in the creator not the craft. They needed to believe that having been re-given life, it could happen again and again.

It felt hard though to let go. They all felt it. The girls eyes watered as they realised the fifth gift was to remain unopened for now. It was for the next party full of new scenes, new friends, new tasks and a new church. The family held each other and looked to their father and said, "We are ready". They released the church and it grew. They released their friends knowing it was not goodbye and they grew too but one couldn't help notice Bebo and cell phone texts coming to life. The music grew louder and the food began to appear. It was time to celebrate. All in the twinkling of an eye.

In analysing Laura's reflective story, it is apparent that Laura has a strong connection with God, which shapes her identity, her actions, and gives her purpose in life. Laura notes, "I'm very much committed to a spiritual journey that God and my Christian faith are part of", and she chooses to have "spiritual correction" once a month in order to ensure her life remains centred on what is important to her. Laura views herself as a highly spiritual person, "I think my priorities in life are spiritual stuff more so than other things", and she sees spirituality as "involving finding meaning in life in terms of relationships with why we are here and what counts". On several occasions Laura noted that her life is driven by the quote, "To much is given, much will be required". Laura also notes that this quote relates to a "desire to strengthen my relationship with God and live by Christian principles". She expands:

> "If I truly believe that the God who created the universe cares about individuals, and that enormously impacts my worth as a person, how can I not respond by giving value to others? I think its inherently part of who I am, and when I get out of bed in the morning, I want my life to reflect that, so whether its helping on the Board of Trustees, or whether it's the way I treat my kids at home, or how I treat my staff at work, it is my ethos".

Within Laura's reflective story, she notes that she "shied away" from the gift of Church and declared, "No I don't want it". When asked about this part of her

story, Laura explained that she often questions aspects of her faith and "like many others" has had "baggage" with the Church. She commented:

> "I'm a questioner, I'm a tester, so I was brought up in the Christian faith but I often question, and say, is this as good as its cracked up to be? And I guess it comes back to me that it takes more faith to say no than to say yes, and I'm pretty committed to the faith journey of saying yes that fits with my internal compass really. So I look at wanting to make a difference, and my Christian faith fits in with that really well".

Laura's faith was particularly tested at the passing of her sister, during this time she questioned the role of God in her life. When asked, *'What has been the greatest personal challenge you've had to face?'* Laura answered:

> "I would have to say my sister dying of cancer at the age of 35 and I was at Bible College at the time, so really dealing with a sense that God failed here. No, that's not quite true, it was a sense that the medical profession let her down, and God let her down, and my sister died at 35. I guess exploring that and creating a new perspective. It was a challenge to my faith and the medical profession as a doctor and my faith in God as a loving God really.

> It was a really cool time to explore faith because we prayed for healing and we thought we saw it and then she got worse and died. Did that mean we didn't have enough faith? And it was a matter of defining faith for me. I guess it was a really significant personal challenge. I remember saying at the time, it's not that I don't believe in God, it's just that I'm not sure whether I like Him. So really just thinking, if I was God I would have done it better, I would have been nicer about it all really. So I guess the journey from that all, I did some searching and decided that I still did like Him really. I was a bit relieved that he still liked me. That was a very defining moment for me".

Laura explained that during this "crisis of faith", she asked herself whether Christianity was right for her. However, she noted that she found herself asking questions all the time such as 'What is my role in life?' and 'Why am I here'? She explained:

"It's all part of my spirituality and my DNA, as a spiritual person. I talk to God about this all the time because these are the things that matter; addressing these questions is what matters in life. Now, not all the time, I'm not consumed by it but they definitely matter. I'm not actually asking those questions because I'm lost; I'm asking those questions because out of all the questions in the world, they are the ones that really matter".

While Christianity plays a central role in Laura's life and she is fully committed to her "spiritual journey"; her reflective story also illustrated that she has a strong connection with family, friends, community, the church, nature, work/education and self. She noted that these too are spiritual things, "the things that really matter in life". Laura also regards "integrity, family identity, a commitment to our parents and a wider commitment to the community, as expressed by our moral integrity" as being of central importance to her. For Laura, "things don't feature, which is very noble but it's true". Indeed, Laura regards materialism as a negative influence within New Zealand:

"I think as a nation we will **have** to get back to what really matters. We'll see that upgrading my car, or I've got to get the new DVD, all that media stuff is a suck-in. If my kids are going to have the lifestyle that I've had, they are not going to get there by default. So I think our kids are going to teach us again some of those good old fashioned values. So I think we all are going to need to change. So do I think the materialism aspect needs to be addressed? Yes I do, partly for equality, to balance, but partly for our sake as well, it's all a balance – and it's a big suck in what's happening. When are you rich enough for money to make you happy? I don't actually think you ever are. I don't know many rich people who are happy because they are rich. If it's about the money, there is always more money you can get, so if rich people are happy, then they are happy for the same reasons I am. I think it will have to change or we will become the most discontented generation".

As a doctor, Laura feels that many people are anxious or depressed because they have been caught up in the materialistic mentality of the Western world and a state of "disconnectedness". She explained:

"If I could I'd get people to open their eyes and notice. Notice their neighbour, and notice beyond their neighbour to what is happening with other people. I think if we notice them, with eyes that really saw,

then I think we'd really care, and we'd become more **human**. So I think, even in a general practice setting. A lot of people come in, and I think **man, why** have you made an appointment to see me? And I think a lot of people have come to see me because I will listen, and I think in the past their neighbour would have listened, or their priest would have listened. I think when people are listened to they become healthier. They're weller (sic) as a person and as a society. So I think some of my patients who are depressed, if they actually went home and baked a cake for their neighbour, some of that depression would lift because they'd be part of a community, which makes them healthier".

Laura herself notes that her faith in God gives her "inner peace" and "comfort", and the feeling that she has a purpose in life is "mentally comforting". She also "exercises regularly" and is "constantly striving" which she feels keeps her mind fresh. She commented that:

"There's always something more to strive for, and I don't like it when people say I've made it because I think there's always more to learn, always more to learn about worship and life…. So I like to push myself and set those goals, and focus on the important things in life, the spiritual questions. So I always put myself in positions that challenge me, I want to grow, to experience everything".

Whilst Laura's "spiritual journey" provides her with an inner comfort, she notes that she feels "anxious and stressed" when she has "expectations that aren't being met; expectations of me, of following my journey, of remembering the important things in life". Her greatest fear is also related to her purpose in life – "I fear losing the opportunity or ability to make a difference". When asked how this might occur, Laura answered with emotion, "My Dad has Alzheiemer's, or look, if I lose the ability to physically do things, I need to be in a position where I mentally can still do it". Generally though, Laura believes she holds few fears, and she "doesn't care at all about what other people say about me".

Laura views travel as an integral part of her "spiritual journey". Indeed, Laura was overcome when she arrived in Peru because it represented an important juncture within her life journey and was what she called "a defining moment in my life". She explained the personal meaning her travel with Hands Up Holidays held to her:

> "When I went to Peru I actually cried when I got there thinking I **really** believe in this and I believe it's really part of it. If I was going to talk about my D.N.A, the way that I was made, this is part of expressing it really; it is part of expressing my journey, so that moment, coming into the village was an expression of my Christian beliefs".

When asked to clarify what she meant by noting that travel was a way in which she was expressed her journey, Laura commented:

> "Yes, it's about my life journey really rather than just my journey to Peru. It's interesting in looking at defining who you are as a person. I guess in terms of my concept of who we are in our journey is that we are all unique. There is some stuff that is the same about all of us and there is some stuff that is uniquely ours and part of our life mission is to find out the unique me that God wants to use. I think for me, leading that team to Peru was part of what I can do that God hasn't called many other people to do, but it's part of expressing my passion really".

Laura also noted that she felt her travel to Peru had given her peace of mind and strengthened the philosophy by which she lives her life – "it gave me a feeling that in a way I am on the correct path with my journey and so I feel a great calm from that, and inspiration to continue". She continued, "it was a path on my journey… it reinforced the value of 'to who much is given much is expected'; it's my journey and I'm continuing on it". Laura's travel experiences to Peru, Cambodia, Thailand, and East Timor, have also made her question what she wants to do with the next stage of her life. Driven by what she has experienced through her travels, and her Christian worldview, Laura said:

> "I think I'm just a frustrated missionary in a sense, my passion is for those who deserve more. Inequity and injustice makes me cross. Part of the question of my life, and my experiences through Hands Up Holidays, and my other travel, is well is this direction that I want my life to go? Because what I could do is medicine in developing countries but if I can motivate great Kiwis to be more empowered to participate, then I think I'd probably have a bigger impact… What say that is going to have far more of an impact than just pottering around with some medicine? So I guess I'm at a crossroads saying, while my kids are still at school, do I want to run these trips?"

Laura, has in fact, since created her own travel company, as she is passionate about getting other people "connected" with her vision of reducing inequity and injustice. She explains how her son had his "eyes opened" through travel to East Timor, and how she was pleased at the values it helped instil in him. Laura explains:

> My fifteen year old came home from East Timor and he said you don't know how lucky you are until you see what little other people have got. That was a very average fifteen year old, and up until then the only thing he noticed was that someone else had a better Xbox, or bike then we had. Then suddenly he thinks there's a whole world out there that has less than that. So these are values I want to instil in my kids, and I guess a sense of responsibility. Too much is given, much will be required.

Her business is now marketed in conjunction with Hands Up Holidays. With Hands Up Holidays, her business blends upmarket, ethically responsible 'holidays' with a taste of volunteering. In discussing the purpose behind her travel business, she said:

> "I think the reality is that people have got busy lives, and if they're going to take two or three weeks out of their year, they have to come home refreshed and ready to roll up their sleeves and get back to work. To combine the two then, it's not a matter of slogging it out for three weeks in undeveloped countries, you get sick and vomiting beginning to end in an unhygienic environment, what say you go and do the tourist thing **and** get a glimpse, and just learn about other people".

Partly as a result of her travel experiences, the previous "black and whites" of Laura's "spiritual journey" have "probably greyed down a bit.… I've matured within my spiritual journey". To illustrate this point, Laura recalled an encounter she had with an Iraqi man in Peru:

> "I was with this Iraqi man on the way to Pumamarka and we talked a lot there about our cultures and beliefs, and it was fascinating to gain insight into who he was and his faith, and to share my faith with him… I think it's really cool listening to other people's stories really, and you can't step outside New Zealand, and step outside your own value system without noticing and respecting other people's. So maybe I feel quite a high commitment to an inter-faith journey that thinks, as a Christian, if I'm trying to convince you that I'm right and you're wrong, and then a Muslim says God has told them to do

something, and everyone else is wrong, and the Jew does the same, then you're pretty sunk as a nation, and as a World, and as a community really. It's not diluting down my faith, and maybe I would have thought as a teenager it was, but it's just saying, the faith I have deserves respect, and your faith, if it's different, that deserves respect also".

Laura also noted how her drive to assist others was only strengthened through her interaction with the children of Peru – "I felt a special bond with lots of the different children I met and some of the different aid agencies over there. The work that they did was simply incredible and just the joy of the children was great; they have beautiful hearts and were really happy to see you".

On a personal level, climbing Machu Picchu also held meaning for Laura:

"It was a shared moment of overcoming a great challenge and we all had total elation at making it. It was something that we all wanted to achieve and being there with others was a feeling of 'we did it'…. When we got to Machu Pichu, it happened. A major challenge met, time to celebrate".

Laura's portrait has illustrated, that she is a high-striving professional who derives meaning in life primarily through her Christian faith; spending time with family and friends; her work; and assisting others. Laura's travel to Peru had significant personal meaning. She saw it as an important step in the development of her Christian faith, and as a way to fulfil her perceived purpose in life. The personal significance of this travel was illustrated when Laura broke down upon reaching Peru – "this is what it is all about". I found my conversations with Laura enjoyable, and because she was an open and friendly person, I felt a rapport with her. Initial conversations were held in a café; a relaxed and quiet atmosphere which allowed a rapport to be established. Additional conversations were conducted by phone and email, as Laura had moved. Laura openly discussed her views on spirituality, confidently and clearly. She was happy to do so. At one stage she told me, "Gee I didn't think the interview would go this way! But it's great!" She also asked me to explain my own worldview and views on spirituality. I was happy to do so, and explained that I hold Christian beliefs and values. Laura made very few changes to this research portrait, except to change

certain words. She commented, "it sums me up very well but gee I go on a bit don't I!"

The following portrait profiles Sharen, a research participant who, as will be evidenced, shares a similar view on spirituality to Laura and who derived similar personal meaning from her travel with Hands Up Holidays.

5.3: SHAREN'S PORTRAIT.

Sharen is a 37-year-old woman from Auckland (North Island of New Zealand), who travelled with her family to Borneo and The Philippines in July and August 2008 through Hands Up Holidays and Tear Fund (a Christian based aid agency). Sharen and her family are devout Christians and view their faith as the centre of their life. It shapes their values, spirituality and what is personally meaningful within life. Sharen stated, "It's the centre of my life and my family life; everything stems out of that, the way we treat others, the way we handle finances, everything". As a family they are not widely travelled; however Sharen notes she travelled to Australia, Fiji and The United States when she was younger "for the purpose of a holiday, and to enjoy the sun". Sharen does however acknowledge that her travel to Borneo and The Philippines was "for a deeper purpose than just a holiday; it's the first time we did a trip like this and it certainly won't be the last". Sharen believes she is a spiritual person, "in a practical way because I like to feel connected so I suppose some of my spirituality comes from that, a sense of connection and belonging and I suppose underlying that would be my Christian faith". Sharen believes that spirituality "involves having a link to something or having a bond with somebody or something or a situation or place". She notes, "this doesn't necessarily have to have any Christian connotations because you could have a spiritual connection while sitting in the bush and having the tuis (native New Zealand birds) around you".

Sharen's portrait illustrates how she views her travel to Borneo and The Philippines as "a miracle"; and how she sought to use her travel to follow the work of Jesus Christ; to provide her children with a 'profound' awakening; and to experience personal spiritual growth. Further, it will explore why Sharen feels her

107

travel, while not defining her purpose in life, has certainly started to 'fuel her fire' in terms of exploring the 'deeper calling' she feels as a Christian, "It has opened up a real can of worms". Sharen describes herself as "a big softie with a big heart" and "a keen sense for the marginalised". She has "always had a sponsored child", and believes doing so "imparts something neat on my children". She believes she is a "real thinker", and often asks herself "the big questions; like, what is my purpose?"

Sharen says her Christian faith "guides my values, morals, and my purpose in life". In particular, Sharen says, "I live my life by the quote, 'Do unto others as you'd have done unto yourself'". She notes, "I am a teacher, and I administer my classes based on that quote". Sharen's family's faith is so strong; to illustrate this she explained how her husband had placed his faith ahead of his job:

> "I think it's tougher because we have a faith; sometimes we come under a lot more pressure. My husband's lost a job because of his faith. He was asked to go to a corporate function. He was told he had to take the lead for another client, another company and he had to see to all her needs, and those being any needs that she might have, and he said nope, sorry not interested. And they said if you don't, you won't have a job tomorrow and he said, fine. So that's pretty tough, I know today you would take them to court for that but back then there wasn't that, you couldn't do that. So yeah, things like that are pretty tough but I wouldn't change those things".

When asked to explain her perceived purpose in life, Sharen said:

> "I think, aside from my faith, my biggest purpose is to raise my children so that they can be positive contributors to society. Secondly, from that, they can influence their friends to be the same. We work for a lot of young people so we have a lot of opportunity to model that and I think if we can do that, then the on-flow is exponential and it just spreads. I think that's probably my [purpose], I know it's a bit wishy-washy, but I think if I can see my three kids into the world and send three out and those three will get married and then there's six… it's about creating a sea of change. Because this is something I **can** change. There are lots of things that I can't change, but I can influence my children".

Sharen believed her travel to Borneo and The Philippines, "fits perfectly with my purpose". Indeed, she felt that her travel with Hands Up Holidays to Borneo was

"a calling", and events preceding her travel had "really had an impact on us as a family". She also believes God facilitated her travel to Borneo, and that "a miracle" occurred that made her travel possible. She said that she "felt guided by Him to do this travel". She expands:

> "We knew this trip was supposed to happen when it did. I suppose what happened was, at the end of last year a really, really good friend of ours got cancer and he died; under fifty, with kids, **really** young. Steve and I, I think we've always discussed going on this sort of trip and we said, well it's got to be done. Because we don't know, specifically, what would happen and at the time we said it's got to be now, we only had two thousand dollars in the bank, it was really funny. And something happened, and we had this tax rebate come back and just weird things you know? A lot of things happened and the money just came in. I'm not kidding you, it just came in and we don't know where, and no-one knew we were short! I didn't even know Chris [Hands up Holidays' founder] existed. I was at the gym, sweating like you wouldn't believe, talking to my girlfriend who's chatting away and we were talking about a few things and she said, oh you need to ring my cousin. Who's your cousin? Chris. You know, it's just quite unusual. A couple of nights after that he was on the news in New Zealand; there was a documentary thing on it. Thinking…oookay. Something's happening".

Sharen described how she believed God was asking her and her family to undertake travel to The Phillipines and Borneo with Hands Up Holidays, and that He ensured their travel was safe and enjoyable. She explains:

> "I do feel that God was talking to us, I feel that He was. Because God always works in a practical way in my life and that I suppose, was a good example of it. The money turning up was another one. Even while we got everything organised with Chris we actually had a really big hiccup. The tour guides in Borneo had mucked up big time and Chris sent me an email that told us about it. Anyway, I said to Christopher, okay we're still going. So you're not budging us, we'll re-do it, and just whatever happens, is gonna happen. What did happen, I think the re-dub option was better than the one we were gonna go on and it's just quite strange. Also, I mean we had thirteen air flights in three and a half weeks, not one lost luggage, not one delayed flight – in fact some of them went early – all our contacts were there when they were supposed to be and none of us got sick. And we ate ethnically everywhere we went. I kind of think, 'God did this for us, have we cheated' [laughs]".

Sharen explained that because she believed her travel was a "calling", that she received a "miracle" through money appearing in her bank account; the death of her friend; and her belief that God was 'speaking' to her, there was no chance that she would allow any "hiccup" to stop her from travelling. She knew she was meant to take this opportunity to go to Borneo and The Philippines for a reason and she spent a great deal of time reflecting upon what this reason may be; she explains:

> "It just came into place and I think sometimes, depending on what you believe, I still feel that we could have bowed down at that point and just thrown our hands up in the air and done a hissy fit. But I think we needed to break through that so I think a big part of it was definitely a calling for us. I stop now and then and think… and you go, well okay, now we're back, so what was the reason for it. You know, hello are you out there?! Don't know what's going to be next! I think it's a processing time, a time to think and talk about what went on. We had a lot of chances to talk to people since we've been home about various parts of the trip, which has been phenomenal. So I do think there's a bigger picture out there, we're not privy to it all but… Even our friend's death, we could see the positive and I've talked to his wife since we've been back and I said do you know this is **what** happened because of Peter? This is what spurred us on. She was just blown away. She really couldn't believe that her husband had such an impact".

Sharen feels strongly that her relationship with God has become stronger after her experiences in Borneo and The Philippines; specifically, she believes that God worked a number of miracles during her travel, which cemented her faith in Him. She explains:

> "My ability to believe in God and my faith was built up tremendously; those were just practical things you know? We had a really funny thing happen in the Philippines. With Tear Fund you're not allowed to… you've got some really strict restrictions, you've gotta know that you can't leave money, you can't. Yeah, things like that you can't do. So we were thinking, you know how are we gonna **do** that? How's a practical way of doing something for this little community where we were, where we can help someone out without it being unsafe. Well, we took these eighteen people out for lunch and while in a truck we borrowed, a jeep thing, it broke down. It had to get a new tyre, and then we had to re-do the spare and then we did bearings and something else. Now if that had happened to the man, it would

have been off the road and that was his livelihood gone **bu**t because it happened on our watch, part of the condition was that we were responsible for anything that happened to that truck. So we **got** to be able to pay for the repair and get that truck back up and running and in better condition than it was when we got it. And it was like God's providence, because we couldn't give him the money so we repaired his truck instead. And it really wasn't hugely expensive but for them it was because their money with their currency, but convert it back to New Zealand dollars and it was no problem. So little things like that happened, a **lot** and you kind of go **YAY!** and it's exactly what we wanted to do, something practical. So it was really cool".

Sharen discussed how perhaps the greatest personal highlight of her travel was interacting with the Chief and his son, Jai. It helped her to understand that in places of extreme poverty and perceived misery, great things are possible and the warmth of the human spirit remains. She felt a deep connection with the people of Borneo and The Philippines and commented, "I felt at home, I was really welcome and I felt that I belonged there. She continued:

"In the village that we stayed in, the chief came and got us, which surprised us tremendously. We were expecting his son, and he came and got us. What we didn't know was people come and go out of that longhouse but they usually stay a night because they go from the longhouse we lived in, up for the weekend a base camp for trampers. So they stay a night on the way in or a night on the way out. They'd never ever **ever** had a family stay, more than a night. So that was quite a surprise but what blew us away **more** was that the chief's son Jai, is actually a Paralympic swimmer. He's a world-class gold medal winner and he's got gold medals and silver, bronze, from all over the world. You go into a place, which looks; I'm not kidding you, like its going to fall down to find such a **treasure** – quite mind blowing considering how remote the place is. So that blew us away. A phenomenon. You know, you just don't expect it".

Sharen also reiterated a number of times, how living with the ex-headhunters had an impact upon her. When asked whether she felt at all concerned about living with these people, Sharen replied:

"No, they are just **amazing** people, their sense of love for one another, just puts us to shame. One afternoon I sat with the ladies who had been out into the jungle and collected the vegetables and stuff and they all

sit with baskets and shell, or whatever they were doing, all together and the laughter! We actually lost track of who's child belonged to who because they were just as happy with granny, oh you knew who the great grandparents were, they'd swat them every now and then when they got out of line. But everybody was… just the sense of community, was huge. One of the families, the father isn't working and everybody provides for him. Just amazing! In fact, the oldies there, there were three of them over a hundred, called the head Chief out one day, just before we left, and said to him to tell us that they wanted us to come back. Apparently, they don't usually communicate with anyone that comes in and out of the longhouse, they keep to themselves. Yet they really wished to be part of everything else that was going on".

Sharen believed that she gained much more from her experiences the Phillipines and Borneo than the locals whom she assisted. She stated:

"It was touching; it was really quite humbling because I felt we didn't really bring much to the table. I felt that they gave us **much, much, much** more than we were able to give them. We had gifts, and we had little things to give, lots of games and stuff for the children, things like that. But the time they would just sit and spend with you, doing your weaving or shelling peas or whatever was brilliant. But yeah, the kids, they were just brilliant!"

Sharen also recounted a moment that meant a great deal to her, and was another example of the "miracles" that occurred during her travels. She explains that she felt a deep "spiritual connection" with her sponsored child, and that God worked through her to find her sponsored child in the crowd. She explained:

"In the Philippines, there were all these kids, about sixty of them performing when we arrived and our sponsor child was not meant to be here. I said to Steven, she's here and he said, 'how do you know?' And I said I don't know, she's just here and the lady said to me, oh your child's here, can you pick her out? I scanned the room and instantly, locked. That was very spiritual. The only photos I've got of her are not clothed, quite distant, quite grainy and she was dressed exactly like everyone else, in their costume. That was it. That was quite spiritual; I was drawn immediately to her. She looked at me and I looked at her and there was a definite connection. It happened instantly, a click of the fingers, it was like I had known her **all** her life. **Quite** bizarre. There were a good sixty kids there and I just knew she was there, I just knew. There was quite a spiritual connection. I say spiritual because it was a really deep connection, a powerful feeling between us".

Sharen was also impressed by the children she encountered in the longhouse; she feels that New Zealand society could learn a number of lessons from them. She states:

> "You'll probably appreciate this, you know, kids are kids; we never saw one scrap. We saw a few little tiffs/arguments but that was it. The favourite toy was a truck and they all had these little trucks and they stuck rocks in the back of the trucks to weigh them down and on the truck was connected a little bit of twine from maybe a flaxy bush, and then that was attached to a stick and they ran around with these trucks on a stick everywhere. **My** son wanted a truck on a stick [laughs]. And then he yells, I got a stick! Things like that were quite humbling, it just makes you realise - no Playstation, no TV's, no telephones, no Internet. But these kids didn't miss out on anything. It was quite phenomenal really".

Sharen views the Western World as overly materialistic and secularised. She has seen evidence of the "greed" and "lust for money" within her own life and feels that "the rejection of religion is a real problem in the Western World". She explains:

> "I think that the secular world, that's becoming a bigger problem because a lot of them have shunned anything to do with religion because it's a crutch and so they're searching for something and they're not getting it with money, it's just not it. They're not getting it with their job, they're often not getting it in their family life, so they're looking for these sorts of things but they're coming away after that and they're **still** empty and that's part of it".

> "I've seen it and everything, and I've got some of our people we deal with work and stuff, very, very wealthy, you know, they own supermarkets and goodness knows what, and I'm on the outside thinking 'greed'; they travel lots, they do this and that and the kids have this and that and underneath it, you don't have to scratch far under the surface to see that there's a big hole there. You know, we might not have the money and we don't have Playstations at home and I don't have a flash car, we don't have a flash house, but scratch the surface and I think there's a bit of gold under it. Maybe that's judgemental but that's what I see".

Although Sharen's family is, by Western standards, not 'rich', her experiences in Borneo have made her question her approach towards consumerism:

"I don't think at this point where we are with our family that this sort of travel is just something we can just swan off and do permanently. But it will be something that I think that we will continue to look at and move toward heading away again, either as a complete family unit or with one of the kids, depending on how old they are at the time. We had to make the decision, travel or a pool? Travel or pool? – Ah travel, I'd take the travel any day, I'd do it tomorrow. It **has** definitely changed the way, you know how you go out for coffee...I don't **really** want to buy that coffee; do I **need** to have a whole muffin? You really have to think about prioritising what money we do have, because believe me, we don't have a lot. It sounds like you know you have to take your kids around and they aren't aware where the money came from, it arrived".

Sharen explained that when she planned her travel to Borneo, she wanted to include aspects that would be "a real challenge" and "difficult". She wanted it to be a deeply bonding experience for her family and she wanted to teach her children the values that she held dearly, as she explains:

"We did it as a family, and that was the point of it. We have three kids and we took them with us. Yes it was individual but it was in a family setting also. For me personally, I've always been aware of poverty and to see the poverty and to **smell** it was quite phenomenal. You see it on the television, you hear it on the television but when you've got all the senses working, the smell is pretty phenomenal. For us, heading into Borneo meant quite a lot of changes. We specifically wanted to keep the trip ethnic, so we wanted to stay local, eat local, live local, be local. We lived in a Longhouse Village in Borneo because it was a very long flight to get there and then get on a truck and travel for an hour through potholes as big as the road to get to a little wee shack; that's the only way to describe it, to get to a longboat and then travel again upstream for another hour to get to the location. It felt very remote. To do that with three children was quite a challenge!

We lived with this longhouse community who only eight years ago were still headhunting. So we went into quite an unknown thing. So at the time we didn't know if the tribe was a local religion or a Christian religion. We didn't really know at that point what we were getting ourselves into except that Chris had organised it. But yes, it has quite changed our family's philosophy. We lived on the floor, paid to sleep on the floor!"

When asked why she wanted to immerse herself totally in the harsh Borneo environment, Sharen said:

"We wanted it to really impact the children – not just for them to walk in and walk out after a few hours. We wanted to live it. You can't do that if you just walk in and walk out. A couple of days, great in the heat, no air-conditioning, 46 degrees, you can't go for a swim because the river is chocolate brown because they've not long ago had really bad weather. And to hang with the kids and get to know them, and to see a totally different lifestyle – and you can't get this if you walk in and walk out. We wanted to impact our kids tremendously because we all have quite a sense of social justice and I think it's very hard to impact children, and a couple of hours doesn't work".

Sharen particularly wanted to impart onto her children the notion that excessive materialism, and greed, is wrong and very damaging. However, she felt the only way she could achieve this was through taking them away from New Zealand society. As a parent, she felt "a strong responsibility to teach my children that there are others that need our help". She noted that there is poverty within New Zealand "but to see real poverty and I mean **real** poverty, you have to move outside this country". She explains:

"I know the older they are the harder it gets, approaching those teenage years now but I'm hoping that this sort of thing helps to guide their radar. Because ultimately, they're both really brainy kids, they will be heading to university somewhere, be it Auckland or not, and they need to have their radar honed for themselves by then. That's what I want them to be able to do; I want them to be able to make good social calls. Their own radar, not mine. But it's not gonna work like that is it? It's hard though, sad to think that we **actually** had to leave the country to get such an impact. We have been out to South Auckland, and there are intellectually handicapped kids that come in and out and around the place and stuff like that, but **even** the kids in South Auckland are well dressed".

"The priorities of money in New Zealand are very different. I think **that's** probably the thing that I came back and got quite angry, you know you look at someone's trolley and they don't have a lot of money but the fags are in there, chips and fizzy drink, bought biscuits, you know? But the kids don't consume and yeah, I suppose if travel was the way to open the kids' eyes then well so be it then. It's all very fun and games; I'd do it again tomorrow. I'd be gone again tomorrow because the kids all say the same; can we go again tomorrow?"

When asked whether she feels travel to Borneo and The Philippines has changed her children's values, Sharen responded:

"The older two have, one's fourteen and one's twelve, near thirteen, and they do because they get pocket money and they have to budget with what they have, so certain things they have to pay for themselves. So they have started going 'ahhh, actually not sure if I want that now' or one of them is putting extra aside because she wants to save and head away again. So yes I think they do look at the cost of things. Because while we were away in the north side of the Philippines where one New Zealand dollar is close to thirty-three peso, we took people out for a meal and there were eighteen of us, and it equated to less than twenty five New Zealand dollars. And the kids you see them, because one's a real math whiz, and you can see the calculator in her head and she just couldn't believe the exchange. So yeah, I think they do think about that because they all bought a few *little* things while we were away. It wasn't a shopping spree but they all came home with a t-shirt and a pair of shorts or something like that. Then they'd equate it back to NZ dollars and then they'd come back here and they'd go, when they'd come shopping and they'd go, oh my goodness how expensive it actually is here, the clothing..."

Sharen described how she has great admiration for her ancestors, and wanted herself and her children to experience the sacrifices they made. She believes her strong sense of social justice was developed after hearing stories about her ancestors' struggles; she explains:

"Some of our sense of social justice would come from our faith. Some of it is my family upbringing. Way back at the beginning of the century my family were immigrants and they left the country because they were going to be executed. Stuff like that, the stories that you are taught as a child, and I think you carry a little bit of that along with you when you go".

"My family are Polish and they were the King and Queen of Poland at the turn of the century and at the same time as The Russian Revolution, where the Tsar of Russia was murdered. The same thing happened in Poland, the uprising, and the King and Queen of Poland abdicated from the throne, got on a ship, taking what they could and ended up here in the North Island, and that is where my family heritage has come from, and has always spurred me to look out for the underdog. My family were going to get killed and we wouldn't have been here if they hadn't have got on that ship. They went through all the problems in the world and I just want my kids to be aware that people **need** their help. Fine, it's neat to be able to go to a shop and

buy a few nice things. But you need to on the other hand be able to help out other people as well. What an interesting family we are!"

Sharen also described how, through travel, she has been able to find out more about herself, such as her family links, what is important to her, and who she is. For Sharen, travel is an important avenue in which she can explore questions concerning identity; she explains:

> "I'm **starting** to know who I am as a person. Do I like who I am most days? I like who I am as a person. There are days where the wheels fall of the bus and I'm probably not a very nice person to know and those days it's important to make sure I grow from that and then I improve you know. But I am growing into my skin. It has taken a while. But then I'm not that old either; I'm well under forty. So I think I am growing into that I think".
> "Truth be known, underneath it all I'm actually quite shy but I'm loud, I hide the shyness...Now I know that sounds bizarre but an example being on my school reports; all the teachers used to write she's so quiet, we'd never know if she was there. As a musician I stand in front of people and perform regularly which is in contrast to what most school teachers said about me and that I'm loud and usually the centre of what's going on, so I can hide that quiet side. So loud but still quite shy. **Forceful**, I mean I'll stand up for myself but underneath it all, my knees are knocking".

Sharen's portrait has evidenced that her travel to Borneo and The Philippines held deep personal meaning. For her, it represented a deeply religious experience as she was fulfilling part of God's perceived purpose within her life by travelling to these destinations. Sharen was also able to connect with her ancestors; learn more about herself and her life purpose; and impart important values to her children. It was also important to Sharen that, through travel, she was able to honour her friend who had recently passed away.

Conversations with Sharen were held over the phone and by email due to the physical distance between us. Sharen was very open, keen to discuss her travel and life experiences; and I found I quickly established a rapport with her. I found Sharen very positive, friendly and warm, and thus allowed for the conversation to flow naturally. Sharen was comfortable talking about her faith, and we shared personal discussions about faith together and realised we have much in common. Sharen, like myself, has a young child, and thus, rapport was further developed as

117

we discussed our children. As with Laura, I felt inspired by Sharen's philosophy on life and felt energised after talking to her. Sharen was very comfortable talking about her spirituality. She views herself as deeply spiritual, and found the flow of conversation comfortable. She made no changes to this portrait.

The following portrait profiles Amy, also a devout Christian. Unlike, Laura and Sharen, Amy did not derive deep personal meaning from her travel with Hands Up Holidays and viewed it as 'not particularly' spiritual. Amy's portrait thus provides a different perspective to the previous two.

5.4: AMY'S PORTRAIT.

Amy is a 25-year-old New Zealand woman who describes herself as "Christian, creative, intelligent, an introvert, a natural leader, practical and thoughtful". She explains, "I reflect upon things a lot… particularly about things that have gone wrong, what I want to do in the future, ideas that are reasonably abstract, and theological issues; I'm a thinker, I will often be awake late at night thinking about things". She hasn't set herself many long-term life goals - "what will happen will happen, but I'd like to grow in my faith, develop skills at work, maybe publish some of my music, travel more, and I'd probably want to get married at some point". Amy travelled with Hands Up Holidays to Vanuatu in April, 2007 with two friends. While she notes that "travelling to Vanuatu was a real eye-opener to me" and that she "often transports myself back to Vanuatu and reflects upon my experiences there", she feels, "Vanuatu has not changed me very much at all… I wasn't using it at all as an avenue in which to ask myself key issues concerning my life… it hasn't really meant that much to me". Rather, for Amy, travel to Vanuatu, "has reinforced the way I am living my life and my belief that happiness is not a result of how much you have in the way of material possessions but rather, it comes from things such as relationships with family and friends, and religion". This portrait will explore what Amy derives personal meaning and connectedness from, and will discuss why her travel to Vanuatu with Hands up Holidays, while being "really enjoyable and memorable", did not reportedly constitute a particularly significant part of Amy's spirituality. To provide insight

into her spirituality, and her thoughtful, reflective way of expressing herself, Amy shared a number of pieces of music that she had written and composed. This portrait explores two of the pieces that Amy felt best represented who she is and her relationship with God.

Amy has, in the last few years, graduated from university, and is now working in the field of engineering. She commented, "I enjoy my work because I get to design things, and solve problems for people". She is "not widely travelled; "except for a few trips to Aussie", and travelled to Vanuatu with Hands Up Holidays primarily because, "a couple of friends of mine were going and asked if I wanted to go as well". Amy notes that to date, her life has been "comfortable and peaceful" economically, mentally, physically, and circumstantially. For example, when asked about any personal challenges she had faced within her life, Amy pondered, "I couldn't really say any, perhaps my life has been too easy so far?" Amy, however, confided that she is experiencing a "quarter life crisis! I'm 25 – what do I do next? Do I work for the next couple of years in New Zealand or go overseas and do travel – what do I want to do? She believes her experiences in Vanuatu have helped her deal with this 'crisis' "somewhat, I guess, because I really enjoyed the trip and seeing a completely different place with a different way of life has whetted my appetite to go and see some more of the world". However, Amy is not overly concerned about this crisis, "I'm sure things will work out fine".

Amy attributes much of her 'comfortable', 'peaceful' and 'happy' perception of her life to her Christian faith. She grew up in a Christian family but discussed how there came a time when "I had to make a decision whether this was what I wanted to carry on with". Upon reflection, Amy decided, "I believe that it's the truth, it gives me purpose and if I thought it was a load of bollocks I would have changed direction". Amy's faith was a theme that ran throughout all my conversations with her, it was clear that Christianity is central to Amy's life. She notes she has "complete meaning and purpose in my life because of my belief in God". Her values, behaviour and outlook on life are all heavily shaped by her relationship with God. She explains:

"I'd describe it as being a personal relationship. I see it as being a two-way thing where God interacts in our world and we can also talk to God. I think I kind of see it as being a basis of my life and it gives purpose to my life. It is the basis of my life because it is an underlying thing that affects all parts of my life. It's my worldview, my values, my morals, all the rest".

When asked to explain how her belief in God gives her purpose and meaning in life, Amy responded:

"The questions What am I? And, why am I here? are answered by my Christian faith… I guess without God you kind of question why you are here and what is the meaning of life. If you take away a Higher Power then it would actually be quite difficult to define a purpose to life. There are a lot of philosophers who come to the conclusion that life is meaningless if they take God out of the equation. I guess because I have the belief structure that life continues after death and that what you do on Earth does matter. It gives me direction".

Amy believes she is completely "spiritually fulfilled". She feels contentment within her life and at this point in her life "any hole in my life is filled by God". For this reason she stated that, while she wanted to visit Vanuatu to "broaden my horizons", she was not using her travel to Vanuatu to confront any significant personal or existential questions:

"The purpose of my travel was not to gain spiritual experiences, or satisfy what some people may describe as a hole in their lives; that I would ascribe to neglecting the spiritual side of life".

In addition to her Christian beliefs, Amy discussed how composing and playing music is a central part of her life. It gives her purpose, alleviates stress and anxiety, and is an important part of her "spiritual expression". Music holds so much personal significance to Amy that the thing she fears most in life is "something that would stop me playing music". She notes though that "really, I honestly don't fear that much". Music, like Christianity, has been important to Amy since she was a young girl, she explained, "I started playing the piano at age eight and also started writing pieces of music at this time". Amy's Christian belief also influences the type of music she writes and enjoys. She notes she finds great joy, peace, inspiration, and often a deep connectedness with God when she is writing and playing. She explained:

120

"It is just joy, a happiness really. I think to an extent I lose track of time – I'll often just sit down and play for an hour or so – it definitely is not a chore! Quite often if I'm writing something new, just to reinforce it I'll sit down and play it like 20 times, to memorise. Whatever stuff I normally write, I don't get around to writing it down for a while, I just memorise it all. I think to an extent a lot of the stuff I write is inspired by God. Music takes me somewhere, it's freedom".

When asked to explain further, Amy noted that many of the lyrics and compositions of her songs seemed to "appear from nowhere"; as if "God is communicating to me"; she explains:

"There's not necessarily a lot of thinking involved, it just comes out. Its not that I kind of sit down and think I'm going to write a song and think for hours about what I'm going to write. Ideas come to me from out of the blue… Quite often a line will just come to me and within the space of half an hour or so, the whole song will materialise. I might think about it a bit about making up some of the words but quite often a lot of it just appears".

Amy writes and plays her music sporadically, "there will sometimes be months where I will go and not write anything; other times I'll be writing all the time". She does, however, feel that she often plays her music during times of anxiety or stress; she noted:

"I probably play more when I'm stressed or grumpy. It makes me feel relaxed; it gets rid of the stress or the anger. It's quite interesting, when I went on Outward Bound, one of the few things that I actually missed was my piano. I think it probably was because I was feeling a bit stressed. It was kind of a different challenge and I just wanted to sit down and play. They actually had a piano there so I played for a few minutes on this and definitely felt a bit better. A stress release. I found that quite interesting".

Although Amy generally writes songs only about God and Scripture, one event in her life led her to write music. The following song, 'Last Train to Nowhere' was inspired by one of Amy's flatmates who was "going off the rails… we found out a couple of years later that he had been diagnosed with bipolar disorder and he was also going off and doing drugs and he got a hideous tattoo on his arm, and getting into lots of other things like lots of alcohol".

This song reflects Amy's 'reflective' and 'introverted' personality, and provides a lyrical insight into how Amy views lives that are 'spiritually empty', and have 'lost direction'.

LAST TRAIN TO NOWHERE ('AMY', 2004).

"Took the last train to nowhere
Ended up somewhere in between.
Can't see where you're going now
You've forgotten where You've been.

It would seem you're unhappy now
So how come you don't know.
Running scared to nowhere
Don't know where to go.

Wallow in self-pity
You better watch that you don't drown
It's not too late you know
To turn your life around

It would seem you're unhappy now
So how come you don't know.
Running scared to nowhere
Don't know where to go".

This song was written in a Minor Key, at 80 beats per minute - representing its moody, reflective, sad subject matter (Nisbett, D, pers comm., 2008). For Amy, seeing her flatmate go through difficult times, and being largely helpless to help him, was upsetting; and she felt compelled to express her emotions through song. It was a cathartic experience that allowed her to release her pent up emotions created by a troubling situation. It reflects how her flatmate was lost, scared and had a lack of meaning within his life. It also reflects how it is never too late to turn one's life around and find meaning in life.

As well as using her music to reflect, Amy also uses music to 'uplift' and 'be thankful'. In particular, Amy discussed how for a long time, she felt it important to compose a Christmas carol; something to tangibly represent her love for God. She explains how she went about composing the song, and how it was once more 'inspired' by God:

> "I read a number of Bible passages that are kind of the subject matter of the song to come up with the lyrics. Some of the lyrics came out of that – part of the reason that I wanted that was because I wanted the lyrics to be correct – accurate, rather than wanting to make stuff up – it's basically the passages in The New Testament that tell the start of Jesus' life and as far as the actual lyrics, again, in some ways, I don't know, they just kind of appeared".

Amy's personal Christmas carol, "A Saviour is Come" is presented below:

A SAVIOUR IS COME ('AMY', 2007).

Verse 1

"Hope of the Nations

A helpless babe

Heralded by Angels

Singing God's praise

Born in a stable

Placed in the hay

Humble beginnings

For one so great

Chorus

A Saviour is come

The whole world rejoice for

A Saviour is come

The whole world sing his praise

Verse 2

Greeted by Shepherds

Feared by great kings

Sought out by travellers

Lead by the heavens

Fled in the night

To a foreign land

Soon to return to

Play out God's plan

Verse 3

Now we remember

This Christmas day

The greatest gift that

God ever gave

Jesus his son the whole world to save

Sent down from heaven

To show us the way".

'A Saviour is Come' has a slow and steady tempo of about 60 beats per minute and is written for voice and piano, typical of a how a hymn would be sung in a Church – either with the choir and church organ, or the choir and piano (Nisbett, D, 2008, pers. comm.). A hymn is written generally to achieve connection with God; or to worship and praise Him. This was certainly a key motivation for Amy. A hymn is defined as:

> "The praise of God by singing. A hymn is a song embodying the praise of God. If there be merely praise but not praise of God, it is not a hymn. If there be praise and praise of God but not sung it is not a hymn. For it to be a hymn, it is needful, therefore, for it to have three things – praise, praise of God, and these sung" (Scholes, 1970, p.497). .

The composition of *'A Saviour is* Come' is in C major, which traditionally represents emotions of calmness, peacefulness and thankfulness (Nisbett, D, 2008, pers. 124comm.). Amy reported that generally she has a calm state of mind, and experiences emotions such as these often because she has a sound

'spirituality'. Amy views herself as a highly "spiritual person" and views her relationship with God as at the heart of her spirituality. She also believes that her musical talent represents one expression of her 'spirituality'. She commented, "the spiritual side of my life is an important aspect of my life". Amy views spirituality as "a person's beliefs with respect to the spiritual world (as opposed to the physical world), and the way in which they interact with the spiritual world based on their beliefs". Amy regards her music as evidence of the spiritual, and her 'inspired' musical creations as evidence of God's presence in the world. Amy also notes that she feels a significant connection with God often when she feels inspired, or moved by nature. She said, "I often get inspired by seemingly quite little things like looking at creation; such as looking at a bug that is crawling that is quite amazing, or the sky, it's God's creation".

Amy noted that she felt close to God in Vanuatu, particularly so "when I was standing right next to the volcano with lava exploding out…. That was quite an awesome experience… I saw plenty of evidence of God through the beautiful creation in Vanuatu". However, she did not feel any closer to God than she does in her everyday life; she explains, "I found Vanuatu no more spiritual than my day to day life… like I said, I wasn't looking for meaning and purpose from Vanuatu, I already have that". When asked whether she felt her relationship with God has been strengthened through her experiences in Vanuatu, Amy answered, "I believe that like any relationship, my relationship with God can be strengthened, however I do not think that my trip to Vanuatu strengthened my relationship with God".

For Amy, the most meaningful memories she holds of Vanuatu relate to her interaction with the local people, and particularly the local children. Amy took more than a hundred photographs of various aspects of Vanuatu; in particular, the scenery, people, food, and places she stayed. However, of the more than 100 photographs she shared with me, she noted that four photographs are "perhaps my favourites of the whole trip". Three of the four photographs are very similar, and contain images of happy, friendly Vanuatu children.

When asked to note why these photographs hold particular personal meaning to her, Amy commented:

"We visited Lelepa Island on a boat trip and they filmed *Survivor: Vanuatu* out there. They were **great** beaches". However, interacting with the local people, especially the children, and their culture was the most meaningful part of my trip to Vanuatu. They have been voted the happiest people in the world and I think they have a lot to teach us. They don't have much in the way of material possessions, but they do have family, friendship, community, laughter, generosity, religion, food and shelter, a beautiful natural environment and a relaxed pace of life. It was a good reminder of what really makes people happy and to be content with what I have (which is a lot compared to many people in the world) and not to get caught up in the belief that more stuff will make me happy".

"The local children were delightful. They were so energetic and happy. We went into several schools and took photos of the children. I don't think they had seen pictures of themselves before. They all swarmed around us to look at the pictures on the back of the camera. It was heart-warming to see such joy and excitement about things that we take for granted, such as technology. It was beautiful that we gave them a new soccer ball for the school and within a day all the writing was rubbed off… that gave us a sense of joy, that something so little we had done meant so much".

Amy's interactions with the Vanuatu locals have strengthened one of her core values. She commented:

"I think the core value my travel strengthened was helping others, although I also think that social justice is important. I feel guilty about not doing more to help others and am working to become more generous with my resources – time, money and skills in order to help others. When you travel and see people with so much less than you have it gives you a new appreciation of just how much you have and how much of a difference you can make by giving time and/or money".

Amy notes that she now has "more confidence" to make a stand and "can now see the difference that something small like donating $20 can make". She discussed how she recently wrote in to a New Zealand television current affairs show, complaining at what she had viewed:

"I wrote into say that it was poor form academically to take anything out of context to make a point. The academic was bending things to suit his point, which is something that really annoys me with these programmes that they often interview people with fringe views that are not in line with the majority of people… I didn't get a response from it

but I've decided I'm going to be more proactive about things I disagree with, writing letters to the editor and things like that… I think perhaps my experiences in Vanuatu have made me want to stand up and be a voice for people that have less".

Amy also noted that in Vanuatu, she felt "very comfortable with the values and way of life of the locals, particularly their focus on the important things, like faith… there are some things though, like the food that I couldn't handle all the time though". This has reinforced a strong yearning of Amy's, to see a more Christian world. She explains further:

> "If I could, I would want Christianity growing over the world; it is happening in a lot of Less Economically Developed Countries but unfortunately it is going the other way in some parts of the Western World… I think some people are too damn comfortable and when you are comfortable you think you can control everything yourself until something goes hideously wrong and you have to think maybe I can't control everything, whereas I think in a lot of Less Economically Developed Countries, the Christian message gives people real hope for a better future, and I think traditionally, the Church has grown a lot in the face of persecution, so areas you'd think people would give up are traditionally areas of growth".

Amy noted,"I often take myself back to the happy, slow-paced life of Vanuatu when I'm stressed". However, she also commented that, "I generally don't get stressed or anxious very much, God is there and I have my music". She explained that Vanuatu gave her a 'temporary' release from everyday stress "Vanuatu worked wonders for my mental health in the short term because it took me out of the fast-paced world". However, she contends, "I wouldn't say the trip had any long term benefits to my mental or physical well-being. The whole relaxed thing I think wore off when I got back into reality back home". Amy explained further:

> "I often think how lucky I am to be living in New Zealand. I use the thoughts of Vanuatu when I've had a disappointment and re-centre that I'm lucky to live here, so I don't get too worked up when things go wrong. I think I go back there in my mind the most when I'm bored or have had a bad day. It is an escape for me".

While Amy gained memorable experiences from her travel to Vanuatu, she does not feel her travel has been deeply meaningful. Specifically, she feels her travel

to Vanuatu has not significantly changed who she is, her values, or what gives her meaning in life. She notes that previous travel to the South Island of New Zealand "was more meaningful because I was with family".

As illustrated in this portrait, Amy is a devout Christian and believes her meaning and purpose in life is provided predominantly through her faith. She notes that she is very young, has a comfortable life, and, as such, has not faced a number of life-changing or 'defining' moments in her life. Further, because she has found total meaning and purpose through God, she has not needed to 'search' for something within her life. I noted the importance of music to Amy and found that after she had shared her music with me, conversation became easier; music clearly energised Amy. I noted that she had 'lit up' and 'let me in' after playing her music to me. Rapport took some time to appear between myself and Amy, I felt she was nervous during initial conversations this may have been, that because Amy was the first research participant I conversed with, I was also perhaps portraying a rather nervous disposition. After Amy shared her music with me, however, our rapport improved. I felt Amy had 'let me in' to her spirituality. Conversations between Amy and myself were held at Amy's house and over the phone, and I found Amy very pleasant and kind. Amy made a number of changes to this portrait; specifically, she added a number of additional sentences illustrating her strong Christian faith.

5.5: RHYS' PORTRAIT.

Rhys is a 21 year-old man from Hamilton (in the North Island of New Zealand) who travelled with Hands up Holidays to Vanuatu in March-April, 2007. Rhys travelled with Amy and they attend the same church. Rhys is a devout Christian, and views his travel to Vanuatu as being an important expression of his faith. Rhys believes that, family and faith is, "all that is important to me, nothing else really figures". While Rhys believes his purpose and meaning in life are largely directed by God; he also believes that his experiences in Vanuatu have strongly reinforced to him that he is living his life in the correct manner. Rhys has recently experienced a number of significant events in his life; he has married, lost a

brother, and is coping with his wife's cancer. I could sense the pain of these issues to Rhys through his tone of voice. Rhys believes his faith has given him the strength to cope with these situations. While he views himself as very 'spiritual', he notes the word 'faith' means more to him. He commented:

> "The word spirituality doesn't really mean much to me, I would use the word, faith. We are spiritual beings as well as human beings; there's like two parts to it. So that's **spirituality,** we are spiritual. I believe I'm a spiritual person, yeah probably. I [pause], I'm aware of that spiritual being, it's more the thing that I'm aware that we are two pronged, we are kind of spiritual beings as well as human beings – two parts to our lives".

When asked, how to him, the spiritual 'being' differs from the human 'being', Rhys responded:

> "Obviously when we die, our flesh stays behind and the rest of us goes up to Heaven and maybe becomes a new creation, so we become born into a new spiritual body. So we're still the same person but we've got a new body".

Rhys' portrait explores the profound role his faith plays within his life and how this faith is evidenced both in his daily life, and during his travel to Vanuatu. To share the personal meaning his relationship with God holds to him, Rhys shared and discussed his favourite passage of The Bible with me - Psalm 51. Rhys explains the Psalm "it creates in me a clean heart, it's David's prayer after he'd slept with Bathsheba. So it creates in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me, cast me not away from your presence oh lord and renew the joy of your salvation within me". When asked to explain why this passage is so meaningful to him, Rhys explained:

> "Because I'm human' I might sin and I know I sin, even really small things. And because of that I continually want to cast my burdens off and strive to hold onto Him and I really love that bit, create in me a clean heart O God – so that's casting off that, and then restore unto me the joy of salvation, so I love to have that joy that I get every time I come to him and pray to him. Renew your steadfast spirit within me, that's like hold onto me, don't let me go. That's pretty much my walk with God is **that.** I don't want to go **anywhere** without your presence".

Travelling with a company like Hands Up Holidays has been a long-term goal for Rhys. He feels compelled to contribute to assisting those in need, as it forms an important part of his Christian belief, he explained:

> "I've actually wanted to do something like that for a while, probably for about five years that I've wanted to do something like that. It also came down to my beliefs, I'm a Christian and I wanted to help people and in The Bible it says that the people that help the lesser essentially help me. So that's one reason but it's more getting out there and actually seeing what the world is like and getting a different perspective on things".

When asked whether he felt his travel to Vanuatu had changed him in any way, Rhys replied, "Yes, it changed me in a way that I more value the things that I have. In that way, it's changed me but it hasn't really changed me if that makes sense? It **has** but it hasn't".

When asked to explain further, Rhys replied:

> "It has reminded me that materialism is not the way. Being away from that for so long, you kind of slip back into the materialism type thing because of the country you're living in. So when you're over there it really hits you and when you come back it really hits you as well, and after a few months you kind of just settle back into the way the Western culture is because you've been away for it for so long".

When asked whether he felt his relationship with God was strengthened because of his experiences in Vanuatu, Rhys replied:

> "I don't think it did but in a way while I was over there, it kind of did. It kind of made me appreciate how much He'd actually done for me as a person because my faith is a personal thing, not just going to church and things, it's a personal relationship with me and God so it's all about what he does for me. So in saying that, looking at the different things He does for me and me being in New Zealand in a very prosperous country it actually means a lot to me from going over there".

Rhys describes his relationship with God as a "two-way thing, it means a lot to have that relationship. He's always there. I speak with him in prayer everyday and I'd like to read The Bible everyday but that's kind of periodic [laughs]". Rhys

130

notes that he does not spend much time "thinking about the big questions in life, such as what am I here for?" He trusts in God and believes that He is the answer to all these questions; similarly, he believes he has a purpose in life, but it is God who shapes this. He explained:

> "I'm not sure what my purpose is but it will be revealed. It's just a day-by-day thing. If something is meant to be then something will come up or kind of guide me in the right direction that I'm meant to be going in but this hasn't kind of been spelt out to me".

Rhys described how he felt that moving to university was a defining moment for him, in terms of his faith, and his overall direction in life. He said:

> "My degree went for four years and in that time it was kind of the defining point, where I grew up in a Christian home but when I left for uni I was out on my own. It was somewhere where I had to choose which way I was going to go and that's kind of when my faith became my own. Its kind of when it became well what do I actually stand for, with this relationship with God that I have – is it real? And if it is, it has to be all or nothing. And so that's kind of then…".

When asked why he felt he had come to a 'crossroads' in terms of choosing which way to go, Rhys replied:

> "Well, when you go through tough times and kind of in isolation it kind of puts you at a point where you have to, you come to a point where you, you know the **truth.** In my situation, I'd grown up in a Christian home, I knew that God was real and that I'd asked him into my life many years earlier. But was I actually going to follow that or was I going to turn around and just ignore what I knew was true, and if I was then it seems kind of pointless to me and so that was I either follow it or I don't, there's no sitting on the fence. So that's really it".

> "I lived at home, I lived with my parents, my parents went to church so I went to church. Whereas when I was at university, I had the option and no one was going to church with me or saying, oh let's go, so it's more I had to take that step of faith and I had to go out and find a Christian family that I could be a part of. In doing so, I was taking that step of faith but it took half a year before I finally came to the point where, okay am I gonna do this full-time, because I play hockey and hockey clashed. Hockey was Sunday morning so after that first year it was like, well what am I gonna do about this? I

ended up changing grades; I went down a grade just so I could play on a Monday night so I had the Sunday morning free. It's just things like that, taking those steps to secure that relationship with your fellow believers so you can strengthen them in their walk and also they can strengthen you in your walk and in turn, together, you are able to help others".

While at university, Rhys believes that God communicated with him his desire that Rhys travel with Hands Up Holidays. He explains that he believed God was revealing what he wanted Rhys to do:

"I was thinking about it for a while, while I was down in university, and it was probably about after a year that I kind of had a feeling that I wanted to do something. Then I moved up to Auckland when I was working and the feeling just got really strong and I had some people pray about it with me and then I went along to a church that I hadn't been to before and Chris from Hands Up Holidays was there speaking. So after the service I went up and talked to him and said, well I'm an electrical engineer, I've been thinking about doing a mission for a while and I said where in the world do you think they need my skills? He said, I've just come from Vanuatu and they're in desperate need of people with electrical backgrounds so it was kind of really blatant right there and then. I don't think it was a coincidence".

Rhys notes his 'calling' to travel with Hands Up Holidays came at a time when he was feeling particularly close to God. This closeness was borne out of a personal tragedy. Rhys explained:

"I was definitely feeling a lot closer to God then. At that particular time I was having quite a good time where I was reading my Bible everyday and also going to church every week and even going to night services as well. That kind of also shone through about a month and a half, two months after I met Chris, my younger brother died in a car accident and in that time God actually moved in ways that I didn't actually believe. My work told me that I got a job twenty minutes from my parents place and that they'd like me to move down there and work at this particular location. They told me that three days before the accident happened, so I was to start a week later. So the accident happened and essentially I moved home. And that, in moving home, it was amazing and it kind of comforted that whole experience of losing my brother; for **me**, and also for my parents and the rest of my family who were at home".

Rhys further noted that his travel to Vanuatu came at an opportune time for him personally, because it helped him to reaffirm his relationship with God. Rhys explained "being over there, pace of life is a lot slower so I had more time to read my Bible and pray about what I have in New Zealand. The Western world is so busy, but in Vanuatu it was very open to Christian inputs".

Rhys spoke with emotion about the tragic passing of his brother and explained that it "really was a shock and makes you think a lot about life". Out of this personal tragedy, Rhys explained that some good has arisen:

> "The passing of him didn't really make me question the way I lived, it more reinforced that I was on the right track. We got to know his friends better and we found out he was actually taking some of his car club friends to church as well; we didn't know that".

Certainly, Rhys was under a great deal of stress during the time of our conversations. He also spoke about how, he is currently facing another tough situation, and how he turns to God to comfort him during difficult times. He explained that everything happens for a reason, and God has a meaning for every life experience. He commented:

> "I'm going through a difficult time now. Not just that I'm getting married on Saturday but I've just found out that my fiancé, or wife to be, has just been diagnosed with cancer. I..[speechless] I turn to God in pretty much everything and look for meaning how this fits; it just seems to flow and different people who help my Christian family, they seem to **know** when to ring or when to talk, it just seems to happen, I can't really explain it. It's not just the people it's the timing that they ring and talk so there must be something else to it".

Rhys notes that he doesn't really fear anything personally, and explains that, "I believe that God will help me overcome anything". However, Rhys expressed great anxiety and stress about his fiancée's health. Rhys also noted that he is concerned about New Zealand society. He explained:

> "I feel fearful about the way New Zealand's economy and society is actually going. It seems to be becoming quite loose. Something that really stood out to me with Vanuatu is that Vanuatu people are very friendly and very open. When you'd walk out into the street everyone would say hi to you whereas in New Zealand you walk down the road

and maybe one person would look up to see who you were, and then not even say hi".

When asked to describe what he meant by the term 'loose', Rhys explained:

> "Yeah, loose. The liberal side of things, family, the community, it's all just breaking down. Where I noticed over in Vanuatu, the families didn't seem to be split; everyone seemed to be in a family environment that I saw. Even if they had their uncles and aunts and whatever else still living with them you know?"

Through conversations with Rhys it was apparent that he derives significant personal meaning from his relationship with God; family; and friends. It was the connections with some of the Vanuatu people that held the most personal meaning for Rhys during his travel to Vanuatu. He explained:

> "For me, the highlight of my travel would have been more the connections with the younger guys. In the Vanuatu culture the guys don't seem to do a lot from my experience. Where we were they pretty much just lived off the land. So they pretty much all had veggie gardens and once the veggie garden was weeded, they just bummed around for the rest of the day. But just seeing the young guys how they want to help out and support the community was amazing. There was a bunch of about six guys there who were just lapping up just about anything that we'd told them about any knowledge or any way of helping and fixing things. The older guys were a little different, they kind of sat back, but it was the young guys and that relationship that we built with them; helping and fixing the stuff there".

The ability to "make a difference" was particularly meaningful for Rhys, as it resonated with his Christian faith. He explained:

> "I **could** make a difference. What we did, the nuns there, they had one light or two or three lights in their whole house and one of the nuns actually liked reading before she went to bed, but she had no light above her bed so she couldn't. So she had to go out to the lounge and read before the generator went off and it usually went off at about eight o'clock at night. So we installed a light with a battery and you could plug it, and it plugged into the wall so it charged and she could sit there and read her books. Something very simple like that, it meant an awful lot to her. Just the look on her face when we did that for her, that was all that I wanted; it was what I wanted to get out of my travel. One of the guys that I helped gave me a wooden owl carved out by a machete. That is special to me".

Rhys' portrait has illustrated the profound importance his faith plays within his life. He made no changes to this portrait and commented, "Yes, this is a good representation". He has recently experienced a number of tough situations within his life and found the presence of God comforting at these times. As Rhys noted, his family, friends and faith mean 'pretty much everything' to him and completely fills his life, and gives him total meaning and purpose in his life. His travel, while not 'life-changing', was derived with significant personal meaning because Rhys believed that God had moved him to travel to Vanuatu, and that he was fulfilling his purpose in life by sharing his electrical skills with the locals. I found discussion with Rhys easy. I heard genuine emotion and anxiety in his voice when discussing the illness of his fiancée and did not pursue this issue with him.

5.6: LACHLAN'S PORTRAIT.

Lachlan is an 18-year-old man from Wellington (in the North Island of New Zealand) who has recently started studying for a degree in law and international relations at university. He views moving to university as a 'defining' moment in his life. It has changed his outlook on life and helped him to learn a lot about himself. In particular, Lachlan notes that he has made a strong connection with a number of people from university. He explained, "I think I've made some lifelong friends, and that's what gives my life real meaning, making these connections with others". When asked whether he could share any stories about connections that he holds within his life, Lachlan commented:

> "I've been through a lot of stuff with some of my friends over this year and over the past few years. They've had issues or if I've had issues, people who I've gone through a tough time with… it often feels like quite a special relationship so that's probably…a little bit with family as well, I've been through stuff with family so that feels like quite a special relationship".

Lachlan has a strong Christian faith and also feels comfortable with other Christians because of the shared focus in life they have. He explained:

"I have a special bond with other Christians because it means so much to me, it really means so much to them. It's that special understanding. They're coming from the same direction as you. Most consider the same things very important and you get a special bond".

Lachlan travelled to Peru with Hands Up Holidays in September and October of 2007, and he views this travel as having a significant impact on him. It played a part in leading him to study law and international relations. He feels it has changed him. He explained, "it's opened my eyes, taught me about Aids, poverty, these sorts of things but I'm not sure I will know the full impact of what I've experienced, I think it has probably changed me in a lot of subtle ways". When asked to explain further, Lachlan noted:

"Well its helped in terms of not taking things for granted because there's so much in New Zealand and also knowing that you're able to make a difference to people's lives and you sometimes just don't think you can make a difference but by experiencing it firsthand, you really can".

Lachlan believes that his Christian faith is central to his life; it shapes who he is, what he values and his outlook on life. It also gives him meaning in his life. He noted, "I do sometimes ask myself the big questions like what is my purpose, but my faith answers a lot of that. Having said that, I don't believe in just sitting back and letting things happen, you have to go and live your life". He also commented, "it definitely gives me a purpose and I feel I have a purpose, although I'm not always sure what it is; however, knowing I have a purpose is quite reassuring sometimes". He believes that his Christian faith has led him to places such as Peru, and East Timor, where he has previously travelled. He commented:

"I think my faith was the big reason for getting involved in this sort of travel but it's also not a chore or anything; it's not some religious chore that you just do, it's something that I get a lot of satisfaction out of as well".

Lachlan believes his Christian faith has helped to make him a good person; he believes he is honest, trustworthy and non-judgemental. He commented, "I think things like honesty and trust are things that I value quite a lot. I like to live in such a way that other people will recognise that and value that trustworthiness quite a lot. I try to be a trustworthy person". His main fears, stresses and anxieties in life

136

relate to letting himself, and others down, and things that he cannot control. He explained:

> "Well I think because I really personally like to value things, like being trustworthy and not being judgemental and stuff like that, I think seeing someone thinking the opposite, like being someone that can't be trusted or breaking someone's trust or something like that. I think that's more that fear of letting someone else down or letting myself down".

Lachlan believes he is a reflexive person and when asked how he deals with stress and anxieties in his life, he said:

> "I'd say writing. I write songs sometimes when I'm dealing with something or reflecting on something I like to do that. I write them particularly when I'm struggling with something, say emotionally, and I just want to write it down. That's probably the main time yeah".

Lachlan notes his songs are personal to him and he generally does not share them very much. He explained "they are really just for me to look at and I normally just put them in a drawer and bring them out when I feel I need to read them".

Lachlan travelled to East Timor in 2005; this was his first experience of volunteering overseas. His travel to East Timor whetted his appetite for a similar type of travel; he explained:

> "Well to be honest, the first time when we went to East Timor was with my family. I didn't have any objections, but initially it was just mainly Mum and Dad's decision, but after getting there and realising that it was such a great experience and **really** getting a lot out of it, I wanted to do it again so I went back to Peru and did a similar sort of thing".

Lachlan believed that his initial travel to East Timor changed his outlook in life and, "started off a bit of a desire to keep doing the sort of things that can really help others". He explained:

> "We went to East Timor in 2005 and that was a similar thing again in a village and in a school. And **that** I feel changed me quite a lot, more so probably more than Peru because it was the first time but they've all been special".

When asked why he thought travel to East Timor had changed him, Lachlan responded:

> "I think it was quite a culture shock to me; I'd never really been to a country like that. I'd only ever been to tourist places like Fiji and Australia. Going over to a Less Economically Developed Country and seeing how different these peoples' lives were but also how happy they were as well, was a big thing for me. It would have been fair that they've all been through so much but they're all still so happy was quite moving".

Lachlan noted that he 'gets a rush' out of helping others, and he feels most alive when he helps others. He explained:

> "I think when I'm helping people that's about feeling alive. Also I like running, you know outside and exercising and stuff. So those two things… Also like helping friends and things and then also when I feel like I've been really helped by friends. So helping others but also being helped by others. I just want to be able to be someone who a friend can come and talk to if they have an issue or want to talk to you about something and when they feel like they can come and talk to you and you can really help them in that way and also the same the over way around… when I'm struggling with something and someone who I feel like I can really talk to and that they help me with stuff like that, I find that quite meaningful as well".

When asked what the most personally meaningful aspects of his travel to Peru included, Lachlan replied:

> "Probably the two most meaningful parts were the work we did in the village up in the hills for a couple of days, working in a school, just helping out there. Some people helped in the clinic and the rest of us worked as labourers, mud bricks and stuff, and in the afternoon we just played football with the kids and hung around them and that was really meaningful".

When asked why this was 'meaningful' to him, Lachlan replied:

> "I think it was feeling like you were making a difference and the fact that it didn't actually take that much to make a difference. I think some people were worried that they'd get over there and there wouldn't be anything we could do, but once we got there we all realised that just being there was helping and that what little we could give was helpful and really appreciated".

Lachlan noted that, "being able to help others and see the satisfaction that gave them; that helped me to work out what my purpose is".

Lachlan's portrait has illustrated that he is a confident person with strong values; he holds a strong Christian faith that provides meaning and purpose within his life. Travel to Peru 'opened Lachlan's eyes' and helped give him a perspective of how other people live. It helped him with his decision to choose law and international relations at university. As a young man, relatively new to the university environment, Lachlan feels that it may take some time for the 'full benefits' of his travel to Peru to materialise. He does know however, that as a Christian, helping others is something he is passionate about, and he hopes to undertake similar travel in the future. Conversations between Lachlan and myself were conducted over the phone due to the physical distance between us. Lachlan made no changes to this portrait and said that it was "well done". I found Lachlan personable and thus a rapport was established quickly. I sought further exploration of Lachlan's story in further detail, but he ceased participation noting that he, "Had to concentrate fully on preparing his assignments and upcoming exams".

Summary Discussion.

Analysis of the common findings running through each of the above portraits derived a number of points of discussion pertinent to the thesis aim. This section therefore notes key similarities and differences between the portraits of those who viewed their spirituality as inextricably linked with their faith.

For those who identified themselves as a devout follower of their faith (Laura, Sharen, Amy, Rhys and Lachlan), their life purpose and meaning is almost wholly influenced by their religious faith; in this case, as a Christian. Specifically, their faith shapes their moral rules and viewpoints; their reasoning; their spiritual expression; and provides personal meaning and importance. This finding supports the literature which argues that religious faith can in large part, for those who are devout believers; shape all aspects of one's spirituality, including, for example, one's values; behaviour; personality; motivations; and

political persuasions (Emerson, 1996; Jurin & Hutchinson, 2005). The five Christian research participants, thus, viewed spirituality as wholly synonymous with their religion, and in particular, viewed their spirituality as involving a deep and meaningful connection with God, finding meaning in life, and forming meaningful relationships within the world. Laura, for example, viewed spirituality as, "Involving finding meaning in life in terms of relationships with God and others, with why we are here, and what counts". Most of the questions asked of the Christian research participants were answered in a manner that was grounded in their faith.

While viewing their own spirituality as inextricably linked with their faith in God, Laura, Sharen and Amy also viewed spirituality as being something that unites humanity; it transcends race, religion, sexuality, gender and age. Sharen, for example, described that, for her, spirituality "involves having a link to something or having a bond with somebody or a situation or place… this doesn't necessarily have to have any Christian connotations because you could have a spiritual connection while sitting in the bush and having tuis around you". Laura, Sharen and Amy noted that they evidenced 'universal' activities such as soccer, marbles and the importance of family and faith during their travel with Hands Up Holidays; for them this 'shared humanity' represented spirituality.

However, while each of these religious participants identified themselves as Christian, their personal expression of Christianity and their beliefs differed. Amy, and to a certain extent, Laura viewed deriving meaning and purpose within their life as being outside their control. It was not for them to determine; rather, God would decide this. Further, it was not for Laura, Amy or Rhys to determine how to behave or how to determine what was meaningful to them; they strongly believed God guided all their decisions and behaviour, and that answers were contained in Scripture. For example, Amy commented, "I haven't really thought about the purpose of my life, what will happen, will happen, God will shape this for me". As a researcher, I thus felt it appropriate to alter my line of questioning from 'What do you feel your life purpose is?' to, 'What do you believe God wants within your life?' In contrast, Sharen was different as she believed that, "While God may put the paths in front of me, it is still for me to decide which path to

take". Laura and Amy illustrated that many individuals live their life primarily by following the objective doctrine of religion. However, the portraits reveal that one also experiences their faith and spirituality subjectively. For example, Sharen explained how she fosters her relationship with God by being with nature, whilst Laura discussed the personal importance of 'spiritual correction', that is, attending specific services at church where she ensures her, "Life purpose is still on track".

As discussed in Chapter 2, the traditional view of how to derive personal meaning within life has recently fragmented, primarily through the decline in religious belief, in certain parts of the world. After the Renaissance and Enlightenment, Naugle (2002) notes that human beings "at large have rejected any overarching ontic or epistemic authorities and set themselves up autonomously as the *acknowledged* legislators of the world… now they claim an essentially divine prerogative to conceptualise reality and shape the nature of life as they please" (p.xvi). While Sharen had not rejected the authority of the Church, she still felt that ultimately, it was for her to determine how she lived her life. Thus, even within Christianity, the expression of faith has become an increasingly personal construct.

Laura, Amy and Sharen all brought up the word 'spirituality' unprompted. For them, it was a concept that they strongly identified with and which strongly influenced their travel experiences. When I continued discussing the concept of spirituality with these research participants I experienced positive responses. Laura, for example, noted, "Wow, I really didn't think the conversation would go this way, but I love it". She then challenged me "before I go on, I want to know about your views towards spirituality". I noted that I believed I am a spiritual person, and for me, spirituality involved ultimate meaning, purpose and connection in life. Specifically I noted that I derived life purpose primarily from God and family. Sharen similarly noted that this was a concept she enjoyed; she said, "Great conversation this! Spirituality, that's my passion, I love talking about this stuff". Conversely, Rhys discussed how 'faith' holds greater personal meaning than 'spirituality'. Thus, discussion of their 'spirituality' was personally significant to them.

The portraits illustrate that each of the above research participants actively seek to transcend themselves. Specifically, they all are high achievers who strive to better themselves. Laura, for example, attends spiritual correction to improve her understanding of her faith and noted she has become 'frustrated' at people who feel they have achieved everything within life. To her, the 'spiritual quest' is unending: she commented, "There is always something we can learn, something we can do to better ourselves". In contrast, Amy commented, that "I am completely spiritually fulfilled", but did later mention that she still can learn a great deal about her faith. Laura stressed that she seeks spiritual growth, not because she is 'lost'; rather, she seeks self-improvement; Sharen, Rhys and Lachlan likewise. Thus, these individuals could conceivably be considered to be seeking self-actualisation on Maslow's (1964) Hierarchy of Needs.

Each research participant also discussed that, at times, they found it difficult to express their faith in modern society. The most extreme example of this was provided by Sharen, who described how her husband lost a job because of his faith - "he was asked to take the lead for another client and he had to see to all her needs and those being *any* needs she might have". Others noted that it was often difficult to express their Christian values in a secular society. Amy, for example, explained "sometimes you do feel alone, and that your views are not the norm". These findings are similar to those of other studies who note that, increasingly, those of a religious faith feel challenged in modern life (Zinnbauer et al., 1999).

A number of additional findings pertinent to the research aim were revealed through analysis of the above portraits. These points of discussion are also constituent elements of many of the portraits presented in the following pages. Thus, to avoid repetition of discussion, they are presented in summary form here. A deeper discussion of these issues is presented in Chapter 6, where the key findings of all 11 portraits are synthesised.

Key points of discussion arising from the analysis of the above portraits include; first, each Christian research participant differed in the personal meaning they had derived from their travel experiences with Hands Up Holidays. Laura, Sharen and Rhys viewed their travel as a personal pilgrimage and as deeply

spiritual; they were seeking to affirm their relationship with God. Conversely, Amy derived little personal meaning from her travel with Hands Up Holiday and viewed her travel as "no more spiritual than everyday life". The portraits illustrate that each research participant's spirituality influenced all aspects of their travel. They could not 'leave' their spirituality behind when engaging in travel with Hands Up Holidays. For example, Sharen commented, "God was with me every moment I was there". Thus, their travel and spirituality are inextricably linked".

Second, all of the Christian research participants equated spirituality with mental well-being. Specifically, they held few fears, anxieties, and hold powerful affirmations that guide their life. Third, each of the Christian research participants noted that travel with Hands Up Holidays represented a personal challenge; specifically through seeking and encountering adversity during their travels, Laura, Sharen Amy, Lachlan and Rhys sought to explore their identity and/or to transcend themselves. That engaging one's spirituality can be an uncomfortable or risky activity was evidenced. Fourth, each research participant sought to experience the 'other' in some form; specifically, they wished to experience how other cultures lived to inform their own lifestyles. Themes of experiencing poverty and a different way of living were common.

Fourthly, the portraits suggest a possible link between spirituality and 'ethical' travel, and specifically, faith and ethical travel. Specifically, those of a Christian faith felt driven to travel with Hands Up Holidays to 'live their faith'. Fifthly, Laura and Sharen viewed travel with Hands Up Holidays as an essential part of responsible parenting. Specifically they view much of Western society as 'meaningless', and thus, felt it imperative to travel with their children to instil them with values and meaning. Sixth, the portraits illustrate that each Christian research participant had asked personal questions pertaining to what is meaningful within their life. Both Laura and Sharen discussed a number of 'defining' moments in their lives that led them to ask questions of personal meaning, and to begin or continue their quests for meaning; the fluidity of spirituality is illustrated through discussion of these defining moments. In particular, the above portraits illustrated that faith can be subjectively questioned during these defining moments, and it is the subjective as well as the objective that forms the nature of

143

the spiritual journey through travel. To illustrate, Laura's portrait evidenced how she became very angry with God after the death of her sister. Rhys experienced a similar personal tragedy, the passing of his brother in an accident; however unlike Laura, he did not question God during this time, rather, he commented, "I was so close to God during this time and felt comforted by Him". This example further illustrates the influence of 'spirituality' on one's life experiences; two individuals encountering similar experiences will, because of their 'spirituality' always perceive and react to them differently. Additionally, this example illustrates that two people, while sharing the same religious faith, and perhaps sharing the same religious doctrines, also have a personal (subjective) relationship with their deity(ies). The relationship is imbued with personal significance.

Research Participants Who View Their Spirituality as Primarily Connecting with Self, Others, or Nature (Charlotte, Amber, Brendon and Karen).

The following four portraits offer a different narrative to the previous ones. Through data analysis, it was revealed that Charlotte, Amber, Brendon and Karen, while perhaps believing in, or not dismissing the idea of 'God', did not view their 'spirituality' as being strongly influenced by their personal faith. Rather, they derived life meaning and purpose primarily from understanding and developing self, and forming relationships with nature and/or other people or things. Thus, the personal meaning they derived from their travel with Hands Up Holidays was not primarily driven by any particular religious faith.

5.7: CHARLOTTE'S PORTRAIT.

Charlotte is a 57 year-old woman from Taupo (in the North Island of New Zealand) who travelled with Hands Up Hoildays to Peru and Ecuador in 2007. Charlotte regards herself as a "highly spiritual person", and in particular finds connection with nature. This connection is apparent around Charlotte's home; she lives in relative seclusion surrounded by nature, and her birds "which I love dearly". 'Spirituality' is a concept that Charlotte holds as, "very important as it is a large part of my life". She notes that she does not practice religion strongly but

can relate to certain aspects of it and believes in it. She went to Sunday School as a child and believes, "that the Ten Commandments in broad terms, are the basis for general day to day living; do unto your neighbour as you'd have done unto yourself etc. That's how I try and live my life". Charlotte is involved in a literacy support programme and a drug education programme, has always been anti drugs - a stance reinforced more recently by an incident involving an acquaintance of hers. In recent times, Charlotte has undergone a number of difficulties, such as the passing of a family member and personal illness; while she says she has a number of goals in life, such as being involved in more voluntary work, she notes these difficulties have put all her goal-setting "on hold". Charlotte believes that her travel with Hands Up Holidays allowed her to "refocus my spirituality, because for a while, I had lost it". She believes she saw the 'real' Peru, "not just the Peru tourism operators wanted to portray". She was previously involved in the tourism industry and commented that "true authenticity is very difficult to achieve". Charlotte's portrait explores how her travel to Peru helped her re-discover her inner 'self', and how her own strong spirituality was displayed through her travel experiences. It is pertinent to note that, at Charlotte's request, there are a number of issues I cannot discuss within this thesis; issues that would have provided greater insight into her life, and the personal meaning travel with Hands Up Holidays held to her. Additionally, Charlotte made a number of edits to the original portrait I presented to her. What follows is a rich account of the conversations I held with Charlotte - with the caveat that this portrait contains certain 'silences'. The respect of Charlotte's views was ethically of paramount importance to me and the following portrait has been validated and approved by her.

For Charlotte, family is "most definitely" the most important thing in her life. She also has a strong focus on self-development, and feels "very much at home" in nature; she explained:

> "Peace, and inner contentment is very important – particularly inner self. Helping preserve the forest and natural environment, the lake and all the beauty around me is important to me. I get a lot of enjoyment from tramping in the natural environment and connecting with the earth. In my life, my goal is to give back something. I am

of the opinion that that is the best way that we can influence the world. Just to be better people. I love my birds and being in the bush – just generally anything to do with the Earth. If I could I'd live on a farm, nature is an important part of my spirituality, it's where I'm at peace".

Charlotte notes that she cannot live on a farm "because I do not have the money, it is too expensive for me". When asked how she tries - and brings - peace and inner contentment within her life, Charlotte illustrated her deep personal connection with nature; she explained:

> "Well normally I walk every morning but I actually haven't been that well recently. I go to the gym probably five or six times a week. At the moment I keep as much stress away from my life as I can and because I come and go a lot from Taupo, at times I get very involved in things, and other times I don't get very involved. I do relief motel work and I travel out of town, which gives me the variety I enjoy. I also like to "go bush" with my pack and get away. I also love fishing, the ocean and the lake. I eat well, live healthily. Most of the houses that I've lived in, I have grown veggies and I have had fruit trees. As a little girl I was taught by my grandparents about the importance of growing vegetables and trees, and my mother reinforced those same things which I guess influenced my life's journey".

During her travel to Peru, Charlotte was involved in a highly stressful situation; one of her travel companions became seriously ill. When asked how she managed this situation, she noted that she is able to cope in times of stress because of her deep spirituality:

> "Well in the case of my friend's illness, you just go into a different mode. You're like a machine, you know what's got to be done and you get on and do it. It's like business, you have to make decisions that you don't like to do or wouldn't choose to do but they've got to be done. You get on and do them and deal with it. So you are always going to have stress in your life and a degree of stress is good for you and you deal with it. You must. I have done a lot of yoga though I'm currently not doing it. With yoga you meditate. I believe I'm a very spiritual person, and while I'm not always practising or living it, in general terms, I do - you can probably see from looking around here I've got all sorts of things, I mean I burn candles at night simply because I like the atmosphere, it's calming. I have music that I listen to that is calming. If I'm hugely stressed I will seek out those sorts of things and make sure I'm not around anybody who will make me stressed. I believe that your surroundings, whilst they don't have to

be the best, they have to give you peace, you have to feel that inner calmness around you, but I know you can't always do this because life is not always like that".

Charlotte's house is full of items that contain personal meaning to her; a number of ornaments, statues, rocks and shells fill her house and surrounding area. She explains that every item holds personal meaning and has a story behind it:

"Yes, everything that is in my house holds personal meaning; I don't keep anything unless it does. It's a very busy house and people who come around always say 'Oh my God! Look at all these things', but everything has meaning for me. Everything in here I could tell you a story about, and that is really important to me. I think it's important to teach the children the value of memories and the value of meaning. It is such a throw-away society today. If something breaks, no worries just go out and buy another one. Everything is chuck out, chuck out, even relationships are chuck out, if it doesn't work, just move on, on to the next one, and they are just not my kind of my values. I'm not saying I am right, but they are my values and beliefs. I find it really difficult to throw out things that I feel have meaning".

When asked what she means by 'everything in the house has a story', Charlotte replied:

"Everything here has been given to me by someone who has chosen it, so it's been given with love and consideration of and towards me".

"So I collect shells, I walk along the beach a lot, so I can tell you about all my shells - or I collect rocks, and I have them all around here. In years gone by we had lots of businesses - just looking at that clock for example - the timber came from a building that we demolished and the clock was made for us as a memory of a job well done'.

Charlotte stated a number of times that she is "a very spiritual person; that is something I really believe". When asked to explain what this meant to her, Charlotte explained that 'spirituality' has always formed an important part of her life. Relatives taught her at a very young age, that it was an important part of life: she explained:

"As a very young girl, I was lucky enough to be around relatives who "believed".... it's a very broad subject. I believe in listening to "the monkey on your shoulder" and the voices in your head, you can call it what you like. I think we're all blessed with intuition and I think our minds tell us a lot if we only would listen to it. That assisted me a lot in South America through that hard time (friend's illness) because I didn't know what to do, I was amongst non-English speaking people and I had to stop and think. So spirituality, for me? It encompasses so many things. But it's listening to your instincts. I could take it a lot further than that. I believe that the power of the mind is huge and part of that power of the mind is willpower - the power that the mind has over your body can influence a situation".

When asked to explain further, Charlotte replied:

"It allows me a peace that can otherwise be hard to find. A lot of people say why do you live here, it's so isolated, it's very private and you're on your own and don't you feel scared? But I don't and maybe I'm lucky. There's so many trees here and they're large and the contractor said to me, 'come on Charlotte, cut down these blimmin trees and I said 'no, where will my birds go?' You've got to look after nature and other people. Of course, you don't 'have' to but I believe you do. Spirituality, I mean I could take it an awful lot further. I felt incredibly in tune on a spiritual level in Africa. I can't explain it, it was simply amazing, an absolute contentment".

When asked why she felt 'incredibly in tune on a spiritual level in Africa', Charlotte noted:

"Spirituality to me is freedom, contentment, peace, and I'd gladly go back to Africa. I think South America is actually much safer than Africa from many angles so I don't know if I'd go and work in Africa. I really liked South America and the people were quite different to the African people. I found the South American people quite sombre, and I couldn't quite work that out. They didn't smile much and that bothered me on a spiritual level, because you don't need money to be happy (though I concede you do need a certain amount and they have so little) but I wondered why they don't smile. The children I saw though were filled with joy, what we were doing for them made them smile. I think kids worldwide seem to smile more than adults".

Charlotte was asked how she fosters her spirituality; she answered:

"I studied a lot when I was younger and read about earth related things. Another interest of mine is trace elements and minerals, and the effects of them or lack of them in all life in all kingdoms. Health is really important to me. Health and fitness, and to me spirituality are all in one basket, it's a matter of getting the balance right. Balance is really important in life. We all need to make money and you do it in a way that you can best do it without being offensive where you can. But you've still got to make a dollar, you still have to do the hard yards. I believe in working hard".

In addition to assisting her with dealing with the illness of a travel companion, Charlotte shared another example of how she felt her spirituality assisted her during her travel; she explains:

"In Ecuador, the day I was leaving, I met an American businessman in the hotel and we were both killing time, and he couldn't believe that I had walked the road to the hospital three, four, five times a day on my own and not been mugged. He had a lot of staff at this hotel who would go there on their days off and he said there was no staff member going through that area that hadn't been mugged, and this was on the way to the hospital. And I'd done it for weeks and I guess I was lucky but there were times when I felt uncomfortable and you sense something wrong, you listen to your senses and you don't ignore them. And I would go into a shop, and I'm not saying I was going to be mugged but it was interesting listening to this bloke at the end and I did wonder about the spirituality of it, what he was saying confirmed it. That kind of thing, I believe the answers are there; you just have to look for them. You just have to dig deeper".

Charlotte believes 'intuition' is a key element of her spirituality and that she also may have psychic powers. She used the word 'intuition' a number of times throughout our conversations and she feels intuition keeps her safe and helps her to determine whether "something is right from me". She explained:

"I've done a lot of reading and I believe and I've been told many times that I have psychic powers and probably I do. I've never sort of gone into that. Maybe I will one day. I've never followed through with that because I have done other things. It's a similar kind of thing to what I am trying to say to you".

Charlotte notes that she often feels an 'aura' about people or places; "I know that when I walk into a room, I can think ooh [shivers], this isn't a good feeling, or vice versa".

Recently, Charlotte has encountered a number of difficult times and she felt her spirituality 'left' her to an extent. I am not able to explain the details of these difficult times in this thesis. Charlotte explains how her travel with Hands Up Holidays helped her to re-discover her spirituality:

> "I think spirituality can come and go in your life, or during your lifetime. Hands Up Hoildays afforded me memories of how important it is to have spirituality in my life. And for a while I got a little lost, so that holiday particularly did that for me, which I'm very grateful for. And it gave me a lot of peace, and I don't know if it affects anybody else in that way but for me it had a huge impact on me. It re-centred what's important for me. I guess, I feel very fortunate to have these spiritual feelings in my life for a long time, but sometimes you get caught up in the day-to-day aspects of life and feel that you lose track of what's important to you".

Charlotte also described how her travel to Peru gave her time to reflect and re-centre her life. It gave her space away from her everyday world and allowed her time to consider her life from a wider perspective; she explained:

> "There were moments in Peru that were spiritual. When you are with a group of people…. I think I was really lucky because I did the single supplement and because we had an odd number of people in our group. Initially I thought oh stink I'm on my own. But that turned out to be a very big plus because at night I could take time to sit and think about my day without everyone yakking in my ear and that was when I was able to not only appreciate what we'd done from a tourist point of view, and the beauty of the scenery or whatever, but I could actually think of those experiences on a spiritual level. Because when you are with a group you are just go, go, go, go, go, and you really don't have any time to collect your thoughts; you've always got someone yakking to you. But being by myself gave me that privilege of quiet time".

For Charlotte, there were a number of highlights of her travel to Peru, indeed, even undertaking the travel gave her personal satisfaction:

> "I guess in the village, being with children, and knowing what I was doing was worthwhile and seeing the joy on their faces. And achieving the Inca Trail because I have always loved tramping and I could tick off another great tramp. And because I was sick when I came back from Africa I nearly didn't make this trip. So I thought that achieving it was a huge challenge".

Charlotte mentioned that any travel to the developing world, and particularly, any travel that involves voluntary work "must involve an element of spirituality for some people; otherwise I can't imagine why people would want to do it". When asked to clarify, Charlotte said:

> "I mean - the conditions are not good in a lot of situations. The conditions weren't good, but Peru for me was far easier "condition wise." We were staying at hotels in Peru. I rarely stay in hotels, I rough it, I choose to rough it. So from that respect Peru was very easy for me. I like to live how other people live. I'm not saying I always rough it, but I'm a camper so I'm used to it. But I like to do it so I can learn about the people and the land where I visit. I don't want to stay in the hotel in the city because what am I going to learn about the people and the land there?"

Charlotte's portrait has illustrated the strong connection she holds with nature, and herself; this for her represents 'spirituality'. It is "being in-tune with oneself and achieving balance with yourself". She found travel to Peru deeply spiritual and views spirituality as an integral part of her identity and her well-being. Conversations with Charlotte were friendly, but I found certain aspects of them uncomfortable. It was clear Charlotte was experiencing a difficult situation within her life, which she did not want me to elaborate upon in this thesis. I was told before my first conversation that I was not to ask about this and to bear this in mind while I was talking with her. While respecting this, I felt nervous with Charlotte; establishing rapport was difficult on this occasion. I believed she was still 'hurt' when talking with me, and was trying to hide her emotion. On one occasion when talking with Charlotte, there was no lighting in the house, and a thunderstorm raged outside; this made me feel uncomfortable. Charlotte's body language was, at times, defensive, as she often crossed her arms and moved back into her seat. I have recently talked to Charlotte and I am aware that she is still experiencing 'difficulties' within her life. I determined that conversations with

Charlotte raised a number of questions with regards to the study of spirituality, particularly with regards to the emotional toll the exploration of this concept can have on both researcher and research participant. This issue is discussed further in Chapter 7.

5.8: AMBER'S PORTRAIT.

Amber is a 53-year-old woman from Kinloch (in the North Island of New Zealand) who travelled with Hands Up Holidays to Peru in September 2007. Amber's travel represented the fulfilment of a personal dream. Amber had always wanted to travel to Peru and complete the Inca Trail. Life circumstances, such as an early marriage, and children, meant that she needed to put her dream 'on hold' until a time that was more appropriate for her. She now feels she is entering a stage of her life where she can have "more me time and do things that I want to do". Recently, she has gone back to school, embarked on travel she has always wanted to, and is engaging in a greater level of voluntary work. She explains that she is now at a lifestage where she can, "Put myself first occasionally" and that, "Travel to Peru was all part of that, I decided I'm going to do this now, I'm able to, so it's time for something for me". She explained that her purpose in life has "largely been defined by my life circumstances". She explained:

> "I'm not sure I've reached my potential in life because of life's circumstances but I'm perfectly happy with my lot. Now is the time for me, and for me to do my travel and things. But because I've left it to this age, I don't know how my health is going to go or anything, so I have to make the most of it over the next few years but I can't think like that either because it comes back down to the power of the mind. So, my life circumstances, getting married, having a family, buying a farm, all this sort of stuff, I wouldn't change any of that but had things been different, I probably would have liked to, and this has been spurred on from my trip in Peru, I want to do more of these things for myself. I've always wanted to do Volunteer Services Abroad even when I was a lot younger, but it wasn't to be because I got kids and it just wasn't to be. That's your whole family involved and with my husband that's just not his scene so it would never have worked. But I have the chance now that all the kids have left home and Sally is now in Australia, I can start".

Amber has experienced a number of difficult times within her life and notes these have "made me quite a strong person really, I don't suffer fools with anyone". When asked if she could share the toughest moment in her life and how she coped with this, Amber discussed that for her, the toughest moments in life come when you see someone else struggling and feel you cannot do a lot for them. She explained that overcoming these times builds character and strength, and that she now "takes things as they come… I don't get stressed or anxious very much anymore because you just have to take things as they come". Amber continued:

> "The toughest time I've had was probably coping with my son who was an epileptic in the beginning. That was pretty demanding, and not being happy with him being on medication, I would have rather he had been on natural remedies. That was a bit stressful because I had 3 other kids. Another time would be when my son started suffering from depression. There are times there when I thought 'Oh my God am I doing the right thing?' Because I had boundaries but with kids like that you can't always force the boundaries because you don't know which way they're going to go or how they're going to cope. It was like walking on broken glass for a few years in lots of ways, and now the same thing about Sally. I guess the hardest things are really looking at other people and not being able to completely help them. There were times with Peter when he started having his seizures, he was 11 months, I had to say thank God for my oldest son, because Noel was a hard worker and was never at home and Colin was only 9 or 10 and he'd be the one that I'd have to say go and ring the ambulance or come and give me a hand or whatever. Until I got used to them, but I never got used to them, but you accept them. Then I took him to acupuncture and he came right. He's still got a short fuse but man alive! Nothing like he used to be".

Amber noted that her strong intuition assisted in helping her son with his illness. Like Charlotte, 'intuition' and 'perception' were concepts that Amber discussed a number of times throughout our conversations, and she mentioned, "listening to that intuition is so important, I just get that feeling when something is wrong or right". She commented on one occasion where she followed her intuition; her son was diagnosed with epilepsy and was not coping well. Amber reported:

> "I blame the drugs because a lot of the problems he had were because of the drugs he was on. I got sick of the drugs. I just didn't like it and I took him to acupuncture, a proper Chinese guy and he

told me to take him off the drugs. I'd been dying to do that but I didn't have the guts to do it on my own. He had a couple of really good seizures after that and had to have lumber-puncture but he's had none since. They decided in the end that his epilepsy was probably heightened by the drugs he was on and I was thinking well tell me something I don't know! I've known that since the beginning. But you have to do what you feel is right. You get a gut feeling and you have to go with it. I just knew it was just not right. Intuition I remember taking him back to the doctor and he said how's he going, and I said have a look at your records, he's hardly come to see you since he's been off the drugs – that tells you something. I don't think the specialist was too impressed, but the proof is in the pudding".

Amber admits that "I've never asked myself what the purpose of my life is", but noted that she felt it had changed over time. She notes that now, perhaps her purpose in life is to experience meaningful travel. She talked further about "now being the time to do things for me". She continued:

"For me, in the beginning the purpose of my life was to have a family and rear them the best I could. My purpose was to put everything into my kids, and I did. Hopefully I did the right things, probably not at times. Then it became, because I drive a bus, you get attached to the kids, and once again I'm still there with the kids and my grandchildren. They've really been the main purpose of my life but now I feel I need to back away from that a little bit, not completely because I don't think I could, they mean too much to me to totally back away, but I need to do some things myself. So that's where this travel bit will come in. I look forward, I never look back, it's not a good thing I think, I mean I've got no reason not to look back but you've got to start looking forward otherwise you just dwell on things".

Recently, Amber has spent a great deal of time caring for her granddaughter, Sally who has experienced a tough period in her life. Sally was originally planning on travelling with Amber to Peru, but because of certain personal issues that, at Amber's request cannot be revealed within this portrait, she could not do so. As a result, Amber spent much of her time in Peru thinking about Sally back home in New Zealand. She commented a number of times "I kept thinking about her because she should have been there, we should have been doing this together

but we weren't". This portrait will explain how, for Amber, the most meaningful part of her travel to Peru was a chance encounter with a girl named Sally.

Amber views herself as a 'spiritual' person but doesn't necessarily relate spirituality to religion. Although she attended Sunday School as a girl, Amber notes that "I'm not a great one for prayer". Amber explains that she faded away from the church because she had other commitments on a Sunday, and "if I'm going to do religion I'll do it on my terms". However, she mentioned that during a particular time of stress she did turn to prayer; she explained, "There was a time where you would call it prayer I guess. It's just thoughts really. It was stressful having my daughter in a relationship that I wasn't comfortable with; I was worried about the kids".

Amber discussed that while she found spirituality difficult to define, she feels she is a spiritual person. She explained that spirituality for her represents intuition, perception, peace, acceptance and compassion. She explained:

> "Its perception, I guess I am quite perceptive, so I don't know whether you'd call that spirituality or not, but I think I feel for people, if you know what I mean. It's that empathy, so that's why I said perception – you pick up on things. So you then accept what ever is happening, and let it go, out of your mind, and move on. I think I put their peace as well because when you accept things and let them go, it should give you a peace of mind. It's acceptance that some things just happen in life and you just have to accept what's happened and get on with it. Or let it go, whatever. Through doing this it gives you peace".

> "I think I am quite compassionate, I think I'm quite a feeling person. I don't know whether that's spirituality but I perceive things, and I don't like to judge people, but I have to admit as I've got older, I've got a little bit worse at that. But I think you do, as you get older I've got a little bit more judgemental, I've heard other people say the same thing. I probably suffer fools a little bit less than what I used to as a younger person, and I don't hang around people who like to talk about themselves a lot, I know there's a reason for that, but sometimes I just don't need that stuff. It's not that I don't care, there's just other stuff that I think are more important. But I'd never hurt anybody or deliberately let anybody down, I don't really know what spirituality is, I don't know how I know I am spiritual, but I just sense that I am".

When asked how she is able to 'let things go', Amber explained how she has developed coping techniques; "It's a matter of having no regrets, things happen and you just have to get on with them". She explained her coping technique in detail:

> "It just comes down to acceptance that something has happened. I've got a new technique that I've just started going through, I did it not long ago because every time I used to go over the back roads through Tauranga I used to get the shudders every time I went over this certain bridge. I knew my son had thrown a cat over there that he'd killed. It was very sick and it was done humanely but I just thought about that cat and I had actually asked him to do it and it always played on my mind because the cat was sick and I thought he has to put it out of its misery, but oh yuck! So every time I go over that bridge because I know that's where he put the body, I used to just get the shudders because I thought, oh that poor cat! It's funny you should bring this up because I was thinking about it last night because I'm going to Tauranga tomorrow night and the last time I went over there, as I was driving up to the bridge I was telling myself I am sick to death of this jolly cat bothering me, just let it go, just get away and leave me alone sort of thing and the last couple of times I've been away over there I haven't even thought about it. But I thought about it last night and I said I wonder what's going to happen, but whatever happens I must put it out of my mind. When I go again, I must put it out of mind, that's what I'm going to do, whatever happens, get it out of my mind. A lot of that I used to learn to do through meditation and yoga, which I hadn't done much of over the last couple of years but want to get back into it now".

Amber explained how yoga, and finding a quiet place in nature allows her to 're-centre' and 'reflect' upon things. It gives her a new energy to deal with things in her life. She also mentioned how yoga helps her stay 'in-tune' with her intuition and inner-peace. She commented:

> "Through what I've learnt through yoga, I keep the principles now really and that's how I'm able to keep calm and let things go. It's all in the mind; it's amazing what you can do with the top two inches. Before I was doing yoga, I would find water restful or at least peaceful. I had four kids and I had a friend who lost her husband so we spent a lot of time at home for about three years. Sometimes with seven kids there in a wee house, every now and then I'd think 'oh God!' So I just used to go and have a walk up into the natives or I'd get in the car and drive around the block.

> Once or twice I'd come down to Taupo and I'd buy an ice-cream and a magazine and just sit down at the lake and turn around and go home, and I'd be fine, just cleared the mind. There's a real energy in nature, with the bush and the trees and garden".

Amber regarded certain aspects of her travel to Peru as 'spiritual'. She found herself 'inspired', 'uplifted', and 'energised' by certain things she saw. She also commented that, "the look on the children's faces, you could say that was spiritual because it was really inspiring". She explains:

> "We went up this shocking road up to this little village and there are these people there that have just got nothing really. They have homes and they've done a lot of work up there improving the homes in the last three years, this voluntary group that's up there. Getting the school and everything going up there, but they just seemed to be so happy. We went up there to the craft day and the room was just full of these people and it was just their faces, and their eyes. They were just… you just looked at them and thought this is absolutely wonderful. The people that have done the voluntary work have encouraged them to use their craft to try and sell it and improve their lot. So this was spiritual for me, because it's pretty high up there and they just had so little. I've got a photo of the kids out there cleaning their teeth; they've never cleaned their teeth before until they brought all these toothbrushes out there and they're just outside and they're all happy out there cleaning their teeth. They were just really happy, and gleeful. Yeah, that was amazing, and really memorable".

Amber noted the most meaningful memory she has of Peru came through a chance encounter with a little girl in Peru named Sally. Sally is also the name of Amber's granddaughter who was unable to travel to Peru due to personal difficulties, and over recent years Amber and Sally (her granddaughter) have built a very strong bond with each other. Sally has recently moved to Australia, and Amber recalled some fond moments with her. She reminisced:

> "I like to be involved. That's the thing I'm going to miss about Sally. I could never have imagined that I would be taking kids to these blinkin' rock festivals, the Bomb Shelter in Rotorua where they play, and in Tauranga. I've often gone to Stage Challenge but then again I was very busy with her hockey because she used to play that and practise. It's really good for you and it just keeps you on your toes. I've really enjoyed having her and I often think about just having her music in my car which is **totally** different to my music, and letting

157

her have it. And continually having to turn down the volume a little bit, and having her sneakily turning it back up again. In the end I said you know I quite like that music now and I'm going to miss that music. It's terrible but you do get used to it and I like music and hers' has a good beat".

Amber explained the personal significance of her encounter with the Peruvian Sally:

"I met a little girl on the islands in Lake Titicaca and her name was Sally, which is my granddaughter's name, who is the one that couldn't go. So I remember buying a big hanging for my wall which I didn't really need but I wanted it explained to me, and it was their family, the mother and the father, and then the daughter, little Sally, at the bottom. And I thought I've got to have that, if not for any other reason than I have to take that home to Sally, and also I grabbed a bit of artwork that she had, starting when she was 2 ½ or 3, selling wares. The wee wee girl was showing us these little paintings, which probably someone else had done but she was selling them for virtually nothing, so you buy them don't you. So cheap! It was special because my Sally wasn't there and she should have been and what a coincidence to go all the way to Peru and meet a little Peruvian girl with a name like Sally, which is certainly not Peruvian or Spanish, or anything like that. I would think it is very much an English name. I don't know where Sally comes from, but to go all that way and then find a little girl called Sally, I just thought well I've got to have that. It was kind of cool… I mean my head just keeps coming back to there. I mean that was amazing anyway but fancy going to the highest lake in the world and finding a Sally in amongst indigenous Indian Peruvians, it is pretty amazing!"

Amber also recounted a touching moment she had with a Peruvian family, a memory she also holds as 'spiritual':

I had bought this painting and I don't remember how much I had paid for it, but it was 30 sol or something which is about $15 or $20, which would be a hell of a lot of money for them. I remember him coming up to me, and he couldn't speak, but he came and held my hands and then was… he was trying to point and really thank me for buying his painting. That was pretty special, pretty neat. I wished I'd got a photo of him but I didn't jolly well think of it at the time. This was the deaf fellow and he had been sponsored by an Australian couple to go to this art college. You could see the glee in his eyes, and the fact that his life was turning around because one person had

decided to sponsor him because he really has a gift. I bought one because of his story. I thought I'll pick one out because of the story behind it and I'll have that painting. So I got that, because of the man and his struggles, and the fact that he'd got this chance and this was like giving him a million dollars.

Amber feels her experiences in Peru, and particularly her encounters with the Peruvian people have changed her life. In particular, they have helped her to, in her opinion, realise the wrongs of a materialistic society, and made her take action within her own life. She notes that her travel in Peru have made her start to 'de-clutter' things in her own life. She said:

> "You see things on television but when you see things in reality it really hits home so it's a real eye-opener. It makes you appreciate what you've got. I suppose that's the biggest impact it's had on me. I'm sure it has changed me. Mainly that it's made me realise just how jolly materialistic we are and how little they've got. And the way some of them live and they seem to be quite happy, I know some of them won't be but they don't know any different. And it's made me want to de-clutter things in my home, and I'm still in the process of doing that, it will happen now with Sally going overseas. I haven't really done anything here but at home it's mad - years and years of stuff there. But some of it is very special because somebody gave me that, do I really want to get rid of it; well no, that was my grandmother's so I won't give away any of that. Perhaps I should hand it to someone else who is in the family and let them appreciate it for a while. I've already started but I'll keep going".

Amber's portrait reveals that she views spirituality as involving intuition, and the power of the mind; it is something intangible to her. For Amber, travel was the fulfilment of a lifelong dream that had been delayed due to an early marriage and caring for others. I found Amber very warm and personable. She made scones and pumpkin soup for me each time I visited her, and seemed to enjoy discussions with me. I felt that Amber was 'healing' through conversing with me about certain issues. After the tape stopped, on both occasions when I was in Amber's house, Amber talked to me for approximately half an hour about Sally. As I am of a similar age to Sally, I felt that Amber wanted my advice about some troubling subjects. I noted in my diary the impact of these conversations on me and noted that they had an emotional toll on me. I often found myself thinking about these

conversations and worrying for Amber. As a postscript to this portrait, I have subsequently conversed with Amber and she explained that Sally has moved back home with her. While Amber has a strong connection with Sally and enjoys caring for her, she notes that her travel aspirations have again been placed on hold. Amber notes that she is, "Continuing to declutter… it is really good actually, it's the right thing to do, I don't need all that junk anymore… it gives me more space and adds to the feeling of peace really".

5.9: BRENDON'S PORTRAIT.

Brendon is a 30 year-old man from the United States of America, who travelled by himself with Hands Up Holidays to Morocco in March 2007. Brendon had travelled to Morocco two years earlier with his work, and wanted to return, to 'give something back', and experience more of the 'authentic' Morocco. He thus told Hands Up Holidays that he would like to be accommodated in hostels and to live with local families. Brendon thought that if he stayed in hotels he would be 'sheltered' from "the people that I really want to meet and work with". Brendon was impressed with Hands Up Holidays because, "they let me be so flexible in terms of organising my travel, I could just tell them this is what I want to do, and they treated me as an individual". He is an engineer working for a pharmaceutical company; a job that "involves me travelling for around eight months of the year". Brendon is also a practicing Catholic but does not feel his faith has had a major role in prompting him to travel, "there are some things I feel strongly about and things that I disagree about within religion, but I wouldn't say it was a major motivation in my travelling". Through his Church he has participated in a number of voluntary projects, such as feeding the homeless, and cleaning parks; he feels helping others out not only "makes me feel good inside", but could be his 'calling' in life. He explains, "if I can bring a smile to somebody's face that's in trouble, that needs help in some way – is that what I'm here for? Is that what we're here for on earth?" Brendon views himself as "a happy, friendly, open, adventurous guy… also technical, I love to draw, and I'm very active athletically; baseball, American football, and I wrestled for twelve years also".

Brendon has travelled extensively throughout Asia, Europe, North and South America, Africa and The Middle East; he describes travelling as "a passion", and notes that through being single, without children, and financially successful, he is able to undertake a high level of international travel. Through travel, Brendon has learnt a great deal about himself; changed his perspective on what gives him meaning and purpose in life; developed a number of deep connections, with self and other people; and been able to follow his 'calling', which he feels is being able to help others in need and advocate their causes. He has a particular passion for travelling to Third and Developing countries; destinations that place him outside his 'comfort zone'. He explained, "travelling to these places has definitely given me a different perspective on life and I really have learnt a lot about myself. You put yourself in situations where you're nauseous, you don't understand any of the language, you're the only one who speaks English but it's cool, it's a rush". Brendon's portrait explores his 'spirituality', although Brendon notes he doesn't particularly relate to the word. He stated, "I prefer to talk about my purpose and what's important to me rather than spirituality". As such, this portrait discusses how Brendon derives purpose and what is important to him, and the positioning of travel with Hands Up Holidays within this. In discussing with me the personal meaning that he derived from his travel to Morocco, Brendon shared over one hundred photographs that symbolised key aspects of his travel in Morocco. The photographs that held particular personal meaning to Brendon are explored in this portrait.

Brendon's attitude towards what makes life meaningful was shaped at a very young age by his mother and grandparents; he explained:

> "When I was younger, I grew up in a single parent home and I had two brothers and it wasn't the easiest childhood to grow up that way; money was always tight and in my mind, I needed to be successful. At a young age, my mum and my grandparents said, you need to go to college and you need to get a good education and you need to get a good job so that you can support yourself and live the American dream. At a young age, even in high school, that was my motivation. I needed to go to college. It was never a second thought about going to college".

However, while at college, Brendon was exposed to greater diversity and different ways of thinking; he explained how his perspectives became widened, and he made a decision to experience international travel:

> "I grew up in a fairly middle class, all white high school and you go to college and there are people of all races and religion. At first, I think my personality is very open with people so it wasn't a shock for me to go to college but at the same time living in a dorm room with those people that are Indian, that are Muslim, it's definitely a different experience. I think that definitely opened up my mind to believing that there's a lot more out there than just this typical middle class suburbia that I lived in. I dated a girl in college who was from Germany and during the course of our relationship she encouraged me. You know the first time I left the country was to go to Germany and I think that opened my eyes to see that there's a lot more out there than where I grew up and there's a lot of people out there and I want to meet them and I want to learn from them".

Through his experiences in college, and his girlfriend's influence, Brendon caught the "travel-bug" and made travel a top priority in his life. Brendon explains how, through travel, his entire spirituality particularly concerning what is meaningful to him has changed. Specifically, Brendon came to believe that seeking material gain was not meaningful to him. Travel moved him to ask certain key questions within his life, and he determined that it was family and close friends that gave him meaning. He described his, "Search for what is important to me":

> "So my mind went from concentrating on my education and being successful to really wanting to learn what is my purpose really? Getting a successful job I feel that I'm fairly successful, I bought a good house, I have a good family but what's really important to me? You could take my house away from me but would that really make me a different person? No. The travel has really given me, enabled me to explore, who am I? Like I previously stated I was living in England for a year and when I went over there my mum and my brother said, hey you're going to England for a year and we're gonna miss you, are you coming back? And they were afraid I was gonna meet someone over there and get married and never come back. When I was over there, I absolutely had a great time and I still have a lot of friends that I still keep in contact with but it made me realise, well what's really important in my life? And that is my family. At the end of the day, I have friends throughout the world now, but who are the people who are really gonna have your back when you're in trouble and need support? And that is your

family and your close friends". "Coming back to the United States after living in England, I definitely looked at my family in a different way. You really do things you know. I made sure that I pick up the phone and call them, I call my grandma daily, even if it's just to make sure that she's okay and those are the people that raised me and I have much more appreciation. I feel like I'm happy with the person I am today. I'm content with who I am and I owe that to the people that have raised me and it gave me the opportunities to get where I am. So I think, just defining that opportunity to travel and see things that are so different from the way I grew up in the United States and I've been able to get that experience".

Brendon discussed how at the completion of his travel to Morocco, he took time to reflect upon what his travel meant personally to him. Prior to his travel, a number of his close friends had told him they could not understand why he would even consider going to Morocco. He feels they have a misguided perception of the world and now likes to be an 'advocate' for the people of countries such as Morocco and Egypt that he has 'fallen in love' with. He commented:

"I was working there for approximately three weeks and then I took the train from Casablanca to Marrakech. So I think that at the end I wanted to sit back a minute and let you know…(it all sink in). When I was going to Morocco a lot of people I was working with here, as well as friends and family, were very sort of, I don't want to say sceptical but they were like 'why would you want to go there?' Why would you want to go and travel by yourself through a country that is potentially very poor, it's dangerous but I said I think for the type of job that I have where I am travelling by myself frequently for me there were definitely no hesitations, it was a rush, it was an exciting trip and on top of that it **really** does give somebody, speaking personally, it gave me a different perspective on just life".

Brendon discussed that through travel, he has been granted a, "different perspective to my friends and family". He also discussed that "travel has made me really recognize that there are some things that aren't right with my country". He explained:

"I have a career, I went to college, I went to grad school just recently to complete my MBA and I think that a lot of my friends have always thought, what kind of job can I get that I can make more money, and I want a bigger house, I mean I know we're known for

driving big cars and having big houses, and for me travelling to Less Economically Developed Countries, and even living in the UK, people put much more value on their friends, their family, than…in the UK I was very surprised, people got a new job and they were making more money and the first thing that came to their mind was, well I want to take a holiday to New Zealand and to Australia, and my family lives in Brazil. In the United States it would be, well I want to buy this bigger house which I really don't need but I'm going to buy it coz it looks good. So for me, when I was going back to Morocco, it was something I was able to tell my friends".

Brendon explained that some of his family cannot understand why he travels to the places he does. He notes that most people do not travel there "because they are frightened". Specifically, Brendon feels that many people have a 'misconception' about the countries he travelled to. He noted:

"Some of my family, they appreciate what I'm doing and some of my friends are like, hey Brendon this is really cool what you're doing, but it's not for me, I have no interest in leaving the United States and I think that's something that I have come to terms with. I can't talk everybody into doing the things I'm doing; if it's not for them, it's not for them. But since my experience in Morocco I've been promoting it, I want people to experience what I've experienced and to see that there **are** other places in the world that, the way they're perceived by news television in the United States is that that's not a place where people - the majority of them are like travel to 'oh Egypt, yeah I want to go see the pyramids but it's not a place where I want to stay'. They think 'Oh they're all on religion, there's terrorists over there and you're going to be in really nasty situations".

While Brendon notes that travel has helped him learn a lot more about himself, and helped him determine what he finds meaningful in life; he stated that exploring his identity, purpose in life, and what gives him meaning, will probably be an on-going task. He notes that he actively seeks out answers to these questions, and wants to educate and expand his mind as much as he can. He explains:

"I think it's an ongoing process. Do you ever really figure out who you are and what your purpose is? I don't know. I think that something that struck me was that when I went to school and at work, everyone talks about 'Brendon's a great guy, I like working with him' so I really try to look into that and think well what do you

like about working with me? Is it my personality? Am I good at getting back to you in a timely way? You learn a bit about yourself through your friends and your family and one thing about me is that people seem to… I don't have enemies, and people when I walk into a room I talk to people who I've never met before and it's difficult for me to not have a relationship with other people. I feel like there's so much to learn, even when you called me on the phone I thought, this is great. I've never been to New Zealand, I've never spoken with anyone from New Zealand but I'm interested to hear what you have to say and the fact that you're working on your PhD. That's awesome and I think that tourism is the sort of thing that, I know that it's very popular. In the UK travel is number one on most people's lists; in the United States, not so much".

Brendon talked at length about what it was about Morocco that he cherished so much - the landscape, the culture, the food. However, for Brendon, the travel experiences that meant the most to him were the interactions with local, 'average' Moroccans. He came away with a profound feeling that everyone in the world is connected and despite different religions, cultures, sexualities, languages, every person is 'one'. He discussed one particular story that impacted him:

"I was talking with a man who was seeking employment and he had a form to fill out. I'm not sure exactly what it said but it referenced 'are you affiliated with any terrorists'? He was under the impression that because of his beliefs and religion, he was not allowed to leave the country and go to France… Other people say the joke that they think because they wear a turban and have a beard; people will think they are Osama Bin Laden because they think that Americans think that all people with beards are terrorists".

Brendon explained that, "through travel, we all get a greater understanding of each other and that's really important for all getting along". He explained:

"These are people that are normal, everyday people, just like the people that I work with here in the United States and the thing that I have come to terms with is that it doesn't matter where you go in the world, there are good people and there are bad people. You **can't** judge someone because of their religion and their beliefs; it does not mean that they are a bad person".

Throughout our conversations, Brendon mentioned a number of times that he wants to "get the most out of life" and "have no regrets". He explained that to do

this he must "get over my fears". To illustrate, Brendon discussed a travel incident that many people would have found frightening. The following quote also shows Brendon's "frustration at how some in the U.S. are living":

"I could go on for hours about my trip but I have a story about Egypt. I was in the airport and I had not had transportation to get to my hotel. There were two locals that were in front of me in a passport line and they were speaking a little bit of English, I felt comfortable talking to them and I mentioned to them that I'm in this hotel in Cairo, what's the best way to get there? And these two guys they said, oh you know you can take a taxi but you'll get ripped off, you can take a bus but it's not the safest route to go and they said, hey you know my uncle's coming to pick us up, feel free to come with us. Granted, some people may have felt that would be a dangerous situation but I had a good feeling about it and I got in the car with these guys, they took me on the forty-five minute trip to the hotel and when they were dropping me off. They gave me their cell phone number and said if you need anything during your stay here feel free to call. That's like the level of friendliness that doesn't necessarily exist in the United States. I could come back here and ask someone for directions to the nearest city and they'd just walk right by. Again I'm making generalisations, but what I wanted to point out was that travelling has given me the perspective that there are good people out there, there's a lot of good to see in the world".

Brendon found the warmth, hospitality and trust of the local Moroccan families "touching" and "humbling", and, in particular, notes that his volunteering experiences with Moroccan children was "a joy" and "something I will always cherish", and he personally gained a great deal from helping others. He commented "we're helping them, but really they are helping us". He explained further:

"Being able to help those who are less fortunate, in a selfish way **I** feel like I got more out of it, as an American, and being able to help the children in the school understand the alphabet or count to ten in English. I'm sure they did get something out of it, but for me it was a chance to experience their culture. Each night the children's families would allow me to come into their home, they would cook me dinner and **nobody** spoke English but it's amazing, through facial expressions, through gestures, they were excited that I was there. They could tell that I was happy to be there. By eating their food that they would cook and by holding their daughter's hand and letting her walk me around the village that they were living in, they were

166

excited that I was there. This was obviously a lot of excitement for them, but at the same time, it was a really great experience to see that, you know wherever you go you need to take precautions, but it allowed me to see that there are people outside the United States that are decent people that are just like you and I".

For Brendon, the interactions with local children were particularly 'spiritual'. He recalled how the little moments, and 'trust' between him and the local people he encountered were "spiritual, because it shows we are all **people** at the end of the day". He commented:

"They may not have been given all the luxury that we have, that we live in but at the end of the day, they are friendly people who are content with what they have. I live in a nice house, obviously they want one too, they want a bigger house, they want to have all the more money. But at the end of the day they felt comfortable letting their kids run around the village without supervision because it was a safe area to be in. They felt comfortable welcoming **me** into their town and letting me sleep in their house…they didn't know **who** I was, I could have been anyone. But they allowed me that trust. They had that trust in me and in return I was able to give it back to them and something like that, in my mind, has been invaluable. You know, the trip was in March of 2007 but I honestly, my experience there comes up on a weekly basis with either friends or I'll reference something that I've done there. It's an amazing…I can't speak enough about it".

While Brendon finds it "very difficult" to pick out any particular highlights of his travel to Morocco, he again expressed how "moved" he felt from his interaction with the Moroccan children; he explained:

"If I was to pick out one highlight, for me, one of the coolest things was, I was actually assisting to build a one-room classroom in their school. During the day, the kids who were between the ages of six and twelve… younger grade school age kids, and there were a couple of classrooms out in the compound. During the day the kids would all be looking out the windows and staring at me because they were excited I was there and after a few days, they allowed me to go into the school and draw pictures on the chalkboard and ask them questions. They were asking me questions, what did I do in the United States? How did I get to Morocco? They've never been on an airplane before and I had a translator with me but at the same time I was able to draw pictures and have them repeat words like airplane and Philadelphia and Pennsylvania. To see the look on their faces, their eyes were just wide open and they were so excited that

somebody would take the time to help them and to want to learn about them. At the same time, they were very excited to learn about my life".

Despite the language barriers between himself and the children from Morocco, Brendon discussed how "something really meaningful was this handshake we did… it was something that broke through all the barriers". He explained:

"One of the exciting parts was, I called it a secret handshake and I taught the kids the full handshake where you take your knuckles and you bang them up against the other guys and you shake them and you do some funky thing with their hands and **every** morning, I was there for seven days during the week when they were at school, and as the kids came into the classroom, they all wanted to do that handshake with me before they went and sat down. It was me being able to erase the language barrier through action because obviously, many of the children speak Arabic, French, and the local dialect is called Urba and I honestly couldn't understand anything they were saying for most of the time. I understood some words, but when they started speaking in full sentences, I was unable to understand them. But it was almost like that unspoken handshake that we had said, hey we're friends, I'll look out for you and I want to learn about you, you want to learn about me".

Brendon discussed further about the "really strong bond I felt with them (the local Moroccans)" and further discussed his frustrations of aspects of American life. He said:

"Without speaking, there was just an unspoken agreement between myself and the village that I was in. It was a cool thing, you really start thinking you know, I don't understand it. You go out for dinner with these kids and I don't understand what they're saying, but I'm sitting around the table with an entire family, with the grandparents with the brothers and sisters and their neighbours and you just got the feeling that this wasn't something that they were doing coz I was there but this was the way that they lived. It was definitely something that, you know we hardly have time to sit. We never sit down as a family, my family doesn't. It was really neat to actually see that. But again, the main highlight was just making that connection. You don't realise that until you're in that position and that's one thing that I've tried to express to my friends here back in the United States is you really don't understand what it's like to be in an area where you don't speak the language until you're there. At times it can be frustrating, but at the same time, you realise there's other ways to communicate. But it's **amazing** how you'll use your hands, you'll point at pictures, you'll draw pictures on pieces of

paper. It takes you out of your element, you know you feel so comfortable in your own skin and surroundings; I live here in Pennsylvania and when you're outside that element, for me it was a rush. It was exciting, and you really learn about yourself in terms of how much patience do I have?"

To illustrate "what life really is all about is relationships; at the end of the day that is what is truly meaningful", Brendon presented to me the travel photographs that held the deepest personal meaning to him. Nearly every photograph was not of a 'spectacular' landscape, but of 'simple' moments; hugging locals, smiling children, and sharing meals or dances with others. Brendon stated, "those are the things that I remember, the interactions, and I've made friends that I will never forget". Brendon said that he can, "tell a story about all these kids and people, they all meant a lot to me". He explained, "the photographs with me teaching, that was such a buzz because I was able to go in there and teach them about my country and I'd learn about their country, it was a really special thing… They accepted me totally, I felt like I belonged there, I was welcomed as part of their *family*". Brendon also stated that, "Experiences in these photos show that, despite many people viewing these countries as 'aggressive', coming here has taught me that they're just like you or me". While some of Brendon's friends and family are often concerned about his well-being while overseas, "because of the supposed aggression", Brendon states he has only "felt particularly uneasy once" during his travels. He explained:

> "I guess the one time I felt, not scared but I felt intimidated, I would be in a café smoking on the [hooka pipe] and some of the Egyptians that spoke English would come up to me… I had local Egyptians come up to me and start talking to me about President Bush and they would ask me if I liked President Bush after they would bash him for the tenth time. You know I had my opinions on certain things and there was one time where I felt I didn't want to put down the president of my country but at the same time it **was** a bit intimidating because there are definitely reasons why they should not like President Bush. Then they started talking about President Clinton and they had nothing but good things to say about him and so many things that he'd done to help them".

Brendon says he is a "very confident person, and I can honestly say that I hold very few fears, except heights when I have to go on top of the Eiffel Tower". He notes that his work, and travel have helped him become less fearful about life. He explained:

> "Well one fear that I have is a fear of heights. Travelling and stuff, a fear of heights when I have to go to the top of the Eiffel tower, but from a standpoint of just fears, honestly, travelling for work you're by yourself a lot; in hotels….it really forces you to…. you're out of your element. One thing when I was little, I was extremely shy as a kid and I do remember my Mom telling me to speak up and talk to people and I think for me it was going to college. You grow up, you mature going to college".

Brendon also discussed how travelling has helped him, in times of stress or anxiety, to put things in perspective. He can re-centre on the problem that he is dealing with, and understand that there are people who perhaps have greater struggles than him. He noted that, "travel has helped me put my problems in perspective and made me realise that I am really lucky". He explained:

> "I've decided that what will be, will be. But there are times when I was stressed out at work and there was one specific family situation, which was very stressful, and you get stuck into those things and everybody has problems. There's always going to be something in your life that's stressful, that you're going to be upset about and in my mind you're allowed three or four days where you are stressed out and you don't want to talk to anybody. You know, why me? Why is this happening? But when you look at the big picture, everybody has their trials and tribulations in life. Granted, when I was growing up, I was so upset that I couldn't be with both my parents and this was the worst situation to me in my mind. But then travelling, going to Less Economically Developed Countries, even meeting people in the United States you know you realise that I've never had it that bad and the person I am today is because of the situation I was in when I grew up".

Brendon noted that, "spirituality I think is what makes us different from each other". He commented:

> "People certainly are good at adapting and I feel that the way that I'm raised has helped to make who I am. This is the conversation

I've been having with some of my friends you know, I have two brothers and neither one of them are anything like me. Neither one of them would have any desire to go to Cairo. We all wrestled for twelve years up to Senior High School and I remember the wrestling coach saying to me one day, why are you so different from your brothers? And it really caused me to think a lot about - all three of us were raised by the same mother, have the same parents and inherently I just think people have different personalities".

Brendon also explained that while people are "inherently different", one's upbringing and life events also strongly influence who they are. He explained:

"Going back to the way I was raised, not having everything given to me, being able to work for what I do have today, I think it made me the person I am and it's made me appreciate what I have. Again, travelling to places to see people, where having a car is a privilege in some countries, and I've seen friends with two or three cars in the United States. I'm not saying that there's anything wrong with that, but for me personally, that's not the important thing. I feel like sometimes that I have that perspective on life. Some people live their entire lives - not getting there. Not saying that that's a bad thing, people are entitled to the way they think, but I'm happy with the person I am and the way that I think. I think that that's reflected on the friends that I have and I think if you talk to some of the friends that I do have, I think maybe they'd say the same things about me".

Brendon's portrait illustrates the importance travel plays within his life, meeting and learning about new cultures gives him meaning and purpose in his life. In particular, the relationships Brendon has formed through travel are deeply meaningful, and mean much more to Brendon than material possessions. Brendon has used travel to explore questions such as Who am I? What am I here for? and What do I want from my life? It has widened his perspective on life, and helped him reduce stress when life inevitably provides challenges. Due to the geographical distance between Brendon and myself, conversations took place via phone and email. I felt that rapport was established very quickly and viewed Brendon as a very confident, friendly person who viewed helping others as a joy. Brendon was very open, talkative and enjoyed talking about his travel experiences. He noted he gained something out of the conversations too, noting

that it was, "Great to talk to you and find out a little bit about New Zealand, it's really interesting".

5.10: KAREN'S PORTRAIT.

Karen is a 53 year-old woman from the United States of America, currently living in England. She travelled with her husband and three children with Hands Up Holidays to Morocco in April, 2008 on a trip that she "tailor-made". She notes that her travel to Morocco was "'all about women's rights really". In particular, Karen wanted to explore the treatment of women in Morocco and impart her views of women's' rights to the people she encountered. Karen notes she is a feminist, and both her parents were feminists. She is actively involved in advocating women's' rights and this was a theme raised by her a number of times during our conversations. Karen viewed herself as spiritual and commented, "What I stand for with women's' rights is spiritual because I view it as something really meaningful not just for me but I'm standing for a cause that is important to a lot of people". Karen viewed spirituality as "involving what you are passionate for; what drives you". Advocating women's' rights is something Karen is "passionate" about and she feels she is "meant to do this, it's what I'm here for". Karen noted that her travel to Morocco "was really eye-opening and made me consider the way in which I look at some parts of the world". To share how she derived personal meaning from her travel to Morocco, Karen shared blogs and emails she had compiled.

Shortly after returning home from Morocco, Karen compiled a blog for the Hands Up Holiday's website. She explained, "It's flowery, but I was feeling in an effusive mood! As far as our trip is concerned, I still am...". Karen's blog, "was me just sitting down and thinking about what that trip really meant to me. It is as follows:

> *"When I travel, I try to stay away from touristy spots, but I have never experienced a trip like this. Even in Marrakech amongst all of the tourists, I felt as if I saw things that they didn't get to see. Having our guide to not only tell us what we were seeing, but being able every day to ask him questions about the culture, politics, religion and attitudes, made me feel as if I was taking a year's worth of*

classes in history, anthropology, economics, and sociology- all in one week.

Day after day, we would see sights, not always an old building, but experience an interaction with the people we met, and I would feel the wonder of an epiphany washing over me. This happened 10 or 12 times a day! My family would spontaneously launch into discussions about what we had seen, not the usual holiday discussions between parents and their 12, 15 and 17 year old children, but in depth conversations about the differences between cultures and a deep appreciation of the people we were meeting.

We want to continue helping with the building of the school in Talamanzou, and we would get more satisfaction out of knowing that they were getting their IT room completed, than we would from any presents we could receive ourselves this coming Christmas holiday.

We want so much to return, I think most of all to see our guide and his family! It was without question, the most wondrous holiday I've ever taken".

As is noted, and as can be evidenced from her blog, Karen believed her experiences in Morocco "really opened my eyes", and for her, the rich cultural exchanges provided deep and enriching learning opportunities for her and her children. Karen wanted to take her children to Morocco to engrain in them values that are important to her. She explained how, while driving her children around in California, she became concerned at their materialistic attitudes and it was at this moment she needed to "really teach my kids about what's important in the world". She elaborated:

> "I guess my desire for this sort of travel started quite a few years ago, when my children were arguing in the back of the car as I was driving, about some catalogue we received in the mail and they were each going to order these very expensive gifts from some toy store, that I would never shop at. They cost hundreds of dollars, you know, for gifts and I just……got more and more infuriated and I sort of thought 'I should just take them to India and leave them for a month there".

When asked to explain further, Karen stated:

> "I thought, let's see what they make of it because we were living in California at the time and I was pretty appalled that I had these, what I considered to be really spoilt children. You know because we didn't collect a lot of toys compared to their friends. You know, I always tried to make them appreciate everything they had, but obviously I wasn't doing a very good job".

Although Karen and her family have travelled "widely", and generally "try and stay away from touristy things", she noted that her previous travel experiences have still "separated" her from "truly experiencing how other cultures live". In particular, she feels that previous travel with her family has 'sheltered' them from some of the 'realities' of life in many parts of the world. She explained:

> "We live in a house on the beach, so lying on the beach is not our idea of a holiday, although we have done that, you know. I just felt that the kids didn't get it and a few years ago we drove down to Mexico…but again… you know, even though we drove to Baha and we're seeing all sort of things and I… you know there was sort of dismay and astonishment at how people lived. You didn't - we weren't emotionally engaged with any of the people that we met, even though three of my children speak fluent Spanish. There was just this separation. So….now we're living in England and, you know, it's always been on my mind (to feel that connection), but I've never been brave enough to join the Peace Corp or anything like that".

Karen describes how, while listening to the radio, she heard about Hands Up Holidays and, for her, it represented the ideal holiday. Specifically, she believed it would allow her and her children to "experience the *real* world". She told me:

> "I was just listening to the radio and I heard this, you know, things about different kinds of travel and this Mom came on and she said that she'd used this company Hands Up Holiday and she just described her holiday that sounded like everything I wanted. In the mean time my two older children had gone for three years to a private middle school in California… they studied Japanese and Japanese culture and it culminated at the end of the three years in taking a three week trip to Japan, but unlike your usual school trips where you sort of go and party and make you look at a castle and you know, buy lots of souvenirs, this was a very different kind of trip.   But then we moved to the UK and I didn't know how to

provide that for my kids, you know. Really immersing them in a culture and living with a family and being part of a community. So the Hands Up Holiday thing just sounded great".

Karen now views herself as somewhat of an 'advocate' for Hands Up Holidays and "wants to help people get the same sort of experience I did". She corresponded with a woman who was considering booking a trip with Hands Up Holiday. The following email provides further insight into Karen's motivations for selecting her travel, and her experiences of Morocco:

"I chose Hands Up for three reasons:
1. I heard about them on a BBC Radio 4 documentary and thought that the radio station would have at least checked them out to make sure they weren't a fraudulent company.

2. Their website and the piece about them on the BBC sounded like what I wanted to do. I liked their philosophy. They went beyond eco-tourism; they considered the impact on the culture as well. They also seem to view it as an educational opportunity for both the tourists and the hosts.

3. They REALLY worked within our limited budget and physical restrictions. My husband tore a muscle in his leg right after we started planning the trip, was bedridden for a while and then on crutches. We didn't know exactly when, if, or how well he was going to heal. I asked Christopher Hill to tell me the latest possible date that we could put off deciding if we would actually go. He gave us one and still managed to work within the plane arrival and departure times we had booked, shortened the visit, yet still managed to give us as much as possible during our visit.

As for their reliability, we found them to be 99% perfect. The only glitch was when we first arrived- but it wasn't their fault. The airport immigration was extremely slow, it took almost 2 hours to get through. Our guides (Hassan and Abdellah) were there waiting for us, and we tried to reach them, but their mobile phones didn't work. That was the only glitch. But they waited and were very welcoming when we finally got through. (The welcome dinner was at their house!!) The delay was in no way their responsibility, but the fact that we couldn't reach them worried us. Other than that, they were totally reliable. Our guide was Abdellah. We adore him.

You said you hoped to hike in the Atlas Mountains. But if you haven't been to the Saraha before, I'd do that. The mountains were gorgeous, but the dunes were perhaps the most extraordinary sight I've ever seen. There also may be weather issues, and that may be

why they're offering the Sahara. We went in the spring, and the weather was perfect.

Yes, we did a homestay while we helped build the computer room. And that was the cultural lesson of a lifetime. For me it sometimes felt like time travel, except when I saw their TV. But many aspects of the village felt like I had gone back 2000 years. When they made dinner for us, I realized that they had just gone and killed one of their chickens to make it. This wasn't a case of stopping at Tesco's on the way home from work....".

As evidenced in the above email, Karen noted that she could not afford most of the Hands Up Holiday options, but mentioned, "we were able to make up the itinerary ourselves and we just slashed the price". However, Karen explained that, "it is the non-expensive parts of our holiday that have really stuck with the whole family". When asked to explain further, Karen commented:

"But it was things like driving out to the tent and picking up or dropping off our guide on our way back in the middle of the desert, you said 'OK you can let me off here'… You know, it's moments like that that have stuck with us, but living with the family in this little village called Palzamando was, I think just the most eye opening because there are all sorts of questions that people have about other people's cultures and a lot of them you know, some of them, you can verbalise and others you can't. I certainly… I consider myself a feminist and so in very strict cultures where women have no rights, it was beyond my understanding so we were able to talk philosophically and say 'well I don't believe in that', but I didn't understand how they existed".

Karen explained that a particular highlight for her was being able to explore and understand more about the Moroccan culture. As a feminist, she holds strong views about certain issues, such as women's rights and could not understand the philosophy behind many aspects of the Moroccan culture. However, through her interactions with Moroccan locals, she was able to form a better perspective of their lives and philosophies, and as a result, her way of viewing the world. She explained:

"I didn't understand, if I was put in a lot of those situations, as a woman, I'd be miserable. And so there were all sorts of questions. How can you have a life? How can you have any joy or happiness?

How can you just not run screaming? And it was living with a family and actually seeing how it worked and didn't work but in a lot of families in my culture, it either works or doesn't work. It just answered so many questions and brought up thousands more and we would lie awake at night, like the whole family. We slept in one room, and we would, as soon as it got dark and we were all in our sleeping bags, we'd start asking each other questions. What did you think of this? You know the kind of… sort of, what's the word? Anthropological or cultural or questions that usually you don't discuss with your twelve year old boy".

Karen also noted how fascinating and thought provoking she found her conversations with her Moroccan guide "who was a communist". "You could ask him anything, absolutely anything. I could be this stupid American, who doesn't know anything and ask him what were probably appalling questions but it didn't matter at all". Karen recalled, how for her, offering her guide a different perspective to homosexuality was rewarding, and the exchange of cultural views "was really great, really rewarding, I felt I taught this guy a lot". She explained:

"We had a huge conversation, with my son in the car, because it was just the three of us in the car at that point, about homosexuality and tolerance of it. And at the end of the 45-minute drive, he had learnt a great deal. You know, because we're saying 'Hey we're from San Francisco. Being gay is not an issue.' It's not even remotely an issue. And so it was interesting for him. You know to hear his perspective on it and give him ours. And one of his best friends was gay, but he would never discuss it with his friend. It was like they would ignore this. And the only gay people he saw were gay men that worked in some kind of nightclub in Marrakech, that are basically prostitutes or whatever and I said 'Well, that's how you treat them from the time they're born.' They're...they're told that they're worth nothing and they're despicable and every horrible thing. How can you expect them to have any self-esteem if you tell them this from birth? Then I told him about all the people in very high estimation that I've worked with in Los Angeles and San Francisco… teachers, business men, doctors, people in very well respected positions that have, you know, families and....and he said 'I guess I would just have to see it.' You know, it just never occurred to him and I said 'Your friend is gay and if something happened between you and your wife that was really bothering you, really important to you, maybe she was sick or you thought it wasn't working out. I mean if some really big problem, could you go to your gay friend and talk to him about it?' He said 'Absolutely.' I

177

said 'if your gay friend has trouble in a relationship of his, could he talk to you about it?'; 'Oh no'".

From her experiences of exchanging cultural and philosophical views with the people she met in Morocco, Karen believes she is "more tolerant, and comfortable around people that hold different views to me; it was really a learning opportunity both ways". Indeed, when asked, "did you learn anything about yourself in *Morocco*?" Karen answered, "yes, just how unintentionally narrow-minded I am, which was pretty shocking. Also, how judgemental I am. I know I'm opinionated but I didn't realise how judgemental I was". Karen noted that in Morocco the one issue she felt particularly judgemental over was women's rights; this was spurred from her strong feminist views. She explained:

> "I think it was specifically, the one thing that I was interested in and learnt about was all about women's rights, more than anything. And I just realise that… I've always said that I believe in people's coexistence and I would like to see that within communities, where it didn't have to be one community over here and another community in another spot that you can actually intermingle and within a community you can have diversity. And I grew up in New York and then moved to Los Angeles and there was a lot of diversity and I thought I was good at that but I realised that I wasn't, that I was really shying away from a lot of things and so suddenly being plonked down in it… I guess in a good way, you know it taught me that I could be tolerant, but it just astonished me how intolerant I had been".

In particular, Karen noted that she was very angry at the way she perceived the Moroccan men treat their women. However, she noted that after talking to Moroccan women, she now understands that their idea of marriage is different to hers and now has a greater appreciation for their lifestyle. She said:

> "You know I so detested the men for doing that (treating the women in that way). You know I viewed it as an abusive relationship… and it's not. I mean it can be, but you know, any relationship can be abusive. So I learnt [from] the women I met, they didn't consider their husband....they didn't consider marriage to be a way of fulfilling certain intimacy needs that I would. So they treated...the women in the house I was in, she treated her husband like I would imagine I would treat my boss. One I might work with for five years or 55 years. So their idea was that I would live with him and I would

provide service for him and he would provide work for me and it was a reciprocal relationship or an inter-dependent relationship. But she wasn't looking for the kind of intimacy with him that I'm looking for with my husband, however her sister, who lived in the house with her and the woman that cooked for them, the three women, that's where they got their intimacy".

Through understanding the Moroccan view of marriage, Karen noted that the structure of her relationship with her husband was reaffirmed; in particular she was thankful for the closeness of her relationship with her husband. She explained:

"I would become aware suddenly of how I was treating my husband compared to how she (Moroccan lady) was treating her husband. Where I treat my husband, like you know, a best friend and we're very physical, physically affectionate, you know. Physically close, very emotionally close and so suddenly I was made aware of that. It wasn't like I was doing it on purpose or I changed my behaviour, I was suddenly aware of how it looked through her eyes".

It was apparent through conversations with Karen, that she derived significant personal meaning from her travel to Morocco. She discussed in detail how it had reaffirmed her perceived purpose; to pursue women's rights, and helped to engrain a "culture of caring" among her children. Karen noted that she felt in an 'effusive' mood for months after her holiday, and it has left a lasting impact on her. In particular, as noted in this portrait, Karen's experiences have given her a new perspective on cultural, and particularly, feminist issues, and helped her to reaffirm or shape some of her own views on issues that were important to her, and form a part of her identity. Karen is keen to share her experiences with as many people as she can because of the personal meaning she derived from Hands Up Holidays. Due to geographical distance, conversations between Karen and myself were held by phone. Rapport was established easily due to Karen's friendly nature, and willingness to discuss her travel and life in-depth. She concurred with her portrait and commented, "Yes, I am happy with what you've written, I can definitely see 'me' in it".

SUMMARY DISCUSSION.

Nine common findings arose from analysis of the four portraits above. Firstly, each research participant viewed themselves as spiritual and viewed spirituality as primarily involving seeking life meaning and purpose through connections with self, nature and other human beings. Brendon, for example, explained that each person is connected in some intangible way irrespective of his or her cast, creed or religion. Each research participant explained they had a deep understanding of who they were, and concepts such as 'intuition', 'perception' and 'inner-peace' were further used to describe their spirituality. Amber, Charlotte, Karen and Brendon were open to the possibilities of faith, but with the exception of Brendon, either did not feel it played a significant part in their lives, or were not followers of any organised religion. Amber discussed how she moved away from organised religion because it was not flexible enough for her and Karen told me she, "Could not really accept many of the Christian perspectives towards homosexuality". Amber, Charlotte, Karen and Brendon noted their views towards spirituality had been influenced by their upbringing. Charlotte, for example, explained how being immersed in organics as a child has led to her interest and love of nature, and Karen discussed how her mother in particular held strong feminist views.

Secondly, each research participant strongly linked their spirituality to their personal well-being. For example, Charlotte and Amber discussed the importance of yoga, an activity they view as 'spiritual' in reducing stress, and promoting inner-peace. Each research participant discussed how protecting their body, through for example, exercise and good nutrition also protected their spirit, and they exhibited few fears within their lives, and held positive affirmations as to how to live. Charlotte equated spirituality to happiness and noted her sadness at not seeing children smile; "That troubled me on a spiritual level".

Thirdly, Amber, Charlotte, Karen and Brendon noted a strong frustration towards an increasingly material world and, ultimately, a world that is 'lacking meaning'. For them, personal meaning is derived from nature and relationships. Objects were only personally meaningful if they held a particular personal connection (such as evidenced through Charlotte only keeping objects that held

personal stories). Amber and Brendon had changed their attitudes towards materialism primarily through their travel experiences. Brendon, for example, commented that, "I was taught that what is meaningful in life is to get the flash car and big house, but through travel I have I've seen that's not the case, it's about relationships". Amber similarly noted that she is 'de-cluttering' her life and removing material objects, "That hold no meaning".

Fourthly, each of the above portraits illustrate that each person had, at some stage in their life, asked themselves personal questions pertaining to meaning in life. These questions were often asked as a result of significant life events, such as moving to college, losing a loved one, or battling with illness. Each research participant had taken active steps to find out about themselves, to challenge themselves, and to derive meaning in their life. Travel with Hands Up Holidays was viewed as a personal challenge, and each research participant believed that through travel they would encounter difficulties. This was evidenced through, for example, Amber's illness and Brendon's discussions about being hassled because his country's president was George W. Bush. However, each of the above research participants viewed this as a personal test and a method to improve themselves as human beings.

Fifthly, each research participant discussed the notion that what they gained from their travel with Hands Up Holidays could not be gained within their own home environment, for example, Amber commented, "You can see these things on T.V. but they don't sink in until you're actually there experiencing it". Charlotte and Brendon similarly noted that they had their 'eyes opened' through travel and Charlotte explained, "When you actually get there and smell it and hear it and see it, it really sinks in, we can desensitise ourselves if its on T.V. Flick the channel. But when you're there, it is so different".

Sixthly, each research participant commented that travel with Hands Up Holidays was life changing; specifically it has changed aspects of their behaviour, values, and views on what is meaningful in life. Each research participant, more than a year on from engaging in travel with Hands Up Holidays still noted that they are still benefiting from their travel experiences, whether it is through enhanced well-being or through fulfilling their life purpose. I have spoken to each research participant again recently and they are still effusive about their travel

181

experiences with Hands Up Holidays and believe them to have been life-changing even now.

Seventh, each research participant explained that their spirituality was with them during every aspect of their travel with Hands Up Holidays. For example, Charlotte commented how her intuition protected her while hiking, and Amber discussed the deep personal meaning she derived from encountering 'Sally' in Peru. Spirituality was not something research participants could 'turn on or off'. However, Charlotte stated that one can lose their spirituality throughout one's lifetime. Brendon's comments that what is meaningful within his life has changed over time illustrates the fluidity of spirituality to him.

Eighth, Amber, Charlotte and Brendon hinted at there being a link between spirituality and travel to 'harsh' destinations where poverty and illness are rife. For example, each research participant discussed how, through having few fears, they had the courage to travel with Hands Up Holidays, and Charlotte commented, "There has to be a link between volunteering in particular and spirituality, otherwise why would you do it"? Brendon commented that travel to 'difficult' locations takes a 'special' type of person, his friends had no desire to travel to either Egypt or Morocco.

Ninth, it was evident that individual life circumstances influence the search for personal meaning. For example, Charlotte and Amber explained that due to life circumstances, they had put their goals, and specifically, travel plans on hold. Charlotte and Amber both discussed how illness within their family had made them postpone their personal goals. In contrast, Brendon explained that, by being single, having no children, and having flexible employment, he had no limitations upon how he sought to live his life. Karen noted how one's personal fears can influence their path in life; she explained how she wished to join the Peace Corp but was, "never brave enough". This discussion illustrates that one generally has to search for meaning and fulfilment within their life, and within their own personal limitations, be it responsibilities, personal apprehensions about self or other restrictions. Travel plans can ultimately be effected by life circumstances.

<u>Spirituality Evidenced as Life Meaning and Purpose (Nyla and Lana)</u>.

Through the data analysis, it emerged that two individuals (Nyla and Lana) held no personal connection to the word 'spirituality'. In fact, they refuted the use of the word in our conversations. However, despite this, when interpreted through the conceptual constructs of spirituality discussed in Chapter 3, Nyla and Lana's portraits exhibited some evidence to suggest that they were indeed 'spiritual'. Specifically, their portraits evidence spirituality through the importance to them of the seeking of personal meaning and purpose through their travel experience. This conclusion is illustrated and elaborated in the following portraits.

5.11: NYLA'S PORTRAIT.

Nyla is a 66 year-old woman from Palmerston North (in the North Island of New Zealand) who travelled by herself with Hands Up Holidays to Vietnam in June, 2007. Nyla is widely-travelled, "I have been to seventeen different countries now, including Thailand, throughout Africa, Peru, Mexico, and now Vietnam". Nyla has experienced a number of 'tumultuous' events in her life, such as battling breast cancer, and she recently ended a 46-year marriage and suffered a "year from hell". She spoke about these events at length, and noted the significant impacts they have had on her life. Nyla's portrait explores her 'spirituality' (although, as will be noted, she does not connect with this terminology), and will evidence why Nyla viewed her travel through Hands Up Holidays as "offering great healing" within her life. To express the personal meaning she derived from her travel to Vietnam, Nyla shared with me a personal diary and a scrapbook containing photographs and anecdotes that she compiled whilst in Vietnam.

Through conversations with Nyla, it is apparent that she derives great personal meaning, and finds purpose in her life through her connections with family, work, friends, the community, and self. She notes her happiness is very much tied up with her family, "At the moment I am hoping that my family just stay on track, and stay well and stay with the partner that they're with, and stay out of that particular place, and whatever, I just want my family to be happy… That makes me happy, if they are well and happy, then I can be happy".

Although Nyla was raised in a Christian family, and regularly attended Sunday School when young, she does not view a Higher Power as playing a significant role within her life. She is unsure about the existence of any Higher Power. She is open to exploring this issue "one day… I'm not sure when". She noted, "we've always known that its something you have to work out for yourself. I don't believe there is a multitude of Gods, but whether there is a Higher Presence, I don't know". Nyla commented; "I have this friend at work who is a very good Salvation Army member, and it was just her and I in the library one morning, and I was having a particularly hard day. And I said to her, 'He only gives enough to test us, I wish He'd stop testing me! I think I've come to the end of my rope. But she said 'you haven't broken'…. Perhaps I do believe then because I say perhaps I'm being tested".

However, Nyla does not believe that she is a 'spiritual person', and views the word 'spirituality' as holding little personal meaning for her. In an early conversation with her, she noted, "I don't view it in a religious way but if it's to do with self-improvement then I can go along with it in that respect, I'm not a spiritual person though'. It was clear that the word meant little to Nyla and that she wasn't very interested in discussing anything related to this topic, 'I'm not spiritual', she noted, and when asked why she felt this, she commented 'I'm just not'. However, Nyla believed strongly that, "I definitely know what is important to me, and it is my friends and family" and that she has "learnt a lot about the important things in life through my experiences". I felt that rapport between Nyla and I was damaged after I had raised the concept of 'spirituality' in an email. It was something that Nyla didn't relate to. At one stage she refused to reply to my emails. She told me, "I saw the word spirituality and I thought blow this, I'm not going to talk about spirituality, I can't be bothered with that today". A telephone conversation between us seemed particularly strained; there were long pauses and the answers from Nyla were very short. Nyla explained later that she had, "Other things on my mind… There was something I did earlier in the week that I'm a bit worried about".

While Nyla noted that she doesn't really consider questions concerning her purpose in life, she noted she likes the saying "what will be, will be". As such,

Nyla said she doesn't "have very many goals at all", she now finds she reflects upon a number of things. She stated, "I'm open to anything. I try and keep an open mind about everything and not have anything set. I think if you set yourself goals, and they don't eventuate, you are setting yourself up for disappointment". She commented, "I think sometimes we don't realise how we're living our lives. Now I've got time to stop and think, - why am I doing this? And what am I getting out of this? "I think we really need to take control of our lives, and so I'm thinking now, well hey, what do I want to do? And what haven't I done that I really want to do?" She believed that, "Keeping fit really helps with the mental health", and therefore she "bikes and walks everywhere" in order to "keep my mind fresh and working properly".

Nyla's connections with self and important people within her life became most apparent when she discussed her battle with breast cancer and its effects on her. Nyla had just begun working as a teacher aide and "received wonderful support" from her work colleagues and friends, "there were so many supportive people at that school, they weren't friends at that time because I barely knew any of them, particularly the women in charge of all the teacher aides – she said whatever you need Nyla, just say, if you can't come to work, don't come, if you can, come… that support made an impression on me and meant a lot". In particular though, Nyla noted that her relationship with her grandson helped her to deal with her illness:

> "But what got me through in a really big way was I had all this just as my grandson was born. He was born on the Sunday. Having him, I would go and hug him – he was my *lifeline*. And he'll always be special to me, I mean I have five fantastic grandkids but he will always be special because he was the one that I could just go and say 'I've just come for a hug'. And my daughter would say – 'he's just in there' – I'd give her a hug, but was there to hug him! That contact, it was a new life, and you know what its like, there's something about holding a new born that's just… I think that got me through more than anything. I thought hey if my time is up, at least I've seen him anyway".

Nyla's battle with breast cancer was a 'defining' moment in terms of how she views herself, the way she approaches her life, and the things that are important to her. She now holds a philosophy of "making every day count, and living life to

the fullest". She noted that overcoming breast cancer has changed her and made her consider her own mortality:

> "I think it has to change you doesn't it? When you get that close, you know, will I or won't I wake up after this operation, and you tell yourself, yes hey I've done this! And then you get through that five years, you get through that, I worried for a couple of years, but then I think hey I'm over this, I've been there done that. It makes you more aware, even more aware of how lucky you are…. Now my philosophy is to just take one day at a time. Get through today, then through tomorrow… If you ask me when I feel most alive, I would answer every day I feel alive. I'm grateful for what I've got and I love my life…. I want to live life to the full, no regrets… This was over a decade ago and I've had thirteen years I might not have had, so let's not waste them!"

Through overcoming breast cancer, Nyla argued, "I have nothing to fear! Whatever will be, will be, we will get through it. Whatever it is, I've got friends and family and they'll help me with anything. I have **nothing** to fear". She also noted she rarely gets stressed or anxious, except when it comes to her children or grandchildren. She explained, "I'm a mother, I'm paranoid and anxious about them! I've never anxious about myself but I do get concerned or anxious if my children or grandchildren are having problems. That's the only time I get anxious – for other people, not for me". When asked to expand, Nyla said, "I think because I feel that I can get through my own things. You feel a bit more helpless for other people because you can't say well pull your socks up. Pull yourself up, get on with it, but you can to yourself; get over it Nyla, you can do this. I can do it to myself, but you've got to bite your tongue to other people".

Nyla's philosophy of living life to the full was reinforced by a conversation with her father that strongly impacted Nyla. A conversation she discussed several times with me, she commented:

> "Because my Dad died a few years ago, and just before he died, it was just him and I and we were standing out in the garden, and he said *"What have I got to show for my life girl?* I went home and cried because that is so sad! He wasn't being pathetic, but he just said, 'what have I got to show for my life?', and I said 'well you've got me!' You've got us, you were the provider, you were always there for us… but he didn't… because of that age group. He missed out going to the war and that was a big thing for him because he was

in the freezing works and so had to stay on the land and then, of course he got married, and had kids, and then there were the economic restraints. And then, apart from his own life he never travelled, he never went out of New Zealand, he never did anything like that, and I thought, I am not going to do that, I am **not** going to do that! I'm not going to die and think what have I got to show for my life, it may not be very much but there'll be something there to show, I've been there".

Nyla explained that travelling to Vietnam represented her philosophy of attempting to "live life to the full" which she crafted after surviving breast cancer and the conversation with her father. During her previous travels, Nyla had generally travelled with friends or family; however, she recently ended a 46-year relationship with her husband which had an influence on her choice of travel. She commented:

"I thought, I can do this, I am a single woman now, and I can do what I want to do. But being single made a big difference to the type of holiday that I wanted to do, I am single now; I don't have to explain anything. I am going to do this, I don't care what anyone thinks, I don't care what it costs, I can afford it, I can work, I can save, I will do what I want to do, **I will do it**".

Travelling to Vietnam alone presented a real challenge to Nyla; one that, because of her philosophy on life, she wanted to embrace. She explained:

"It was a completely new concept and I didn't know there was such a thing, and because it was new I thought hey, I'll try this and give it a go. I thought **that's** what I'd like to do. But it was **hard** being a group of one because you had nobody to share the language barriers with, and nobody to share the expense with because every time they took you somewhere, it was only me to do the shopping".

Nyla's philosophy towards life was further evidenced through entries contained in her travel diary. It is apparent that she encountered a number of difficult situations in Vietnam, such as dealing with the oppressive heat, being hounded by hawkers, encountering unappetising food, and being robbed. However, Nyla saw even these events as 'gifts' that provided life enrichment through creating memories and new experiences; she wrote in her diary:

"They had tried (to rob me) a couple of times now that I think back. I remember the black dress with the white spots and the black plastic bags one was carrying. Went back to the hotel and decided to be even more alert next time! Just an experience, no big deal".

While travel to Vietnam helped Nyla to realise her goal of 'living life to the full', it also came at a time when she needed "great healing" within her life. When asked, "Can you please reflect back upon your holiday and consider what it has *meant* to you?" Nyla explained, "Well, last year was a year from hell for me. It was a **really**, **really stressful** year for lots of different reasons, and having my granddaughter living with me was just one of them".

Nyla noted that during this year from hell, she was "a different person", and "not myself" She provided an example of this by describing the music she listened to during this time:

> "It's funny, last year, I changed the sort of music that I listened to. I could not listen to my favourite music, and now I am back to playing my light opera. Last year, I put the radio on and just let it play through what was on; mind you, 17-year-old girls don't really like light opera so it didn't go down very well with her! I was just thinking the other day, I'm feeling **good** now, and I'm listening to **my** music".

Nyla noted that her travel to Vietnam with Hands Up Holidays played an important part in providing "healing" from her "year from hell", and helped her to renew her self and become her 'old self' again; she explained:

> "That holiday, the build up and going on that holiday was a focus, and I was going to go come hell or high water and then when I went, it was a complete break away from all the stresses that I had here at home. It was just me. I said to my kids, there will be no phone calls, no postcards, no emails even – there will be **no** contact. I am going to forget you the moment I get to Auckland – from that moment you don't exist. 'Fair enough' they said, 'you have had enough this year'. I said I am going to shut everyone out for two selfish weeks. This is my selfish holiday and I will do it. I planned to clear my head, and I did. It worked. And I came back and I was euphoric and drove everybody berserk – **Would you calm down!** They'd say! Because they had all had a go at having problems last year. So when I went, I really just focused on getting the most that I could out of the holiday. But ooh I didn't have to – it **was just** the most amazing thing! – the

most **fantastic** holiday from the moment I was picked up, Hands Up
were just brilliant".

Nyla wrote several times in her travel diary that this was 'my **me** holiday'; it was
time to heal, to reflect, and to discover her self again. Nyla's diary illustrated that
no-one was going to interrupt her 'me' holiday; One of her diary entries was:

> "The French couple and an Asian girl were by the bunks. She swapped
> the bottom bunk for the top bunk with me then left to join her friend,
> leaving just the three of us. No, she's back. I am **not** moving for her.
> This is my **me** holiday remember".

Nyla noted that she felt her travel to Vietnam through Hands Up Holidays would
be healing because she perceived it would be markedly different from her
everyday life in New Zealand, and her previous travel experiences; it was
something 'fresh'. For example, she stated, "I had deliberately chosen gardening
to get away from teaching English because that's what I do anyway and I'm an
ESOL teacher so I thought I don't want to do teaching over there (in Vietnam)".
She noted that this travel appealed to her because, "I thought stuff the malls! I just
don't want to see another shopping mall in another country". Many of Nyla's
diary entries also express interest and intrigue at cultural differences between
Vietnam and New Zealand. For example, on one day, Nyla created a diary entry
entitled 'Impressions so far'. She discussed the different markets; 'I saw the meat
market, chicken, pig, cow/buffalo and DOG!! Yuck!"; the mode of transport of
the Vietnamese; "whole families (up to 4) on one scooter. There is a little footrest
at the front for the toddlers", and the different foods; "Diem had a bowl of some
sweet porridgey something. Too sweet for me but interesting". Nyla wished to
share a piece of New Zealand with the Vietnamese; she notes in her diary that she
gave a number of wooden kiwis and New Zealand pins to different people she
encountered during her travels. She also took 'delight' at locating New Zealand
made ice-cream in Vietnam.

While Nyla noted that travel to Vietnam was 'my selfish holiday'; the
environmentally and social responsibility of Hands Up Holidays fitted within her
value set. Nyla noted that, although by Western standards she is not wealthy, she
often gets a 'guilt feeling' when travelling:

"Well the travel was different because it was selfless, it's not me me me, I want to go here, see this, do this, whatever. I do that anyway, but it was something worthwhile that I could do for the less fortunate, and it also distinguishes the guilt feeling because when you travel overseas you are the wealthy foreigner – the fact that I work three jobs and clean dunnies at schools to pay for my trips doesn't mean a thing to them there, we are still the wealthy foreigners, so if you can help a little bit…".

The ability to be able to "help out the less fortunate" while in Vietnam resonated with Nyla because volunteering and assisting the community provides her great meaning within her life, she explained:

"I'm with Lions so I'm always doing voluntary work, so there would be barely a week where I don't do something for someone; unpaid work. We're going to build a Habitat for Humanity house! – we normally do sausage sizzles! I said it's a little bit of a quantum leap from sausage sizzles, to how about we build a Habitat house! We are planning on five months, every weekend, it's quite a commitment but it's fun though. It is just so neat to work with people who do it because they want to do it. I'm very lucky with where I work – we've got a **wonderful** staff, but I know there are a lot of people who don't enjoy going to work everyday but I do".

While Nyla enjoyed "everything about Vietnam", she holds vivid memories of the Vietnamese children she encountered that she "cherishes". She feels "inspired" by her interactions with some of the children, and her experiences have reinforced the her need to be a good role model for her grandchildren. Nyla felt touched that although most of the children she encountered had severe disabilities, they "were so delightful, if they can do it, we can do anything". The impact the children had on Nyla is apparent; her scrapbook is nearly entirely composed of photographs of children with disabilities from Vietnam's 'Friendship Village', and captions including their names, and activities that she participated in with them. She explained:

"The children I saw were very damaged, but they are very lucky. I sat in on the maths class, and the art class, and communication, and they had four classrooms from most needy and you progressed up. There was a girl from New York, she was making paper machè birds. I got on the mat, and the boy I was working with could not get the

difference between a five and a three, and every time he put the wrong one down, I'd get the rubber and say no no no no no, and we were doing maths with chopsticks – have 10 – take away 3, how many do you have? But by the end he was laughing, I was laughing, everyone was laughing".

Nyla discussed how many children in New Zealand "are spoilt, they are ungrateful and are given too much". She compared the lifestyle of many New Zealand children to those of Vietnam:

"The kids are delightful because, I think, because they don't see television. They **don't** play space invaders; they **don't** have any of that violence that's on television in their lives. Now I'll be working there, and there'll be a kid over there and all of a sudden, I'll put my head up to look for something and they'd zoom in – how can we help you? What do you want? Whether it's a rubber or anything that I was looking for, they would give it to you and they help each other. That would just about bring you to **tears**. The fact that they had so little but they had such beautiful **souls**. I really believe that – they don't see all the rubbish that our kids see from the time they are born, they are plonked in front of the television, video games and whatever else. These kids just don't know that and they help each other out with their arms around each other. Somebody drops something, and somebody else comes and picks it up. You know, it's just what they do. It's not an act, it's from the heart. I think it's a different world, it's inspiring".

Nyla explained that her experiences with the children in Vietnam personally reinforced the 'wrongs' of a materialistic society; and has increased her drive to make positive changes within herself and society:

"I've sort of got past worrying what other people do now. I think I've got to the stage now where I'll change the world, but I'll start with me. I'll do my bit, I am determined to reduce **my** carbon footprint, but I am not going to preach to other people what they should do. I think it has to come from your heart. I think family values have fallen a little with the pressures of this consumer oriented life that we're all in to – me too, but I think we're too busy chasing the mighty dollar to spend time with family, and when you get that thing – 10 things kids should do before they are 10, I think it is a Persil advertisement, but lie on their back and look at the sky, and play in the mud. We used to just automatically do that, but life's too busy now, and **not safe**. You wouldn't say to your kids now, go to the park and lie on your back and look at the clouds, it is just not safe".

"We never locked the doors when we were young, and that's true, but now they tell you to lock the doors in the daytime. How sad is that? We also have kids who at my school, I think they are not getting enough love – we can do things over there (another country), and be the grandiose, and go and help, but it has to start at home. I think it's a generation thing and it's getting less and less; they feel they are more entitled to things. We are lucky here. I have a Filipino sister in law and I know what she went through, she had nothing, and we had a beach house, as well as a town house – she said 'who lives here'?, and I said no-one, she said but who lives here! I said **nobody**, we are just greedy, we have two! In there they have their whole family in a place smaller than our beach house, and it makes you think, wow do I really need this?"

Nyla's portrait illustrates that her travel to Vietnam came at a time when she needed to 'escape' from situations occurring in her own life, take time to reflect, and find her 'old self' again. Nyla's travel experiences renewed her, as evidenced by her 'euphoric' state of mind when she returned home. Nyla has overcome significant challenges in her life, and these events have helped shape her philosophy of 'living life to the full, making every moment count'. Travelling to Vietnam alone presented a challenge to Nyla, but because of her philosophy, it was something she wanted to embrace; this was 'my me holiday, no-one is taking that away from me'. I found Nyla initially very upbeat and positive; she was in a positive mindset this was also evidenced by the strong sound of her favourite music, *Michael Buble*, being played on a stereo prior to initial conversations being held. Initial conversations with Nyla were held at her home, and subsequently, on the telephone. Nyla was very open and warm and shared openly with me; so much so that during a subsequent phone conversation she noted, "I think we've exhausted all the details of my life really!" As noted though, we did not use the word 'spirituality' during our conversations due to her refusal of the concept. Our conversations ended amicably but it was at Nyla's request, rather than mine that we cease our discussions.

5.12: LANA'S PORTRAIT.

Lana is a 46 year old woman from the United States of America who travelled to India with Hands Up Holidays in November-December of 2007. Lana discussed at

length how she feels alienated by her own home country, the U.S.A., and travelled to India to experience 'home', a place she felt she actually belongs. Lana does not identify with the terminology of spirituality and, as will be discussed within this portrait views 'spirituality' as part of the cause of "the ruined America". She explains what is a better 'fit' for her:

> "You know I, I hate the word spiritual, it sounds so hokey, but I guess if you have to say something, I mean there is, you have to say something like that you know. I'm not a Wiccan or any sort of, I don't try put a coat or a brand on it, it's just the overall feeling of, you know, interconnectedness, I guess would be the overall, interconnectedness and respect that needs to exist between all living things and you know the resources we all depend on".

Lana explained that she travelled with Hands Up Holidays to 'search for something'. She explained, "before I took this trip this was something that I was searching for, but I didn't have a very tight focus. I knew I was trying to do something and I knew I was looking for something, I just didn't know exactly what it was". Lana's portrait discusses the degree of alienation she feels with the U.S.A., and how travel with Hands Up Holidays was 'life-changing'. So much, so that she has a yearning to live in India, and to see her 'comrades' again. She noted that through her travel to India she has 'found' what she was searching for. She noted, "Yes I was searching but I didn't know for what. And now I'm just really focused on it. I found it".

Lana explained that a major reason why she travelled to India with Hands Up Holidays was because she was felt 'smothered' and 'could not breathe' in The United States. Specifically, Lana discussed how she believed she was "ruining not just myself by being around this junk but I feared for my daughter". She believes India is more 'real' than the U.S.A. and has not been 'damaged'. She explained:

> "I think I have been kind of feeling more and more alienated from this country for just a long time, and it's a chance to go some place real, I use the terms like real and non-real, I mean this country seems like a not real place and that place like a real place and especially for, you know, bringing up a child now we just can't

continue in the vein that we are going in, we are going to have to wrench it back and you know turn 180 degrees. And I'm really, I really want to do that kind of work and I really want my daughter to be exposed to that too".

When asked what she means by 'real' and 'not real', Lana explained:

"Just, it's a lot of things. Well one thing is the political situation here for the past you know two and a half decades now, you know this increasing religious fundamentalism, and just people are getting much more stupid and much more lazy and, it's just people here really scare me a lot. It gets worse and worse all the time, it's just brain dead, it's like living in a country full of people who are brain dead. It's scary, it's just really scary".

When she was asked what she meant by 'living in a country full of people who are brain dead', Lana noted:

"Part of it is definitely the attachment to material junk, the other is that this culture has became so saturated with meaningless distractions that are made out to be things that are meaningful. People have completely lost perspective on what's a valuable use of their time. They have lost perspective on what it means to be part of a meaningful community, and just what kind of work and kind of activity is important for themselves and their children. So much wrong-headedness".

When asked how she felt India was more 'real', Lana continued to compare India to the U.S.A and explained that in U.S.A., there is no 'connection' between people, "everyone ignores each others' problems and only seeks to feather their own nest". She commented:

"Well part of it is the fact that there aren't so many material goods and so there is just much less distraction, so one thing that is was really interesting to see is how kids don't have toys there and yet they somehow seem to be perfectly happy. You know they don't have Nintendo's and a million different toys and soccer leagues and all these things that people think are necessary for kids to have now. And so some of the things that people have in this culture now just isolate them in their own little bubbles, like you know, people that, I don't know if people do this where you are, I imagine they do, walk around on the street or in the bus here with just headphones on, listening to

their Ipod's or whatever. And I think it just makes people isolated and brain dead. And you know then they just lose perspective on everything. And I'm just not interested in living in that kind of culture".

To find a "sense of myself" again, Lana explained that she sought to live with a community in India. She noted she did not know exactly what India would be like, but she felt she needed to experience this different way of life. Lana did not want a 'small taste' of this way of living; she wanted 'the extreme' and this is what she believed India would hold for her. Lana's abhorrence of materialism is further evidenced in the following quote:

> "I went to India mainly because I thought of it as some place that was as opposite to the culture as it could be. So that's why I wanted to do it. There were other cultures that didn't seem quite as … as a polar opposite. I didn't have a big sense of … before, it's not something I had really thought about but, it's interesting to have seen that culture and to hear other people talking about other cultures and see how they differ from the standpoint of how they have been victimised by materialism. I hear people talking about their experiences in South America and Africa and how you know, lots of sectors of that culture will be forever suffering heavily from having been colonized and vanquished and just basically ruined by European materialism. And, India's not that way. Everybody kind of thinks of it as maybe isn't being in the same boat as those other places. It's not really. They are not really downtrodden by having been vanquished by Spain or America or you know, European materialists".

Lana discussed further that she needed to expose her daughter to the Indian way of life, before it too changed. She noted that her daughter had not experienced any 'alternative' ways of living compared to the American culture, and that she was in 'danger' of believing the American way of life was the only option of living life. Lana discussed how she viewed "rearing a child as a privilege and not a right", and that "every parent must teach them that there are alternatives to this brainless way of living". She further commented:

> "My husband and I, particularly me, have always been really keen travellers and after we had our daughter I started travelling even more because I need to… I needed some quiet time because our daughter is really high energy and it's just been a tough, tough little parenting gig. But we also took her a

lot of different places all over the US and then when she was six we took her to Europe, and then I realized that something I had never done and something that I wanted to expose her to before she got too big, was a non-developed, non-affluent place, because, especially today, where people all over the world are affecting each other in ways that they never even think about, it just gets imperative to actually go to those places and see people and get a different perspective on you know what we are all actually doing here".

"And, so I also always really wanted to visit India and I was also really interested in Vietnam, so we kind of got it down between Vietman and India and we finally picked India because it's changing so quickly. And I wanted to kind of get a glimpse of it, you know, before it all changed. So we did that. We went to, it's actually just turned out to be kind of fortunate too, it's West Bengal which is not a very well travelled part of India and we went to Kolkata for a few days but we spent most of the trip in the Sundarbans".

The importance of teaching her child that there was an alternative, 'non-American' way of living was something that Lana talked about a number of times. A further illustration of this is when Lana commented:

"Since I did make the choice to have a child, it's also really meaningful to me to bring her along on that process so maybe she can help be part of the solution rather than part of the problem. It took me a long time before I decided I even wanted to have one, because obviously the planet doesn't need more people on it but the reason she was born I felt like you know she is going to be an aware and involved person. And it's interesting, you realise, kids are naturally that way, you know, we ruin them. We sort of spoil them and distract them we sort of squelch that very natural urge to explore".

Lana described how the destination she had travelled to with Hands Up Holidays was remote, isolated, and 'natural'. It was what she wanted to experience in order to "breathe again". She needed to completely escape her life in the U.S.A. The following quote also described her communion with nature:

"Not many people have heard of the Sundarbans, it's the area that straddles India and Bangladesh, it's a delta area of a number of different rivers and basically these rivers run into the Bay of Bengal and there is so much filth, it's created this huge

delta with mangrove forest. And so it's the thing that it's most famous for is that it's the home of the Royal Bengal tiger. And so part of the area no people are allowed to go to and part of it there are people are living there and they get eaten by tigers…So we went and just basically lived in a village there for a week and it was kind of interesting, because by our second day in India we realized that you know we may as well just throw away our itinerary because it was like, it was we were going to do something but it wasn't on the itinerary so we just said ok that's fine were just going to go with the flow there. So that's what we did, we hung out in the village and I'm a big wildlife person so I spent a lot of time sort of thrashing around in the jungle and looking for critters and stuff life that".

Lana explained that being 'at one with nature' is "very much a part of who I am and what is meaningful to me". She noted she feels at 'home' in nature and it is a place she feels 'at peace'. She explained:

"I grew up in a tropical climate and so there were always tons of fantastic critters around and for whatever reason, I don't know, but that's how I spent a lot of my time, you know stalking critters and swimming in the ocean, you know, I was lucky because I grew up in this unbelievably beautiful sort of Caribbean environment. Swimming, and we had a small plane and we would fly all over the Caribbean and just the beauty of it and the vividness of it was, that must have been it, that must have made just a huge imprint on me".

Lana commented that, "Understanding that animals, plants are all here to live together and share the same resources is very important". She explained that the view that man is somehow superior to animals is abhorrent. She commented, "It's important to stop to realize how incredible this spider web is and how beautiful the individual parts are that make it up. And to remember that you know the most humble critter can do things that people with their rational minds can't do. Like spin a web, or see above and below the waterline at the same time, you know we can't really do anything very cool".

Lana described how she feels people in the U.S and much of the world have lost communion with nature, a further reason why she feels 'alienated' from her country of origin. She commented, "People are so alienated from nature they

get hysterical if they see a damn fly they are like oh my god, you know you don't have to do that, you know it's really ok".

Lana found all aspects of her travel with Hands Up Holidays 'amazing and life-changing'. She noted there were two particular highlights for her; the first of which further reinforced for her the 'flawed' thinking of Americans:

> "We stayed at a place called Sundarbans Jungle Camp, which was a little village. Well it wasn't really a village it was like little bungalows and then there was a dining and meeting area, and then immediately surrounding it was a village where people live. One night we were kind of sitting in the dining area and it was dark and we heard what sounded like shots, and everybody kind of got real quiet and then one of the wildlife guards said it was probably one of the Indian Forest Service out in the boat trying to scare a tiger back from this island that we were on, to the adjacent island, which is where they are supposed to be. Nobody lives in the other island, so it was pitch black and a couple of us decided to go and see it we could see anything, and it doesn't take you too long to realize, you know if you've got any brain cells you know, you shouldn't walk too far in the pitch black when there is a tiger around".

> "So we sort of started and then stopped and said you know we should go back. And then we were walking on top of this dyke that surrounds the island and protects if from the incursion of the water, so I stopped and looked down and I saw two fishing boats that were getting ready to push out into the water and it, I was just so floored by the fact that these people knew there was this tiger in the water theoretically and they are going out fishing because they don't have a choice, that's what they have to do. So, for me, this was personally meaningful, because of the acceptance. That's something that we have a really hard time with in western culture and particularly in American culture; that accepting that things are the way they are and you can't and shouldn't try to change and manipulate everything as there is sort of a larger wisdom to everything that humans don't always need to control".

The second travel experience that held significant personal meaning to Lana was a further encounter with nature, and was personally meaningful because it allowed Lana to teach a valued lesson to her daughter. Lana explained:

"One of the wildlife guys, and I, and my daughter, and another boy from the village, we were sort of thrashing through the mangrove forests one day and in the Sanderbans they have these gigantic bees. And so we were walking through the forest and we turned around and discovered there was this massive swarm of bees. I think they were in their nuptial flight or something, and so they were really close and we thought its ok, are they going to decide that they should turn their wrath on us? And they did, they were coming at us and so we all just kind of got down on the grass in a little knot and put our heads and faces and they went away. And so then when they were gone I got up and talked to Jack, my daughters name is Jackie, I said to her 'you just did something really important. You just communicated with the bees. You told them that we were not a threat to them' and so I was just really happy that I was able to give her the opportunity to see that you can get in a situation like that and you don't have to react hysterically or violently and that you know a swarm of gigantic angry bees doesn't have to be something that you don't have to decide you never want to encounter".

Lana explained how her travel with Hands Up Holidays has been 'life-changing'. Specifically, she discussed how her experiences have helped her to further determine what is personally meaningful to her, and opened her up to a world where she 'belongs'. She notes that even now, more than a year on from her travel, she has not 'closed out' the memories or lessons she has learnt from her travel to India. She commented:

"It has completely changed my life, especially about seeing how much people's lives are a distraction. That is just so blatantly obvious to me every day, of how, so much of what we see and do and think about is, completely unnecessary and meaningless and every day we like throw out at least one thing, you know a real possession type thing or an activity or thought process, or you know I've even done that with relationships. And it's really pushed me further along, much further along on a road to clear my life of distractions".

Lana's travel has been so 'eye-opening' that she is now considering moving permanently to India, and to continue full-time with the environmental work that she was involved with in India. She explained:

"Two environmental guides and I, we bonded really quickly. So they started and they have this whole network of people that

have created their own non-governmental organization to do all kinds of wildlife conservation and improvement of quality of life in rural village kind of stuff. So these people are kind of my friends and comrades. So I work with them all that time and I went back to India myself this summer and I'm just I'm ready to go and I'm just ready to do it. To go there and live there, for a while at least".

Lana commented that the environmental work she participated in with Hands Up Holidays felt 'very real', and she wanted to continue this. She explained:

"Well you know the work that I'm doing now with India, it feels very, **very** real to me. Because it's very direct and it's just that it feels very meaningful too, and the fact that I can bring some things to them that are really helpful to them and that they need has been really amazing too. So it's kind of just made me feel like I really want to have the next stage of my life there".

Lana's portrait has illustrated how she has become deeply alienated with the country she lives in, The United States of America. She travelled to India with Hands up Holidays in an effort to feel 'real', and to experience the perceived polar opposite of her life in America. Lana noted her fears for her daughter, particularly that she would become 'ruined' if exposed to too much to the "American garbage". Lana's travel has helped her reconnect with her self, to further "clear out some of the rubbish in my life" and to teach her daughter an alternative way of living. Lana felt India is "my true place of belonging", and seeks one day to "move there permanently maybe, to be with my comrades". As a postscript to this portrait, I recently conversed with Lana and she explained that she has now started to "move my life completely to India". She hopes to be living there permanently with her daughter within the next few months.

I conversed with Lana on the telephone, as she lives in the U.S.A. Through Lana's tone of voice, it was apparent she is deeply disconnected with the U.S.A. Her tone changed markedly when talking about India, she was quieter, and softer. I wrote in my diary, "I've talked to research participants who are frustrated with society, but this certainly appears to be an extreme example". I felt rapport with Lana was achieved easily; she was confident and very willing to talk with me.

Six common findings arose from the analysis of Nyla and Lana's portraits. Firstly, Nyla and Lana reported no connection towards the word 'spirituality' and in fact, appeared hostile to it. I was not able to determine where Nyla's animosity towards the concept stemmed from; when asked, she noted, "I just don't like the word" and would not elaborate. Lana's portrait clearly illustrates why she views 'spirituality' with derision. Lana equates the concept to 'religious fundamentalism' and feels that America has become 'ruined' by this, and its associated 'political correctness'. Lana was also angered at the view that humanity has dominion over nature and animals; she would thus strongly disagree with the notion put forth by many philosophers that only humans may express their 'spirituality'.

The above said, while the word 'spirituality' held no personal meaning to either Nyla or Lana, their portraits illustrate that they each engaged in travel with Hands Up Holidays to derive personal meaning within their lives. Nyla sought healing and to re-establish what was personally meaningful to her after her 'year from hell' and the separation from her husband, and Lana had become wholly disenchanted with her country of origin, and sought to find her 'home' in India. Both Nyla and Lana's portraits also potentially illustrate that the conceptual constructs of 'spirituality' as described earlier in Chapter 3 were relevant to these stories. Specifically, they sought meaning in life, had asked themselves key existential questions; sought to self transcend or improve themselves; and sought connectedness within their lives. Nyla's portrait, in particular, illustrates how, after experiencing defining moments in her life (surviving breast cancer and the emotional conversation with her father), she began questioning aspects of her life and actively engaged in seeking meaning and 'me time'.

Secondly, to gain personal meaning within their lives, Nyla and Lana commented that they needed to travel to a destination that was perceived to be the polar opposite to their country of origin. Both were disillusioned with parts of their home society (Lana more so than Nyla), and believed to grow they needed to experience personally challenging travel. Nyla noted how she had never travelled

by herself but wanted to do so to test her limits, and Lana sought to wholly immerse herself in Indian culture, she dismissed the option of staying in luxury accommodation and sought to live with her 'comrades'. Nyla and Lana spoke at length about their dissatisfaction with their society's obsession with materialism and thought that this way of living was 'ruining' their children. Lana discussed how it is the responsibility of every parent to immerse their children in a non-materialised society and stated that the U.S.A. is not a 'real' place to raise children. Nyla similarly stated that parents must take their children away from 'space invaders' (both made similar comments to Sharen about this). Thus, they showed concerns about the materialism of modern Western society.

Thirdly, Lana and Nyla equated mental health to physical health. Nyla discussed at length at how she walks and bikes everywhere and believes the key to staying "fresh at my age" is to exercise. Lana similarly noted how yoga and walking 'with nature' keeps her mind at peace. The link between mental (or spiritual) and physical well-being is a common point of discussion amongst most of the 11 research participants. As with many other research participants, Lana and Nyla explained they had no fears, except for the well-being of other people, such as their children. They believed they could deal with all of life's circumstances. Nyla uses the affirmation 'what will be, will be' to reduce stress in her life, and found that this affirmation helped her heal during her chemotherapy. 'What will be, will be' was a quote she used many times throughout our conversations. Lana similarly explained how one must show acceptance in life, she noted how she was inspired by the Indian people who went into the water even though a tiger was in there 'that's the way it is'.

Fourth, Lana and Nyla explained at length how their travel was 'life-changing'. For Nyla, travel to Vietnam helped her to "transform to the person I was before my year from hell". Nyla explained how this transformation was reflected in the music she listened to. For the year prior to travelling, she could not listen to her opera music, "I guess I didn't want to associate my music with what I was living through", but was playing her favourite music "all the time now". Lana discussed how travel to India had made her feel she 'belonged' in the world; she had found a 'home', and the fact that she is now moving to India to

live with her comrades, illustrates the transformation of Lana's lifestyle. The portraits illustrate that Lana and Nyla's travel experiences did not wholly begin and end during travel with Hands Up Holidays. For both Lana and Nyla, the 'build-up' to travel held personal meaning, and for Nyla in particular, was part of her 'healing'. Lana and Nyla also discussed how, months after their travel experiences they are still in 'effusive' states of mind.

Fifth, Lana and Nyla both noted that one can feel 'lost' at certain times in their life. They would not say one's spirituality can come and go like Charlotte did, but intuitively they feel that meaning, and purpose, and life, can come and go. Nyla, for example, commented, "I think sometimes we can get caught up in life and not really think about how we're living it" and Lana also said, "I'm in danger of losing perspective here". Both Lana and Nyla discussed that one must continually strive to determine what is meaningful in their life, and needed to spend time nurturing what is meaningful to their life. Nyla, for example, explained the deep importance of her family to her. However, she noted that, "Like anything, it can't be taken for granted, we have to work through things, spend time with each other to stay close".

Sixth, Nyla and Lana hinted at feeling 'guilt' at being a Westerner and living in an environment that, in Lana's words, "is selfish, meaningless, and pathetic". Nyla discussed how part of the reason why she travelled with Hands Up Holidays was to "reduce the feeling of guilt I get every time I travel". Nyla believed that most travel is "totally selfish" whereby little consideration is given towards the environment, personal morals, ethics, and ensuring the well being of locals. Nyla viewed Hands Up Holidays as a "better" form of travel, one in which the 'Western guilt' can be reduced. Lana felt "ashamed to be an American" and was seeking permanent relief from her society. This ethical perspective and resulting quest for meaning was commonly expressed among the 11 research participants and will be discussed further in Chapter 6.

ADDENDUM TO RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS' PORTRAITS.

Certain research participants periodically continue their communication with me. I feel that I have become close to these individuals; they inspire, interest and encourage me. Certain individuals who discussed particularly difficult personal issues with me have continued to converse with me about these issues; I have developed their trust and share a bond with them. The above portraits include the most recent life circumstances discussed by them; it was important to stay true to the philosophy of 'voice'. However, how one derives life purpose and meaning is forever fluid. Thus, the above portraits present a snapshot of the role travel with Hands Up Holidays played in facilitating life purpose and meaning within the lives of these 11 individuals. It will be of interest to continue to converse with these individuals in the future about the personal meaning they have derived from travel with Hands Up Holidays; something I hope to pursue. My relationship with these individuals garners important insights and issues for future scholarly research, which will be discussed in Chapter 7.

5.13: CHAPTER SUMMARY.

This chapter has followed the key phenomenological principal of giving 'voice' to each individual who participated in this research through the presentation of individual 'portraits'. Their individual accounts of the role of their travel experiences with Hands Up Holidays in facilitating purpose and meaning in their lives have been presented and key points of commonality have been raised. The following chapter presents discussion of the key themes derived from wider analysis of these portraits; specifically, it discusses key considerations pertinent to the thesis aim and purports that the research findings pose a number of conceptual considerations for scholarly knowledge. Specifically, Chapter 6 purports that four themes arose from analysis of the above portraits. They are that spirituality is ever-present, experienced subjectively and objectively and influenced by one's 'defining moments', and that one's search for meaning and life purpose may be influenced by a number of contemporary factors, such as materialism and secularism.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION OF KEY FINDINGS.

6.1: CHAPTER INTRODUCTION.

This chapter discusses the key themes emerging from the data presented in Chapter 5. To synthesise the key findings of the data analysis, key quotes pertinent to the research aim were highlighted from each individual research portrait and all transcripts. On subsequent reviews of the data, these quotes were grouped under common categories and then into common themes. Four encompassing themes emerged from thematic analysis of the individual research portraits. They are entitled 'spirituality as the essence of being human,' 'spirituality experienced subjectively and objectively,' 'life defining moments,' and 'search for meaning and life purpose fuelled by modern frustrations.' Each of these four themes are defined and evidence of the theme is provided through a discussion of each theme's key points, comprising categories and quotes from individuals from each of the three groups presented in Chapter 5 (that is, individuals who view their spirituality as encompassed by their religious faith, individuals who view spirituality as involving connection with self/nature/and/or others and individuals who express spirituality through a search for meaning and life purpose). The four main themes emerging from the data and their categories of common headings are introduced in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1: Main Themes and Categories.

Theme	Category
Spirituality as the essence of being human	Personal search for meaning and purpose Experiences of transcendence Experiences of connectedness Imbuing the travel experience with one's spirituality
Spirituality experienced subjectively and objectively	Shared objective value sets or life philosophies Personal expression of objective value sets or life philosophies
Life-defining moments	Spiritual expression challenged through life-defining moments Travel as life-defining Defining moments influencing the travel experience
Search for meaning and life-purpose fuelled by modern frustrations	Materialism, secularism, poor morals and values

6.2: THEME ONE: SPIRITUALITY AS THE ESSENCE OF BEING HUMAN.

Analysis of all eleven portraits elicited the theme, 'spirituality as the essence of being human.' This theme was entitled in this way because the portraits revealed support for the argument put forward in Chapter 3 that regardless of the self-stated view of spirituality (that is, whether defining oneself as religious, holding New Age values, or holding no connection to the word spirituality), each individual's research portrait showed evidence of the three core constructs of spirituality. Firstly, each individual had engaged in a search for meaning and life purpose and expressed what was meaningful to them in a personal manner. Secondly, each individual illustrated transcendence through seeking to extend their capabilities and/or experiencing a sense of being able to reflect upon life in an objective manner. Thirdly, each individual expressed connectedness (with self/nature/God/Higher Power and/or others). Specifically, every individual held a relationship with something outside himself or herself. Each individual imbued this relationship with personal meaning. Each portrait also revealed that each individual could not separate how he or she derives life meaning and purpose or how he or she experiences transcendence and connectedness within his or her wider life from his or her travel experiences.

Two key conclusions arise from this theme. Firstly, the theme illustrates that every person could conceptually be considered spiritual; this has ramifications for scholarly interpretation of spiritual tourism. Secondly, as an individual cannot separate his or her spirituality from travel, there is a need for greater scholarly understanding of how an individual imbues their wider life with meaning, life purpose, transcendence and connectedness. Table 6.2 provides evidence that every research participant expressed the three constructs of spirituality as discussed in Chapter 3, and as such, the significant conclusion which could be drawn from this theme is that every travel experience could conceptually be considered as spiritual; spirituality can be viewed as the essence of being human.

Table 6.2: Evidence of Spirituality as the Essence of being Human.

Spirituality as Essence of Being Human	<u>Spirituality as encompassed by faith</u> (Laura, Amy, Sharen, Rhys, Lachlan)	<u>Spirituality as connection with self/nature/and/or others</u> (Charlotte, Amber, Brendon, Karen)	<u>Spirituality as expressed by a search for meaning and life purpose</u> (Nyla and Lana)
Search for Meaning and Life Purpose	"Why am I here?… What is my role in life?" (Laura) "I am a big thinker… What is my purpose?" (Amy) "I'm starting to know who I am as a person… It's something I'll keep working on" (Sharen) "I really have had to think about what I wanted to do at university… I know God will direct me" (Lachlan) "God will reveal my purpose" (Rhys)	"I think about what is important to me all the time. For me it's family, and being with nature" (Charlotte) "I think now is the time for me really to think about what I want to do with my life" (Amber) "I think about what is about me that people really like… What have I got to offer?" (Brendon) "For me, pursuing womens' rights issues are what I'm here to do" (Karen)	"I wasn't my self that year, I never played my special music" (Nyla) "My family is, at the end of the day, everything to me" (Nyla) "I need to really live what I believe and that is treating the planet with respect" (Lana) "Growing up in the Caribbean with all those amazing critters means that I find it really special that I can make a difference in helping them" (Lana)
Transcendence	"I'm very much committed to my spiritual journey that God and my Christian faith are a part of" (Laura) "Being next to the volcano… I very much felt close to God" (Amy) "I don't know why but I just knew my sponsored child was there" (Sharen) "My experiences in Vanuatu changed my perspective on life" (Rhys) "I really learnt about a different world… of AIDS and poverty (Lachlan)	"I understand that we are part of something bigger; a circle of life" (Charlotte) "I felt a shudder everytime I crossed that bridge… I have strong intuition" (Amber) "I just knew it was the drugs making him ill" (Amber) "I seek to learn about myself as much as possible" (Brendon) "I had a new understanding of the relationship a woman has with her husband" (Karen)	"I had to really reflect after my breast cancer about what it all meant" (Nyla) "When I was in Vietnam I could just sit back and think, whew, and look at my life in a different way" (Nyla) "Being there with my comrades in India, I felt that I was really living" (Lana) "Swimming in the waters back home, you really get a feeling that you are part of something greater" (Lana)
Connectedness	"Faith and family are what is important to me" (Laura) "My relationship with God is so comforting" (Amy) "I felt compelled to travel to honour Peter" (Sharen) "My relationship with God is a two way thing" (Rhys) "I have some really close friends and we've gone through a lot" (Lachlan)	"I feel very much at home in nature" (Charlotte) "Sally means the world to me" (Amber) "I ring my Grandma up every day" (Brendon) "I strongly connect to feminism and what women stand for" (Karen)	"My grandson… He was my lifeline" (Nyla) "I get a lot of comfort out of my birds" (Nyla) "I need to be with my comrades in India" (Lana) "I have such a special relationship with my daughter" (Lana)

Personal Search for Meaning and Life Purpose.

Analysis of the data revealed that each individual research participant has, at some stage in their life, asked themselves personal questions relating to life's meaning and taken action to determine what is meaningful within their life (see Table 6.2). Many of these questions revolved around one's life purpose or the meaning of life. Laura commented, "I ask myself the big questions in life, like why am I here? and What is my purpose? all the time." Amy similarly commented, "I'm a big thinker, I do think, what is my purpose?" It was not solely Christian research participants who asked themselves questions pertaining to life purpose or meaning. Charlotte, for example, said, "I think about what is important to me a lot." Brendon similarly commented, "I have really taken time to consider what really means a lot to me." Nyla and Lana treated the word spirituality with derision. Nyla commented, "I am **not** spiritual!" and Lana explained, "I hate the word spirituality, it is so kooky." Despite this, both Nyla and Lana said that they have considered what is meaningful to them, and their purpose in life. Nyla commented, "I now know what is important to me and I've figured that out through years of living and thinking about it." Lana similarly stated, "You do have to take hold sometimes and think about whether you're living your life in the way you want to."

In addition to asking a range of personal existential questions concerning their life purpose or the meaning of their life, each individual also asked themselves a series of additional searching questions imbued with personal significance. These questions were framed by what each individual derived personal meaning from. For example, Lachlan explained that deciding what subjects to study at university was personally important in terms of deriving his life purpose. He explained, "I considered each subject at university and needed to think about how each of them fitted with my Christian faith." Amy similarly explained, "It was important for me to have a career that I felt I could live my Christian beliefs through." Brendon, who sought meaning through building relationships with people, explained, "I wanted to work out what it was that people liked about me." Karen, who derived meaning from connecting with

individuals, said, "I have had to decide how best I can portray my feminist values."

Further to the discussion above, each individual, regardless of his or her self-view of spirituality, expressed a significant and personally meaningful life purpose. Each individual's life purpose was driven by what he or she derived personal meaning from. Individuals who viewed their spirituality as linked with their personal faith built their life purpose upon living their faith. For example, Laura viewed her life purpose as fulfilling what she felt God wanted of her, and of living by the Biblical quote, "To whom much is given, much is required." Rhys commented, "My purpose in life, everything, is driven by my faith and God." Amy similarly commented that, "God has put me here for a purpose and I will follow it." In contrast to the other individuals, Rhys and Amy argued that ultimately, one's life purpose was not for one to decide; rather it was for God to determine. Rhys explained, "God will reveal my life purpose and guide me through life." Amy commented, "I do feel guided in life and I don't really worry too much about what my purpose in life might be because I'm being guided." Lachlan similarly expressed thoughts of being guided by God within his search for meaning and life purpose.

For Charlotte, Karen, Brendon Amber, Nyla and Lana, purpose in life was derived from seeking meaningful relationships with self, others and nature. Charlotte explained, "For me, what is meaningful is nature and family." Karen explained, "Pursuing women's rights issues are what I'm here to do," and Lana explained, "Growing up in the Caribbean with all those amazing critters means that I find it really special that I can make a difference in helping them." These individuals felt that their life was no less purposeful or meaningful than those that hold a strong religious faith. Amber commented, "I may go back and do the religious thing but I'm quite content with things," and Karen commented, "I believe in something outside myself but I can't subscribe to Christianity because of some of its views to, for example homosexuality."

Nyla and Lana, while denouncing spirituality, expressed a clear life purpose. This purpose was centred upon personal value systems and relationships with people. Specifically, Nyla commented a number of times upon the

importance of being seen as a good role model for her grandchildren. She stated, "I bike everywhere because I like to show my grandchildren that I can do it… it is important to me to be a good influence on them." Nyla also explained how following environmental values gives her purpose. She commented, "I can do things one small step at a time to make a difference to the planet, small things like taking my bike to work." Lana similarly discussed at length how she viewed protecting the environment and educating her child as to the correct way to live as her calling in life. She commented, "Because I made the decision to bring a child into the world, it is up to me to teach her the right values." Concerning her environmental values, Lana stated, "I need to really live what I believe and that is treating the planet with respect." The discussion above confirms that all human beings engage in a search for meaning and life purpose through asking themselves questions of personal and subjective significance (Gaarder, 1999; Hardy, 1979; Thomas, 1996; Torrance, 1994).

Experiences of Transcendence

Further to the discussion above, seeking transcendence to derive life meaning and purpose was also evident within each of the eleven research participant portraits. Transcendence was illustrated through each individual's search to improve his or her capabilities through, for example, education, travel and/or reading. This confirms the definition of transcendence as involving a search to extend one's personal capabilities (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Burack, 1999; Butts, 1999; Emmons, 2000; Marra, 2000; Torrance, 1994). This is illustrated in Charlotte's comment, "I'm a big reader because I always like to push myself to know more." Nyla discussed how taking night educational classes "…was important because they keep your mind interested and occupied," Lachlan explained, "University was a good fit for me because I want to learn about things and push myself." Laura, Brendon and Nyla illustrated that self-growth and deriving meaning and life purpose was a never-ending process. Laura commented, "I get cross when people say they know everything because there's always something to learn." Brendon stated, "Do you ever really know who you are? I don't know." Nyla

commented, "I went back to school because I was interested in doing something I didn't know much about."

Each research participant sought to extend his or her capabilities in a manner that held personal meaning. Each research participant identifying as Christian discussed the need to grow in his or her faith, through, for example, studying the Bible, attending church, or attending spiritual correction. Rhys commented, "I can read The Bible more because I'm a bit periodic;" Laura discussed how she attends "...spiritual correction each month where I discuss with others and we think about things and see whether my life is still on the right track." Sharen explained how she seeks to grow in her relationship with God through "...quiet reflection, and listening to Him." Non-religious individuals sought to expand their capabilities through, for example, seeking to learn more about themselves or the world, or improving their physical capabilities through activities such as walking, cycling and yoga. For these research participants, physical exercise was equated to clearer thinking and the ability to view their life from an objective perspective; a conceptual characteristic of transcendence as described in Chapter 3. Charlotte explained, "I used to go to the gym a lot because it allows me to think clearer…. I'm into yoga and meditation because again that takes me to a place where I can think about things in a different light." Nyla said, "Mental and physical well-being goes hand-in-hand. Going for a bike-ride gets me ready and alert for the day." Amber similarly commented, "I do like to get moving and maybe dancing because it gets you energised and gets your mind ready for tasks to do."

Certain portraits also gave evidence that transcendence was experienced through a feeling of something greater than oneself. Amy, for example, explained how being close to a volcano in Vanuatu allowed her to be "...particularly close to God because I realised how insignificant we are as people." Lana similarly explained that "being in the jungle and realising there could be a tiger around anywhere makes you aware of how small you are." Certain Christian research participants discussed how feeling a presence from God reinforced that there was a greater force in life. Laura commented, "I do feel God's presence and know He is real and that Earth is not the be all and end all." Sharen explained, "You do feel

God particularly strongly once in a while and it is a reminder that faith is important." Other individuals explained that they felt a higher presence through experiencing "intuition", feeling a "monkey on the shoulder" (Amber), or having "possible psychic abilities" (Charlotte). On occasions, individuals experienced a feeling of something greater than themselves during times of particular stress. Nyla, for example, explained that during chemotherapy for her breast cancer, she felt "…actually really calm, which I'm not sure where that came from." Rhys commented, "During the passing of my brother, I felt particularly close to God; I certainly felt His presence."

Evidence of transcendence was also clear within the individual research portraits as involving the ability to reflect upon one's life from an objective viewpoint. In particular, a number of individuals explained how they derived personal meaning from Hands Up Holidays because, through being physically separated from their home surroundings, they were afforded time to consider important aspects of their life. For example, Amy, Sharen, Rhys, Charlotte, Amber, Brendon, Nyla and Karen all discussed how, through travel, they were able to reflect upon their life from a different, broader perspective. Charlotte explained, "I was alone at my tent at night and I could meditate; I had time for myself to really reflect." Sharen commented, "When you are so far away and encounter extraordinary things, it really makes you look at your own life in a different light." Rhys said, "Being in Vanuatu gave me time just to spend with God." Brendon explained, "Being in Egypt and Morocco and all these places opens your eyes to your own life."

Certain research participants also discussed seeking to improve themselves through engaging in a personal challenge. Sharen, Nyla, Amber, Laura, Karen and Lana explained that travel with Hands Up Holidays was a personal challenge and was undertaken partly to gain a greater understanding of their own personal capabilities. Amber commented, "Doing the Inca Trail, that was always a challenge I wanted to achieve and I learnt, 'Amber you're a bit stronger than you think.'" Sharen explained, "We knew it would be a total shock sleeping on the floor of the longhouse, and you couldn't just walk out! But we wanted to do it as a challenge." Lana said, "I knew certain parts of my travel to

India would be challenging but I needed to experience it to get myself away from the American way of thinking."

<u>Experiences of Connectedness</u>

The theme of connectedness was present in all individual portraits; personal connections were found to drive what each participant finds meaning from and how they derive life purpose. Specifically, each portrait illustrated the importance of personal relationships to individuals; relationships with family, friends, animals, nature, self and/or faith were consistently stated as forming the most important aspects of each one's life. Every individual reported a personal connection that was outside of themself; it was apparent that each individual needed a type of external relationship to derive meaning and life purpose. Each of the Christian research participants reported that their values, meaning, and life purpose are primarily driven by their personal relationships with God. Amy, for example, commented that, "My relationship with God is so comforting and is central to all aspects of my life." Laura said, "Faith and family are what is important to me" and Rhys explained, "My relationship with God is a two way thing… It's my life, my values, everything." Non-Christian research participants also discussed the importance of personal relationships within their life. Charlotte explained, "I feel very much at home in nature," Similarly, Lana commented, "When you are one with the critters, being in their environment, that is something really amazing to me." Amber discussed the personal importance of her relationship with her granddaughter Sally by saying, "Sally means the world to me," and Brendon described the important relationship he has with his grandmother by stating, "I ring my Grandma up every day." Personal connections were found to be particularly important during times of personal difficulties. For example, Nyla explained how, when living through her breast cancer treatment, her grandson "…was my lifeline… I was really there to hug him. You know what it's like; you have a special bond with a new life." She also noted that, "During that time, my work colleagues were so good, it is really important to have them there to talk to." Charlotte similarly explained that during her current difficulties, her "…family support is so important."

214

Connectedness was found to be an intangible as well as tangible aspect of spirituality; for example, Laura and Sharen discussed how they derived significant meaning from the memories of loved ones or friends who had passed away. Sharen explained, "Peter's memory is strong; we know he is still with us." Laura similarly explained, "I know my sister is still with me." Other research participants explained the important connection they held with a particular cause. Karen commented, "I strongly connect to feminism and what women stand for." Charlotte discussed her involvement in drug prevention, and commented, "I am so anti-drugs it's not funny." Other individuals, Laura, Brendon and Lana, held a strong connection with certain countries or people. Laura stated, "New Zealand is my home but Peru is too really" and Brendon explained, "The kids of Morocco, I always remember them and with our interactions I think we still share a special bond." Lana's portrait illustrated her strong connection to her comrades in India and, despite living in the U.S.A., she explained, "I have a deep relationship with India, I really feel it is my home."

Certain individual research portraits also suggested a link between connectedness and well-being. This supports the literature that argues that individuals must hold a meaningful relationship to be well (for example, Marra, 2000; Miner-Williams, 2006). Laura discussed how, based upon her medical expertise, she felt many individuals would improve their well-being by forming meaningful connections. She commented, "A lot of people that come in, I think why have you come to see me? But it's because they know I'll listen… Lots of people would be happier if they baked a cake and took it to their neighbour."

Imbuing the Travel Experience with Spirituality.

The case for conceptually considering all travel as spiritual is illustrated through each of the eleven research participant portraits; all of which revealed that one does not abandon one's spirituality (or what one derives personal meaning, life purpose, transcendence and connectedness from) when travelling. Rather, every aspect of travel is filtered through what is personally meaningful; all choices an individual makes, such as the choice of where to travel to, how to travel, and what activities to engage in are influenced by that individual's spirituality. This

discussion supports and adds further consideration to the findings of Wilson and Harris (2006) who argued that what is happening within an individual's life, their relationships and state of mind influence how they interpret their travel experiences. In this study, Laura, Sharen, Lachlan and Rhys, as devout Christians, chose to travel with Hands Up Holidays because they viewed the tour operator as fitting with their personal Christian ethics and values. Laura, Sharen and Rhys selected their destinations because God had called them to travel there, and the most personally meaningful experiences gained through travel were those that fitted in with their Christian-derived meaning and purpose in life. Supporting comments include, "I really felt that Hands Up Holidays was a good fit for my values and the quote 'to whom much is given, much will be required'" (Laura); "Travel with Hands Up Holidays fitted with my purpose perfectly" (Laura); "I felt God calling me to travel to honour Peter" (Sharen), "I think being able to help others resonated with me as a Christian" (Lachlan) and "I strongly feel that it wasn't a coincidence that Chris came to the church that Sunday and talked about the need for electrical help in Vanuatu" (Rhys). Other individuals similarly noted that they selected Hands Up Holidays because it fitted with what they found personally meaningful in life. For example, "I saw that Hands Up Holidays was big about protecting the environment so that was important" (Charlotte); "I didn't know anything about Hands Up Holidays but heard they were a responsible company who were doing good in the world" (Nyla) and, "If I was going to show my daughter the wrong thinking in our society, I needed to travel with someone that believed some of the same things that I did" (Lana).

Each individual portrait further illustrated that meaningful connections influenced all aspects of their travel experience. For example, each Christian individual noted that they filtered their travel experiences through their personal beliefs and life purpose. "I just broke down at the airport because this was what my life was for" (Laura); "The most meaningful part of my trip was being able to help with the truck… I thought that God had created that opportunity for me" (Sharen); and "Being with the nuns and sharing our faith was a real highlight for me" (Rhys). Other individuals filtered their experiences through connections to a cause beyond themselves. For example, Karen, who connected with feminist

values, filtered all her travel experiences through the connection she had with her feminist ideals. She commented, "My trip was all about women's rights really… As a feminist, seeing the way the men treated their wives troubled me." She also commented, "A really memorable part of my holiday was talking with that man about his gay friend because I could then share my views on that." Lana similarly explained that "…a memorable experience was when we were attacked by a swarm of bees… I said to my daughter, 'Just lay down and they will leave us alone,' and that was a really good lesson I could teach her."

Other individuals found that they derived the most significant personal meaning from travel experiences that were imbued with personal meaning. Amber, for example, discussed in detail the personal importance of her relationship with her granddaughter. The moment that held the deepest personal meaning to Amber was purchasing a painting by the Peruvian girl who shares the same name as her granddaughter. She commented, "My mind keeps coming back to the little girl Sally… Fancy meeting a Sally there!" Amber also described how "Building mudhuts was really special because I used to do that with my Dad when I was young." Other comments reinforce this "What was special was being able to really make a difference and we knew that through doing that we were able to honour Peter" (Sharen); "Something really meaningful and memorable to me was teaching the kids our secret handshake because to me that shows we have developed a special bond" (Brendon); and "Spending time with the women meant a lot to me because we opened up each others eyes… I realised how damn small minded I was" (Karen discussing her feminist values).

6.3: THEME TWO: SPIRITUALITY EXPERIENCED SUBJECTIVELY AND OBJECTIVELY.

Analysis of all eleven portraits revealed the theme 'spirituality experienced subjectively and objectively.' The theme was entitled this way because the portraits showed that while individuals may share a value set or lifestyle that is formed upon the same objective prescribed doctrines or philosophies of how to live life, such as Christianity, or moral attitudes towards the environment, each individual ultimately expressed his or her spirituality in a manner that held

objective and subjective significance. The significance of this theme is that it illustrates that to understand an individual's spirituality, requires the exploration of both the subjective expression of spirituality and the objective values or philosophies that are behind that individual's expression of spirituality. Table 6.3 illustrates the theme, 'spirituality experienced subjectively and objectively.'

Shared Objective Value Sets or Life Philosophies

Analysis of the data revealed that each individual held a philosophy or moral code of how their life should be lived, and what values are meaningful to them (Table 6.3). Each Christian individual explained that much of their value system, what is meaningful to them, and way of living is wholly shaped by their Christian faith and the religious doctrines that are of importance to them. For example, "God is my values, my life, everything" (Rhys); "Everything I do is driven by my Christian faith" (Laura); "A lot of my values are certainly driven by my beliefs" (Sharen); "My outlook on life is Christian" (Amy); and "Christianity is central to my life" (Lachlan).

Table 6.3: Evidence of Spirituality Experienced Subjectively and Objectively.

Spirituality experienced subjectively and objectively	Spirituality as encompassed by faith (Laura, Amy, Sharen, Rhys, Lachlan)	Spirituality as connection with self/nature/and/or others (Charlotte, Amber, Brendon, Karen)	Spirituality as expressed by a search for meaning and life purpose. (Nyla and Lana)
Shared Objective Values	Devout followers of the objective doctrines of Christianity. A belief in a singular loving, forgiving God "God is my values, my life, everything" (Rhys) "Everything I do is driven by my Christian faith" (Laura) "A lot of my values are certainly driven by my beliefs" (Sharen) "My outlook on life is Christian" (Amy)	A respect for the planet and humanity. A view that relationships with people drives meaning and life purpose "I have a keen sense of environmental responsibility" (Charlotte) "I think my values are built upon caring for my family and children in particular" (Amber) "Forming relationships is everything that is important to me" (Brendon) "A lot of what I do is based on my feminist values" (Karen)	A life purpose that revolves around respect for others and being a good role model for children "It is very important for me to live my life in a way that shows a good example for my grandchildren" (Nyla) "I have made the decision to bring a child into this world and therefore I must teach her the correct way to live" (Lana)
Examples of Subjective Expression of Values	"I challenged God and thought he's not a very nice person really" (Laura, after her sister's passing) "I was definitely feeling a lot closer to God then" (Rhys, after his brother's passing) "I attend spiritual connection at the church each month" (Laura explaining the importance of her church to fostering her spirituality) "You can have a spiritual connection in the bush while having the tuis around you" (Sharen)	"I find the lake very spiritual" (Charlotte) "Sitting with an ice-cream by the lake is a way of being able to remind myself what's important (Amber) "I try and meet and talk to as many people as possible because I want to share a bond with people" (Brendon) "I really enjoyed the conversation we had with the man about his gay friend" (Karen)	"If they can see me getting out there and biking everywhere, staying fit and healthy, that's important" (Nyla, talking about being a role model for her grandchildren) "I needed to teach her that there is an alternative way of living. To do that, I took her to India" (Lana, talking about the values she wants to instil in her daughter)

Research participants who held no religious faith also expressed spirituality through objective means. These individuals each had an objective value set that was based upon, for example, attitudes towards environmental responsibility and/or a view that one's life purpose is derived by living in harmony with nature and imparting strong values onto one's children or grandchildren. These value sets were culturally and/or morally defined rather than being based on purely subjective behaviour. Like the Christian individuals, these objective value sets drove how each individual derived meaning and life purpose. Brendon and Karen both discussed in detail how they derive personal meaning from forming meaningful relationships with others and enhancing peace between people through enhanced cultural understanding. They commented, "Forming relationships is everything that is important to me" (Brendon); and "A lot of what I do is based on my feminist values" (Karen). Similarly, Nyla and Lana, while not viewing themselves as spiritual, both discussed how they value environmentally responsible behaviour, and described how they believe that their behaviour needs to display a role model for their grandchildren and/or children. "It is very important for me to live my life in a way that shows a good example for my grandchildren" (Nyla); "I have made the decision to bring a child into this world and therefore I must teach her the correct way to live" (Lana); "I want to live in a way so that I am doing my part for the environment" (Nyla); and "I must live my life based upon what I value, and that is people and holding respect for the planet" (Lana).

Personal Expression of Objective Value Sets or Life Philosophies

Table 6.3 illustrates that while certain individuals subscribe to similar objective value systems or life philosophies, each individual expresses their objective beliefs in a personal, subjective manner. In their subjective and objective expression of spirituality, Rhys and Laura both identified strongly with Christianity and its associated doctrines, and experienced a similar personal tragedy; each experienced the passing of a sibling. The manner in which they expressed their Christianity at this time was imbued with subjective significance. Rhys explained he felt particularly close and comforted by God in dealing with his grief. He commented, "I felt particularly close to God at that time and it was a

220

time where I was reading the Bible a lot and attending church a lot." In contrast, during the passing of her sister, Laura became distant and angry at God, challenged Him and felt, "He was not a very nice person really." She explained, "I didn't want to know Him for a time there, I thought I could do a better job."

The other Christian individuals similarly expressed the objective doctrines of religion in a subjective, personal manner; they had their own personal ways of viewing spirituality. For example, while personally viewing her faith as encompassing her spirituality, Sharen discussed how one can experience spirituality even if one is not religious. She commented, "You can have a spiritual connection in the bush while having the tuis around you." Rhys, also Christian, explained that the word faith held greater personal meaning than spirituality. Each Christian research participant also held subjective views of how they were to derive meaning and life purpose. For example, as previously discussed, in contrast to the other Christian individuals, Amy, Rhys and Lachlan believed that, ultimately, how meaning and life purpose is derived was not for them to determine. Rather, it is God's will to guide them and whatever He determined for them constituted their life purpose. For example, Lachlan commented. "I am doing international relations at university hopefully so I can travel and work," but that, ultimately, "God will shape my life in the way He feels is right." Rhys similarly noted that, "God will reveal my purpose." These comments illustrate that, essentially, some individuals believe they are being guided or controlled in life by their belief in a Higher Power, and fate or destiny is predetermined within their lives. Much of the theology and religious tourism literature supports this argument (for example, Timothy & Olsen, 2006; Vukonić, 1996; Zinnbauer et al., 1999).

The objective and subjective expression of spirituality was further in evidence in the portraits of individuals who viewed spirituality as involving connection with self/others/and/or nature, or held no connection to the word spirituality. Brendon and Karen both lived by a view that relationships with people drive meaning and life purpose but both sought to meet their life purpose in a personally meaningful manner. Brendon, for example, discussed how he seeks, "…to talk to people and learn about them and share my culture with them

because that is the way to link all people together." In contrast, Karen discussed how she seeks to enhance peace between people primarily through promoting feminist values. She explained, "The way I live my purpose is by exchanging ideas between individuals about issues important to women." Further, Nyla and Lana both discussed at length how they sought to live their life in a manner that set a strong positive role model for their grandchildren/children. Both sought to express this value in a personal, subjective manner. Nyla expressed this value by exercising regularly and imparting the virtue of fitness to her grandchildren. She commented, "I want to be actively involved in exercise so that my grandchildren can see that if I can do it at my age, anybody can." However, Lana chose to express this value by taking her child to India, to impart to her the understanding that there was an alternative to the American way of life. She commented, "I saw how damaging the American message was to her. I needed to teach her that there is an alternative way of living… To do that, I took her to India."

The objective and subjective expression and manifestation of spirituality through travel was illustrated in the discussion by Laura, Rhys, Lachlan, Amy and Sharen concerning the influence of Hands Up Holidays on their faith. Laura, Rhys, Lachlan and Sharen observed a growth in their personal faith and/or a reaffirmation that their faith was true and that they were living their lives correctly. They commented: "Doing that work in Peru and feeling God's presence with me reaffirmed to me that I was living my life correctly" (Laura); "I am certainly closer to God because of my experiences in Vanuatu" (Rhys); "I think I am closer to God because of Peru, just that I was able to make a difference to people and that was important to me" (Lachlan); and "I felt God's presence a great deal and that just told me to carry on the way I am" (Sharen). Certain individuals also reinforced the notion that travel can be life-changing or cathartic. Specifically, Sharen, Karen, Rhys and Amber all commented that they had changed their behaviour and thought patterns in some way as a result of their travel with Hands Up Holidays; in particular, certain research participants made changes with regards to what was personally meaningful within their lives. They made comments such as, "I have changed my attitudes towards money because of my experiences. The people had very little money but were so happy… This put

money in perspective within my own life" (Lachlan); "I realised how damn narrow-minded I was" (Karen); "Borneo showed us as a family what is really important; it has reminded us that it's not money and cars" (Sharen); and "I have started to declutter my life and I'm only keeping things that mean something to me" (Amber).

However, travel with Hands Up Holidays was not life-changing and/or did not build faith for every research participant; indeed, Amy explained that she derived little personal meaning from her travel. She explained, "It was a great holiday but I wouldn't say it changed me at all really." Amy's portrait also showed how she felt her travel did not lead to a greater communion with God. Amy explained, "I do feel, like anything, I can grow in my faith, but I wouldn't say I have become closer to God through travel, no." Similarly, Rhys commented, "I was close to God definitely, but I'm not sure my travel changed me… It has and it hasn't if that makes sense." The discussion above illustrates that the personal meaning derived from travel will differ between individuals because they experience travel through objective and subjective lenses.

6.4: THEME THREE: LIFE DEFINING MOMENTS.

Further to being expressed subjectively and objectively, analysis of the individual portraits revealed evidence to show that an individual's spirituality is significantly influenced by any formative or life-defining moments that they have experienced. Theme three is entitled 'life-defining moments' because most individual portraits show evidence that each individual experienced certain moments that have altered that individual's perspective and made them question aspects of their life. In many cases, these experiences significantly altered the individual's expression of spirituality and, consequently, the personal meaning they derived from their travel experiences with Hands Up Holidays. These life-defining moments were found to either confirm or hinder spirituality. The portraits thus provide support for the argument presented in Chapter 3 that one often seeks meaning and life purpose after experiencing key life moments. This theme is significant because it

illustrates the influence key moments within an individual's life have on their spirituality and travel experiences; these key moments have received a paucity of attention within the tourism literature. Evidence of each individual's self-stated life defining moments is contained in Table 6.4.

Spiritual expression challenged through life-defining moments.

During data analysis, each individual portrait revealed that certain self-stated defining experiences, such as facing mortality, divorce, marriage, mental or family breakdown significantly shaped how an individual imbued life with meaning and purpose. The experience of life-defining moments was found consistently across all portraits, regardless of each self-view of spirituality, and often led individuals to question what was meaningful in their life. This supports the argument made in Chapter 3 that a personal search for meaning and life purpose is often started or continued after experiences that shake personal beliefs, or jolt their foundations. Comments by the particiapants confirmed this understanding, "I had to deal with my sister dying young... It defined my faith in a way" (Laura); "My brother's death and my fiancée's illness have moved me a lot closer to God" (Rhys); "The episodes with his epilepsy and really worrying about him. That changed me in terms of, I now don't suffer fools with anyone" (Amber); "That changed me, I think it has to, doesn't it?" (Nyla discussing her breast cancer battle); "Ending a relationship after 40 years, that has changed my life" (Nyla); and "My parents divorcing had a big impact on me" (Brendon).

Table 6.4: Evidence of Research Participants' Life-Defining Moments.

Life-Defining Moments	Spirituality as encompassed by faith (Laura, Amy, Sharen, Rhys, Lachlan)	Spirituality as connection with self/nature/and/or others (Charlotte, Amber, Brendon, Karen)	Spirituality as expressed by a search for meaning and life purpose (Nyla and Lana)
Dealing with mortality	"I had to deal with my sister dying young... It defined my faith in a way" (Laura) "My brother's death and my fiancée's illness have moved me a lot closer to God" (Rhys) "Peter's death was a real wake-up call" (Sharen)	"I used to have a number of goals but they are put on hold now" (Charlotte) "The episodes with his epilepsy and really worrying about him. That changed me in terms of, I now don't suffer fools with anyone" (Amber, discussing her child's illness)	"That changed me, I think it has to, doesn't it?" (Nyla discussing her breast cancer battle) "Everyday now I am grateful... I live life to the full" (Nyla discussing how her breast cancer changed her outlook on life)
Specific relationships	"My relationship with God completely defines me" (Rhys) "Deciding that what I believed in was actually the truth… That was an important time" (Amy)	"I guess marrying young and having kids young, that defined how my life panned out" (Amber) "My parents divorcing had a big impact on me" (Brendon) "My girlfriend opened my eyes to a new way of thinking" (Brendon)	"When I made the decision to have a child, from that point I knew the responsibility I had" (Lana) "Ending a relationship after 40 years, that has changed my life" (Nyla)
Travel experiences	"Arriving in Peru was defining... I just broke down because this was what my life was all about" (Laura) "It has changed our family dynamic" (Sharen)	"All the travel I've done has really opened my eyes and defined me as a person" (Brendon) "I really found out how damn narrow-minded I was" (Karen discussing the impact her travel experiences had on her feminist views) "It just answered so many questions and brought up thousands more and we would lie awake at night, like the whole family talking" (Karen)	"Going to India, I knew right away that I belonged there" (Lana) "I came back just buzzing and now I'm listening to my music again" (Nyla)
Other moments	"For me, moving to university was something that's really made me grow and help to work out who I am" (Lachlan)	"I had an experience that really has made me so anti-drugs now it's not funny" (Charlotte)	"Hearing my kids arguing in the back seat really shocked me" (Lana) "I always come back to that conversation I had with my Dad" (Nyla)
No defining moments	"I can honestly say I haven't experienced any life-changing moments... Perhaps my life is too damn comfortable!" (Amy)		

In contrast to the other individuals, Amy believed she had not experienced any moments that had significantly changed how she derived meaning or life purpose. She commented, "I can honestly say I haven't experienced any life-changing moments... Perhaps my life is too damn comfortable!" However, she did explain that coming to an acceptance that her beliefs were true was significant for her. She commented, "Deciding that what I believed in was actually the truth… That was an important time." Thus, it could be argued that this was a defining moment in terms of how Amy viewed her life purpose.

Defining moments were found to both confirm and hinder an individual's spirituality. Through challenging what was personally meaningful, analysis of the portraits revealed that individuals either became stronger in their belief of what was personally meaningful to them and what their life purpose was, or lost ground on their spiritual search for meaning and life purpose. Laura discussed at length how the passing of her sister forced her to critically evaluate the role of God in her life. Laura described how her faith was challenged because, "We prayed and we thought we saw improvement, and then we lost her and my sister died at a young age." Laura initially felt her faith falter but explained that, "Really, that was a cool time to explore my faith and I came away from it believing that, yes, I do like God and my relationship is now stronger because of what I went through." Rhys similarly commented, "That was a time of exploration with my faith and I read a lot and became a lot closer to God so that was an important time."

In contrast, Charlotte and Nyla described how, because of defining moments, they lost meaning and purpose in life. Nyla described how, after her, "year from hell" in which she divorced her husband of 40 years, she "… wasn't myself". She explained she felt "weird" and could not bring herself to listen to her favourite music because of her feelings of "emptiness". Similarly, Charlotte commented, "I think feelings of spirituality can come and go in your lifetime… I used to have a number of goals but they are on hold now." These goals have been placed on hold because of a number of issues that are not relevant to this discussion. The discussion above illustrates that how meaning and life purpose is derived appears to be fluid, that is, there is potential for change in how spirituality is viewed and expressed. This supports the arguments of scholars who argue that

226

defining moments force individuals into beginning or continuing their spiritual quest, and in many cases, significantly alter the path of this quest (for example, Gaarder, 1999; Hardy, 1979; Marra, 2000).

Certain individuals regarded the entering or exiting of personal relationships as defining moments; this adds weight to the argument made in Chapter 3 that connections with people are often central to how one derives life meaning and purpose. Brendon discussed how his relationship with his German girlfriend was defining as, "[it] opened me up to a new world and way of thinking in terms of what was important to me." Specifically, Brendon discussed how through being introduced to a new culture, "My horizons were broadened." Brendon also explained that his parents' divorce while he was young was defining. He explained, "That shook me a great deal and I was forced to be a lot more self-sufficient and think for myself." Nyla also described how divorce was a defining moment for her. She explained, "Ending a relationship after 40 years, that has changed my life… In particular, I can now do things that really are important to me, and I don't have to think about him."

Travel as life-defining.

Laura, Sharen, Lana, Amber and Karen explained that travel with Hands Up Holidays itself was defining. For these individuals, travel provided them with an expanded perspective on how they could imbue their life with personal meaning, led to healing, life-change and/or fulfilled life purpose. This finding is consistent with that of volunteer travel whereby individuals often experience catharsis, or experience moments of life-fulfilment (Wearing & Wearing, 2001). Laura expressed how travel with Hands Up Holidays allowed her to fulfil her life purpose of, "To who much is given, much will be required." She explained, "Arriving in Peru was defining... I just broke down because this was what my life was all about." Other participants explained that travel with Hands Up Holidays widened their perspective on life, and consequently, led them to derive meaning from life through broader, or different means. They commented, "It has changed our family dynamic.… We now are tighter as a family unit because of what we

experienced in Borneo" (Sharen); "All the travel I've done has really opened my eyes and defined me as a person.… I look at things differently and interpret situations differently now" (Brendon); "I really found out how damn narrow-minded I was" (Karen discussing the impact her travel experiences had on her feminist views); and "It just answered so many questions and brought up thousands more and we would lie awake at night, like the whole family talking" (Karen describing how her travel experiences have led to deeper, more meaningful conversations between her and her child).

For Nyla and Lana, travel with Hands Up Holidays was perceived as defining because it offered deep healing and a new, more invigorated perspective on their life. Nyla discussed in detail how her "year from hell" spurred by her divorce from her husband, caused her to feel "not myself at all." However, after travelling with Hands Up Holidays, Nyla commented, "I came back in such a different mood, I came back just buzzing and now I'm listening to my music again." Similarly, Lana explained how she felt, "I was going crazy being surrounded by the braindead American way of thinking." Through travelling to India with Hands Up Holidays, Lana commented that she became aware that she needed to move to India to be " [at] peace with my life." She explained, "Going to India, I knew right away that I belonged there."

Defining moments influencing the travel experience.

Certain individual portraits evidenced that personal defining moments influence personal travel choices and the personal meaning one imbues one's travel experiences with. Nyla commented that experiencing breast cancer, "Changed me, I think it has to, doesn't it?" and a conversation with her father "always stays in my mind… He turned to me and said 'What have I got to show for my life girl?'" After surviving breast cancer, and with the conversation with her father in her mind, Nyla was determined " [to] make every moment count and live life to the full." Travelling with Hands Up Holidays to Vietnam by herself formed a part of this personal philosophy. She commented, "I had never done anything like this before but I thought 'Why not?'" Thus, travelling with Hands Up Holidays

allowed Nyla to fulfil her personal vow of "living life to the full" that emanated from her breast cancer experience. She explained that travel with Hands Up Holidays, "is living life to the full." A further example was provided by Sharen, who explained how she was, "badly shaken," when her good friend Peter passed away. For Sharen, the most personally meaningful experiences of Borneo were those that she believed honoured the memory of Peter. Sharen explained, "When we could help those people with the truck, and also the fact that our family became a lot closer through what we went through, that meant a lot because it was honouring Peter." She continued, "When I told Peter's wife about those experiences, I think she was stunned because she could see how much Peter meant to me."

Other individuals expressed how their personal life-defining moments influenced how or when they could travel. For example, Amber commented, "The travel that I have wanted to do was put on hold because I married young and had to raise the kids, and my husband wasn't really into the same sorts of holidays that I wanted to do." Amber also explained how one's goals are often changed because of life events. For example, she commented about how her granddaughter's personal problems have influenced her travel aspirations. She explained, "I have had to reassess what is important to me because I've needed to look after her…. She's recently come back to live with me so she is my main focus at the moment." Charlotte, in relation to the personal issues confronting her, similarly commented, "I have goals, including future travel but that has all been put on hold now."

6.5: THEME FOUR: SEARCH FOR MEANING AND LIFE PURPOSE FUELLED BY MODERN FRUSTRATIONS.

Analysis of all individual research portraits elicited the theme, 'search for meaning and life purpose fuelled by modern frustrations.' The theme was entitled this way because analysis of the individual portraits revealed that a number of contemporary issues can cause individuals to seek meaning and life purpose and,

hence, spirituality through travel. Specifically, strong frustration with issues of materialism and secularism was a common theme emerging from analysis of the portraits. Certain individuals also discussed how they believe the Western World holds poor morals and values. Every individual explained that Hands Up Holidays particularly appealed to them because its tours promised immersion in cultures that were not overly materialistic. Despite offering high-end travel, individuals chose to travel with Hands Up Holidays because they offered personally tailored travel, and they were able to address any issues they had with materialism in a manner that was personally meaningful. This theme is significant because frustration with contemporary issues such as materialism and secularism, and the need to re-ground oneself in what is personally meaningful through travel, are themes that have received increased attention in the tourism literature (for example, Sharpley, 2009; Wearing & Wearing, 2006). That each individual denounced materialism and sought travel experiences that escaped the trappings of the Western World highlights the need for greater attention to be focussed towards understanding the influence of contemporary issues such as these on an individual's travel motivations and experiences. Table 6.5 illustrates the frustration with certain contemporary issues that were apparent in all the portraits. These frustrations often fuelled the individual's personal search for meaning and life purpose.

Table 6.5: Search for Meaning and Life Purpose fuelled by Modern Frustrations.

Search for meaning and life purpose fuelled by modern frustrations	Spirituality as encompassed by faith (Laura, Amy, Sharen, Rhys, Lachlan)	Spirituality as connection with self/nature/and/or others (Charlotte, Amber, Brendon, Karen)	Spirituality as expressed by a search for meaning and life purpose. (Nyla and Lana)
Materialism	"I needed to shock them and I couldn't do that in New Zealand" (Sharen discussing imparting non-materialistic values onto her children) "In a way, the recession is a good thing because it will force us to address what is really important" (Laura) "They have the big cars and own the supermarket but inside they just have nothing" (Sharen)	"I only keep things that hold meaning to me" (Charlotte) "I now am now not so jolly materialistic" (Amber) "I used to think getting a big house and car were important but they are not" (Brendon)	"Everything now is such a throw-away society, even relationships" (Nyla) "It is the responsibility of parents to show their children that there is another way to live" (Lana discussing why she travelled with her children to India)
Secularism	"People are too comfortable... I'd like to see Christianity across the world" (Amy) "I found it really nice in Vanuatu because it is much more of a Christian culture" (Rhys) "He had to take care of her needs, and I mean *any* needs" (Sharen discussing the challenge her husband faced)		"I need to get away from the religious fundamentalism and kooky spirituality" (Lana)
'Poor morals and values'	"People here are very loose" (Rhys) "There is a lot of stuff going on here that certainly could not be called Christian" (Amy)	"In America, there is not a closeness between people... People do not say hello to each other" (Brendon)	"People here are so braindead, it's frightening" (Lana discussing the need to be with her comrades in India) "The kids over there, they are not broken like they are here. They don't get given everything and have such good manners" (Nyla)

231

Materialism, Secularism, Poor Morals and Values.

A common theme arising from analysis of the individual portraits was a strong feeling that parts of the Western World have lost sight of what is truly meaningful in life through being overly materialistic, secularist and/or holding poor morals and values (see Table 6.5). As a result, each individual discussed the desire or need to re-ground themself periodically in a culture that holds the right values. For example, Lana discussed how she was shaken by a sudden realisation that her children had become victims of materialism. She stated, "I did not want them to view this life as the way to live, I needed to shock them into what was really important in life.' She explained, "I took them to Mexico to show them that way of life but that obviously wasn't working; I decided then to take them somewhere out of their comfort zone, no technology, no materialism." Sharen similarly used Hands Up Holidays as an education for her children. She explained, "I wanted to really teach my children a lesson, and I couldn't do that in New Zealand, it had to be the complete opposite of here.… I think it is the responsibility of every parent in the Western world to expose their children to this." Other comments were, "In a way, the recession is a good thing because it will force us to address what is really important" (Laura); "Everything now is such a throw-away society, even relationships" (Nyla), and "I only keep things that hold meaning to me" (Charlotte).

Laura, Amy, Sharen and Rhys discussed how they sought to immerse themselves in a culture that they believed was grounded in more traditional religious values than their home country (New Zealand). For example, Rhys discussed how in Vanuatu he asked to live with a Christian community and to engage his faith through being able to interact with local nuns. He commented, "I found it really nice in Vanuatu because it is much more of a Christian culture." These individuals discussed how, at times, they feel it is difficult being Christian in New Zealand because of perceived over-secularism. Sharen commented how her husband lost a job because of conflicts between his Christian values and his employer's values. She commented, "He had to take care of her needs, and I mean *any* needs." Amy commented, "In New Zealand there is a feeling sometimes that you can't really be around like-minded people; in Vanuatu that was different." The religious tourism literature has discussed at length how individuals travel to immerse themselves in a culture that they feel more fits their religious faith (for example, Graburn, 1989; Rinschede, 1992; Vukonić, 1996). However, Lana presented a view that is in contrast with much of this literature. She explained how she sought to escape religion rather than immerse herself in it, and that, in her view, the United States

was 'under-secularised.' She commented, "This religious fundamentalism and kooky spirituality really is scary and I have to get away."

In addition to commenting that parts of the Western World were overly-materialistic and secularised, certain individuals described how the morals and values of many people in their country were poor. In particular, individuals commented that there was a lack of connection, friendliness, compassion and love between societies in the Western World. several comments illustrate this, "People here are very loose" (Rhys); There is a lot of stuff going on here that certainly could not be called Christian" (Amy); "In America, there is not a closeness between people…. People do not say hello to each other" (Brendon); "People just walk on by listening to their Ipods not caring about anyone else" (Lana); and "The kids over there, they are not broken like they are here [New Zealand]. They don't get given everything and have such good manners… They have beautiful souls" (Nyla).

A further category raised in certain portraits was an association of feeling guilt because of association with the Western World, and the resulting desire to travel in a manner that minimised this guilt. For example, Nyla commented that part of the reason why she selected travel with Hands Up Holidays was because " [It] lessened the feeling of guilt that comes every time I travel." She commented that she feels guilty because, "When you travel overseas you are the wealthy foreigner – the fact that I work three jobs and clean dunnies at schools to pay for my trips doesn't mean a thing to them there, we are still the wealthy foreigners." Amy commented similarly, "I feel guilty about not helping people out as much as I could and it was good that I could do that on this trip." Others noted, "I have a feeling of being so privileged just because of where I was born and so I feel obligated in a way to help others through travel… Many individuals never have the chance to travel anywhere, so I need to make it count" (Laura); and "I feel horrible because of my association with the U.S and I want to show that some good can come out of there" (Lana). This finding supports the work of Sin (2009), who discussed the idea that guilt is becoming a growing consideration for individuals when choosing their travel destinations.

The desire to reground oneself in what was personally meaningful, and specifically, escape the material values of Western society, was further illustrated by the fact that most individuals requested of the tour operator that they were not cushioned by Western luxuries; for example, most research participants asked to sleep with locals, and often on the floor of locals' homes, rather than staying in a resort. Individuals saw this as an important element of

233

personal growth, and an avenue through which they could engage their search for personal meaning. Charlotte commented, "I can stay in a hotel whenever I want and I wouldn't have got as much out of it if I had chosen that option." Sharen explained, "I said earlier that I really wanted to shock the kids, and the only way I could do that was by being authentic, by sleeping on the floor with the ex-head-hunters!" "I wanted to sleep in the same place as the people, if that was a bit rough, I'm used to it, that's fine" (Brendon). "I didn't care if I bunked it, as long as I had the top bunk! I didn't need all the swanky things" (Nyla).

Further, several of the participants described encountering illness during their travel; reported ailments including vomiting, diarrhoea, headaches, fatigue, heat stroke and altitude sickness were common. However, each participant noted that they expected to become ill when travelling to their respective destinations and some mentioned that overcoming illness was a source of personal growth and pride. Amber discussed how, although feeling nauseous, she conquered the Inca Trail, a dream of hers. She explained, "I was really not very well and my legs were jelly, but I kept going; no-one was going to stop me doing that, and I did it." Nyla similarly explained, "When you're put in those situations; extreme heat, not feeling the best, and you get through it, you do feel a certain amount of pride in yourself." "I did get a bit of the wobbly belly but that's all part of it I think" (Sharen). "I had headache and was so hot but it was all worth it" (Charlotte). This discussion adds weight to the argument that travel is not always the hedonistic pursuit that it is sometimes portrayed as being; for example, Harris and McIntosh (2006) observed that many individuals travel for reasons of sorrow or stress, such as to be near an ill relative.

6.6: CHAPTER SUMMARY.

This chapter has discussed the four key themes that emerged from data analysis. These themes were 'spirituality as the essence of being human, 'spirituality experienced subjectively and objectively', 'life defining moments' and 'search for meaning and life purpose fuelled by modern frustrations.' These themes synthesise the key findings of the data analysis emanating from the individual research portraits and additional data from each individual transcript. They are significant because they articulate findings that were apparent across all the descriptions of spirituality.

Five main findings can be articulated from the analysis; these will be discussed in detail in Chapter 7. They are, firstly, as each individual displayed the three core constructs of spirituality presented in Chapter 3 (that is, they illustrated a search for meaning and life purpose, experiences of transcendence and connectedness), each individual could, arguably, be considered spiritual. This supports the argument that spirituality has conceptually expanded far beyond its religious traditions and holds important ramifications for how scholars view spiritual tourism. Secondly, as an individual does not separate his or her spirituality from his or her travel experiences, and holds connections beyond him or herself, there is a need for greater scholarly understanding of how an individual imbues his or her wider life with meaning and how he or she views his or her life purpose. Thirdly, to understand an individual's spirituality, this chapter has shown the need to explore one's subjective expression of life meaning and purpose and the objective values or philosophy that drive this subjective expression. Fourthly, each individual was shown to have experienced life-defining moments that influence how their life meaning is derived and their life purpose is viewed. These life-defining moments have received a paucity of attention within the tourism literature. Fifthly, each individual expressed frustration with certain contemporary, predominantly Western, issues.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH.

7.1: RESEARCH CONTRIBUTION AND CONCLUSION.

This thesis has explored spirituality and travel; specifically the role of travel in facilitating life purpose and meaning within the lives of individuals. This research was important as it explored how eleven individuals imbued their travel experiences with personal meaning derived from their wider lives. It can be argued that much tourism research to date has neglected to delve deeper into the personal meaning travel holds for individuals and situate this within the wider context of tourists' lives, as travel has traditionally been viewed as something separate from an individual's life (Cohen, 1979; Crouch, 2007; Hall, 2006; Harris, McIntosh & Lewis, 2007; Wilson & Harris, 2006). Moreover, from a tourism studies perspective, there has been a paucity of research exploring spirituality outside that of pilgrimage or religious tourism, despite the argument that increasing numbers of individuals are seeking spirituality through travel (Sharpley & Sundaram, 2005; Sharpley, 2009; Timothy & Conover, 2006). In this way, much previous research has not acknowledged spirituality as a broader concept than religion. This thesis has sought to open a dialogue concerning tourism and spirituality. It has achieved this through a cross-disciplinary review of the key constructs of spirituality. This thesis found that, while each discipline or worldview considers spirituality differently, there are three core constructs common to all descriptions. Specifically, this thesis has argued that spirituality involves a search for meaning and life purpose, transcendence and connectedness. This thesis thus provides a conceptual platform on which future studies of spirituality may be based. Evidence to support this conceptual platform has emerged in this thesis research (Chapter 6).

To meet its aim, this thesis followed key phenomenological principles. Through a phenomenological framework, it allowed individual research participants to express themselves in a manner that held personal meaning, such as through music and reflective stories. The phenomenological approach adopted in this research focused upon allowing research participant's individual voices to be heard. Through allowing research participants to express themselves in a manner holding personal meaning, a deeper understanding of the

236

individual was realised. Specifically, personally meaningful manners of expression within this thesis allowed research participants to express painful and/or deeply personal issues, such as illnesses of loved ones, separation from friends, relationships with God and personal philosophies towards life. In fact, three groups of participants were identified through this research, i.e., individuals who equated their spirituality to their religious faith, individuals who expressed spirituality through connections with self/others and/or nature, and those who, while having no connection to the word spirituality, showed evidence of engaging in a personal search for meaning, life purpose, transcendence and connectedness. Across these three groups, each individual demonstrated objective as well as subjective expressions of their spirituality.

A significant contribution of this thesis is how research participants were able to give voice in this research. Specifically, the individual portraits, driven by the phenomenological framework, were an original means of presenting the persona of each individual and their story. Portraits have been previously used in a small number of phenomenological studies (for example, Rosser, 1992; Schmidt, 2005) but these studies have primarily used portraits to provide in-depth accounts of an individual's reaction to a particular experience, such as the personal meaning they attach to a leisure activity (Schmidt, 2005), rather than presenting a rich portrayal of an individual's life, biography, and positioning the personal meaning of a particular experience within the wider course of an individual's life. The portraits in this thesis are more like those achieved by a painting portrait where a rich personality is unveiled. The design of the portraits presented in this thesis thus illustrates how creative methodological approaches can gain rich and, potentially, new insight into understanding an individual traveller. Thus , potentially, they provide a platform on which future scholars may seek to explore the personal meaning individuals derive from travel experiences, and how these experiences are situated within the wider lives of individuals.

From the discussion above, the phenomenological approach to understanding spirituality is confirmed. Specifically, through enabling an individual to express how he or she derives meaning and life purpose in a manner that is personally meaningful to him or herself, individuals are placed at the forefront of the research and can shape conversations in a way that allows an individual's voice, rather than the researcher's, to frame the research. However, it should be noted that the researcher's voice is heard through interpretation in any piece of research. Ultimately, within this research, I have interpreted each individual's voice

237

and built results and conclusions upon these interpretations. As such, it is not possible to have a totally passive role in the research process. Researchers must consider their positioning in the research while ensuring that the voice of each individual is clearly presented. In this way, an individual's wider life context is expressed in an inductive, rather than deductive manner, and rich insight into the personal meaning of travel experiences can accordingly be explored. The portraits illustrated the importance of placing the individual at the forefront of the research; through facilitating a rich, individual-directed narrative, phenomenology can assist in gaining a greater understanding of the individual within tourism research. For example, Sharen discussed the significant personal meaning she derived from understanding and actively following her family history. She derived meaning from her travel experiences in Borneo because she was able to connect with her ancestors through experiencing personal adventure. The personal importance of Sharen's connection with her ancestors would, arguably, not have emerged through an approach that was deductive, and researcher-led. However, as discussed in Chapter 4, I struggled with Husserl's (1907) foundational view of phenomenology to bracket oneself out of tourism research, and ultimately, decided it is neither possible nor desirable to bracket oneself out as all researchers influence their studies, and are obligated to share this with readers. In this way, this thesis supports the Heideggarean approach to phenomenology of writing oneself into the research, and thus, the call to become more reflexive in scholarly research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Tribe & Airey, 2007).

Through thematic analysis of eleven individual portraits, this thesis identified four common themes of discussion. Firstly, spirituality was found to be the essence of being human. Secondly, spirituality was shown to be experienced both subjectively and objectively. Thirdly, spirituality was found to be influenced by a series of defining moments that every individual experiences within their life. Fourthly, for certain individuals, frustration with a number of contemporary issues, such as excessive materialism and secularism in parts of the Western World, were found to influence their personal search for meaning and life purpose.

Five key conclusions arose from these four themes. Firstly, this thesis argues that as each individual, regardless of their self-view of spirituality, expressed a search for meaning, life purpose and experiences of transcendence and connectedness, all individuals could conceptually be considered spiritual. Further, it could be argued that all travel could be considered spiritual because the traveller filters their travel experiences through what they find personally meaningful and purposeful within their wider lives. This discussion holds

important considerations for how scholars understand pilgrimage, religious and spiritual tourism. Specifically, it suggests that these specific travel journeys or experiences cannot be explored in isolation; rather, they need to be explored within the context of an individual's wider life, and particularly, how personal meaning and life purpose is derived. While this conclusion may appear obvious, there is a paucity of tourism research that explores key life experiences, such as encountering mortality, dealing with relationship breakdowns and mental illness that are shared within this research. It is a premise of this thesis that each individual has experienced, or will experience, a number of life-defining moments. The significance of these to how an individual imbues their travel experiences with personal meaning has not received sufficient attention within the tourism literature. Further, this addresses the call by Crouch (2007), Hall (2006), Harris, McIntosh and Lewis (2007) and Wilson and Harris (2006) to seek a deeper understanding of the individual tourist and the personal meaning with which they imbue their travel experiences.

The consideration that all tourism may be viewed as constituting one's life meaning and purpose is not a new debate, however. It is similar to the views of Cohen (1979), who developed five modes of tourist experience (as discussed in Chapter 2). Cohen (1979) argued that all tourism is spiritual because all travellers relate their travel experiences to their wider life experiences, but the degree of spirituality associated with travel differs. Specifically, Cohen (1979) argued that depending upon the life circumstances of individuals, travel takes on greater or less significant personal importance. The analysis builds upon Cohen's (1979) argument by illustrating that preparation for, and reflection upon, travel is also spiritual; specifically, individuals choose travel that fits with how they derive meaning and life purpose and integrate what they have gained from their travel experiences into their lives in a way that is deemed personally meaningful.

Further to the above, through this thesis' argument that all travel may potentially be considered spiritual, and using as evidence the differing descriptions of spirituality provided by each individual, further credence is placed on the argument that attitudes are changing towards the scope of spirituality in modern societies (Sharpley, 2009). Specifically, this thesis provides evidence that spirituality has expanded beyond the religious domain and those who hold New Age beliefs, or no religious beliefs may also identify with the term. However, certain individuals, such as Rhys, while identifying as a Christian, preferred to use a different term, such as meaning or faith to express the three core constructs of spirituality and Nyla

and Lana denounced the label spirituality. This illustrates the importance of exploring how meaning and life purpose is derived in a manner that holds personal meaning to the individual.

The discussion above also holds considerations for how scholars conceptualise spiritual tourism. As discussed in Chapter 2, spiritual tourism has traditionally been conceptualised as involving a niche form of travel within traditional spiritual sites such as pilgrimage, spa, yoga and wellness centres (Fredrickson & Anderson, 1999; Jackowiski, 1987; Lehto et al., 2006; Sharpley & Sundaram, 2005; Stringer & McAvoy, 1992; Tilson, 2005; Timothy & Conover, 2006a). However, if how life meaning and purpose is derived cannot be separated from one's travel experiences, there is a need to expand the scope of how spirituality is explored within the tourism literature. This thesis puts forward the notion that all tourism can be spiritual.

That all individuals seek meaning, purpose, transcendence and connectedness in life should be considered carefully by the tourism industry. The individual portraits are evidence that an individual's search for meaning and purpose in life is both a conscious and subconscious phenomenon. How one may seek meaning and life purpose consciously, is illustrated by Laura, Sharen, Amber, Karen and Lana each discussing how, through being able to personally tailor all aspects of their travel itineraries, they used Hands Up Holidays as a platform on which to tailor travel experiences through which they could elucidate rich and deeply personal meaning and life purpose. For example, Laura sought to use her medical skills in Peru to assist underprivileged Peruvians. She commented, "I wanted to do that because that is what my life is all about really." Similarly, Sharen sought to connect with her ancestors through encountering hardships. She explained, "Actually, by sleeping on the floor and living with the villagers, I could feel in a way what it was like for my family way back then; the adventurous streak they must have had." Through allowing individuals to personally tailor all aspects of their travel arrangements, it could be argued that Hands Up Holidays facilitated spiritual growth amongst these individuals, although future research is required to explore how spirituality can be facilitated from the supply side of the tourism industry,

That an individual's search for meaning and life purpose is also a subconscious phenomenon was displayed within each of the individual research portraits. Amber, Nyla and Charlotte each explained that the travel experiences that were the most personally meaningful to them were unexpected and not consciously sought. Amber, for example, explained how

encountering a girl named Sandra in Peru was unexpected and made her think about her grandchild, Sandra who was at home in New Zealand. Sharen similarly explained how encountering her sponsored child in Borneo was unplanned. She commented, "That was such a surprise and really meant a lot because I felt that something deeper was happening there." While more research is required to explore how suppliers of travel experiences may facilitate spiritual growth amongst those for whom the search for meaning and life purpose is predominantly a subconscious phenomenon, it may be that through creating moments of serendipity, suppliers can facilitate spiritual growth. This thesis has largely focused upon the personal stories of individual travellers; future studies that explore the rich stories of individual tourism operators and how they seek to facilitate spirituality through travel would provide further important insight into the phenomenon of spirituality and tourism.

Secondly, this thesis shown clearly that an individual does not separate how they derive meaning and life purpose, and their experiences of transcendence and connectedness from their travel experiences. This holds considerations for how scholars conceptualise travel. Through showing clearly that one's travel experiences are influenced by how one derives meaning, life purpose, transcendence, and connectedness, this thesis challenges the predominant discourse in tourism research which, according to Larsen, Urry and Axhausen (2007), "Still treats tourism as a predominantly exotic set of specialized consumer products that occur at specific places and times" (p.245). Tourism scholars should instead seek to elucidate a more complete account of the personal meaning of travel to individuals by viewing travel experiences within the context of the wider lives of individuals. Specifically, the portraits reveal that travel experiences often last much longer than simply the time of consumption; this supports the notion that individuals are able to transfer the meaning and benefits from their travel experiences upon their return home, and integrate them into everyday, changing lives (Wilson & Harris, 2006). That travel experiences continue long after arriving home from their destination was illustrated by Laing and Crouch (2006) and Sharpley (2009) who claimed that individuals will often derive further personal meaning from their travel experiences through discussing them with others, educating and motivating them to engage in similar travel, and in essence, being a travel preacher (Laing & Crouch, 2006; Sharpley, 2009). Nyla's portrait illustrates how she acted as a travel preacher and continued to derive personal meaning from her travel experiences after she had arrived home. She commented, "I came home just buzzing and I have been telling everyone about it, and

241

they are saying, 'Can you just shut up!'" The portraits also illustrated that the traveller does not realise the benefits they have gained from travel immediately. Sharen commented that "I think there's a processing time afterwards where you think, 'Okay, what does this all mean?'" and Laura commented, "This travel really changed me and I'm sure I haven't realised yet quite how much it has changed me." These conceptualisations of tourist experiences are in contrast to many traditional conceptualisations which view the tourist experience as happening when one leaves home and finishes when one returns home (Ryan, 1997). The ontological conceptualisation of tourists' experiences are developing (Uriely, 2005) but the potentiality of tourists' experiences to be spiritual, or rather, to constitute part of the search for life meaning and purpose is, arguably, still yet to be accepted by most scholars.

Thirdly, spirituality was found to be experienced both subjectively and objectively. Thus, while the traveller may ascribe personal meaning to, for example, the objective doctrines of religion, they also experience life in a personal, subjective manner. The view that spirituality is experienced both subjectively and objectively differs from how spirituality is seen in previous literature. Traditionally, research has explored spirituality from a largely objective perspective, and largely overlooked an individual's personal expression of spirituality. For example, traditional Christian theological research is framed by the understanding that Christianity is monotheistic, and involves organised, set beliefs, such as viewing God as Trinity; much research has focused upon the ritualistic, institutionalised notion of religion and explores the collective experience of individuals (Cochran & Beeghley, 1991; Ingersoll, 1994; Vukonić, 1996). The differing reactions of individuals to spirituality discussed above adds weight to the argument that while traditional, objective approaches to exploring spirituality are valid, new insight into the role of spirituality within life can be found through exploring an individual's personal expression of spirituality. While people may fall under the same bracke, of, for example, Catholicism, the role faith plays in each individual's life, the way they express their faith, live and worship is unique, and holds personal meaning. This notion was expressed by Rhys, who explained, "It's a *personal* relationship between God and I."

The discussion above holds considerations for how scholars approach tourism research. For example, the religious tourism and pilgrimage literature has predominantly focused on studying the collective experience of tourists (for example, Digance, 2003; Eade, 1992; Tomasi, 2002). Thus, while studies that explore the collective experience, of, for

example, pilgrims visiting holy places, yield important insight into the phenomena of religion, pilgrimage and spirituality, there is a need to support this body of work by also exploring the personal meaning these journeys hold to individuals. Similarly, McIntosh and Prentice (1999) argued that much experiential research has focussed upon the personal, subjective side of travel experiences. This thesis argues that to gain greater insight into the personal meaning of travel experiences to individuals, the subjectivities of the travel experience need to be explored alongside the objective philosophies apparent in an individual's life that will influence how they imbue personal meaning and beliefs onto their travel experiences.

As spirituality is experienced subjectively and objectively, the application of phenomenology in exploring spirituality, and more generally, travel experiences, appears even more meritorious. Specifically, both the objective and subjective experiences of the three core constructs of spirituality described in this thesis were articulated through the eyes of individuals themselves. Laura and Amy both commented that many of their values were shaped by their Christian faith. However, both sought to grow their faith in a personal manner; Laura emphasised the importance of 'spiritual correction' to the development of her faith while Amy commented that through music, she becomes closer to God. In this way, this thesis proffers that through greater adoption of phenomenological approaches within tourism research, scholars will be able to gain greater insight into the personal meaning with which individuals imbue their travel experiences.

Fourthly, the influence of, for example, personal loss, facing mortality, divorce and marriage were illustrated as changing how an individual derives personal meaning and life purpose. This is not a new conclusion. For example, McGraw (2008) discussed how every human being, at some stage experiences one or more of the 'seven life-defining moments', including, loss, fear, physical and mental health breakdown, addiction and existential crises. These experiences are purported to jolt our foundations and shape who we are. Amy's comment supported this. She commented, "When something goes hideously wrong you think maybe I can't control everything… it really makes you think about your life." However, the influence of defining moments has received a paucity of attention within the tourism literature. With the exception of Harris and McIntosh (2006), few studies have explored whether negative travel experiences (such as becoming ill or losing a relationship) can hinder how one derives meaning and life purpose. These personal moments are, arguably, often

seen as private by scholars, and it may be that scholars have not sought to explore many of these issues because of the personal toll their discussion could take on both researcher and research participant. As a result, there is a paucity of research exploring the influence of defining moments on travel experiences. This research would be important for scholarly understanding because it would assist in gaining greater insight into the lived world of individuals and the personal meaning individuals gain from their travel experiences. This conclusion appears to fit with the critical turn in tourism research whereby calls are being made to advance scholarly understanding into the individual tourist and add to a more personal, humanistic research agenda (Tribe, 2005; Wilson & Harris, 2006).

Fifthly, this thesis adds credence to the argument that increasing numbers of individuals are becoming frustrated, angry, and/or depressed at aspects of Western culture; in particular, materialism, secularism, and or 'poor morals and values' (for example, Belk, 1980; Cushman, 1990; Hartmann, 1999; Miner-Williams, 2006). To reground themselves in what is personally meaningful, some individuals discussed the need to periodically immerse themselves in a culture wholly different from their own, although it should be noted that other individuals within society evidently do not feel a need to travel. That many do, however, holds considerations for how the role of travel within the wider life of individuals is viewed. Specifically, it challenges the argument that everything travel offers can be gained within one's own home surroundings (e.g. Munt, 1994). Munt based his arguments on the notion that the world has 'come to every individual;' for example, people do not have to leave their home setting to taste international food or experience alternative cultures. This thesis illustrated, however, that they participants held the view that they could only find particular meaning within their lives by travelling beyond the boundaries of their home. As Sharen commented, "I suppose it's sad to say but I needed to shock the kids and I couldn't do that in New Zealand."

The degree to which Lana became disenchanted with the "Braindead materialism" and, "Hokey spirituality" of the U.S.A and the discussion by Sharen, Lana, and Karen of the need to travel to re-centre themselves holds further considerations for scholarly knowledge. Specifically, these research participants believed that they had multiple homes and, in some cases, felt more at home in their travel destination than their country of residence. Laura, for example, commented, "My home is New Zealand but really, so is Peru;" and Lana discussed in detail how she views the people of India as her 'comrades.' This consideration supports the

244

arguments of scholars, including Cohen (1979), that people can have many spiritual centres; although they may reside at one location, they may not feel this is home. They may hold a deep connection, or derive significant life meaning or purpose from a destination far away, or that they have never visited. Home, thus conceptually does not solely consist of a physical presence; one can view a place as home because of a psychological or emotional connection to that place. Further, it adds credence to Wilson and Harris' (2006) argument that the dichotomy of home and away is much too simple a division and needs to be extended in any discussion of (spiritual or) personally meaningful travel.

These four themes offer further advancement of scholarly knowledge concerning spirituality and how travel may be conceptualised. Many studies of tourism focus upon what happens at destinations, or at a specific point of time at a destination (Hall, 2006). Thus, most scholars fail to capture all the other influences on an individual's path through life (ibid). Through proffering that spirituality is inseparable from travel experiences, this thesis has highlighted the need to position the exploration of travel within the wider context of an individual's life. Specifically, this research argues for the need to widen our understanding of the personal meaning an individual derives from travel through recognising that travel experiences require exploration pre- and post- travel. There is also a need to explore travel experiences within the context of an individual's wider life circumstances. However, this is not a new conclusion and has been argued by scholars such as Crouch (2007), Harris and McIntosh (2006) and Ryan (1995). The four themes also illustrate that every individual holds a personal connection outside of themselves. Specifically, the personal importance of relationships with God, family, friends, communities, ancestors, nature, and or/ others was illustrated as driving how meaning and purpose in life is derived. In this way, this thesis has shown the need to explore what individuals hold onto for meaning and purpose in their life, as this fuels how they imbue their travel experiences with personal meaning and this thesis importantly found that meaning is bth subjectively and objectively shaped and expressed. Potentially, when discussing spiritual tourism, what scholars are truly seeking to understand is how an individual seeks meaning and life purpose within or outside him or herself.

This thesis has displayed that while spirituality delves deeper into the life stories of individuals, conceptually, it is high up Gottschall's (2003) 'tree of knowledge.' In particular, exploring spirituality is not easy and pushes the emotional thresholds of both researcher and research participant. The analysis reveals that, often, when discussing how they derive

meaning and purpose in their life, this is often equated with discussion of personal heartache or tragedy. The personal difficulties of the researcher are also brought to the surface through much of this discussion; for example, I noted the difficulties I had when discussing issues of depression and cancer with certain research participants when these issues were paramount within my own life. Thus, to advance our understanding of the individual within tourism research, scholars need to consider issues of rapport, trust, and research ethics. This research has noted the difficulties of knowing when to consider pursuing or ceasing discussion that is painful or emotional for research participants. For example, I elicited deep and painful discourse from Rhys, Amber, Charlotte and Lana in particular, about the influence of personal tragedies on how they derive meaning and life purpose. In certain instances, I believed I could have elicited deeper insight into the influence of these events, but ceased to do so in order to minimise the emotional impact on the individual. Researchers should thus consider the question, 'How far is too far in the pursuit of understanding the lived world of research participants?' As previously discussed, this research did, at times, cause me significant anxiety and stress. To deal with this, I used my reflective diary entries as a vehicle to release my emotions and thoughts. I also discussed my personal issues with my supervisor to ensure that she was aware of the impact of the research on me, and we talked through how to minimise the impact. My experiences have led me to conclude that qualitative research can be demanding on both researcher and research participant. However, I believe that through employing appropriate coping techniques, such as those discussed above, I can approach future qualitative research with confidence. I have found that qualitative research, and particularly phenomenology, yields rich insight into the lived world of individuals, and thus, will continue with this approach throughout my research career.

7.2: SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH.

In conclusion, whilst this research has provided important insights into exploring spirituality and tourism, and specifically, the role of travel in facilitating life meaning and purpose in the lives of individuals, there is room to build on the initial conclusions made in this thesis (see Chapter 4). To advance knowledge, scholars could also seek to explore this research aim under different circumstances. Specifically, this thesis engaged with one tour operator, who offered high-end travel to certain destinations. All research participants were Caucasian, English-speaking and located in three Westernised nations, New Zealand,

England and The United States of America. Studies that sample non-Western travellers in different settings will build upon these research findings and potentially reveal alternative conceptualisations of spirituality in the context of travel. Eastern studies of spirituality and tourism may reveal different paradigms for the study. For example, it may be that those of a Buddhist or Hindu faith imbue personal meaning from their travel into their wider life through different means than Christians. Furthermore, while I developed a relationship with research participants over a period of 12-18 months, studies that adopt a longitudinal approach will advance knowledge, and can seek to explore the more long-term role of travel in facilitating life purpose and meaning within the lives of individuals.

In proposing a new discourse relating to the tourism experience, that is, one centred on an understanding of the spirituality of travellers and how they seek meaning and purpose through travel, this thesis further illustrates the need to widen scholarly understanding of what constitutes spirituality and identifies a need for further research exploring the manner in which pilgrimage, spirituality and religion have expanded from their conceptual traditions. Firstly, this thesis provides support for Sharpley's (2009) comments that there is a need to soften our understanding of what constitutes spiritual travel. Specifically, this thesis concurs that traditional definitions of pilgrimage, spirituality or religious tourism may have been appropriate up until the beginning of the twentieth century but the terms have now been fragmented with secular overtones (Sharpley, 2009); for example, one can engage in a shopping, musical or sporting pilgrimage (Digance, 2006); there are also virtual pilgrimages (Timothy & Olsen, 2006) which call into question whether pilgrimage must involve a physical journey.

Secondly, future research could seek to build upon analysis from the portraits, which suggest that, from a certain perspective, conceptually, *every* person could be considered a pilgrim. Bauman (1996) suggested that every person is a pilgrim and compares the world to a desert; empty and meaningless; that is, until people find things to imbue their desert with personal meaning, be it God, (friends, work, pets etc.). Bauman argued that, like the desert, winds can come and remove what is meaningful to us; the personally meaningful items we had placed in our desert are swept away and we become lost again. The portraits offer support to this theory. Every research participant had, in the least, asked themselves key questions of personal meaning, and each reported unique and individual sources from which they derived personal meaning. The winds were also evident in many individual portraits,

particularly in those who had suffered a personal tragedy, or key defining moments. For example, Charlotte commented, "I used to know where my life was heading, and my personal goals, but that has all changed now after what has happened." The portraits suggest that individual pilgrimseach find and shape life meaning and purpose in unique ways; for some, travel becomes their 'objects in the sand', and thus, can be deeply meaningful within their lives.

Thirdly, and arising from the discussion above, as spirituality is experienced subjectively and objectively, there is a need to understand how religious codes influence the travel experience. For example, studies could explore the extent to which the availability of kosher food influences the travel decisions of those following the Jewish faith. This thesis concurs with Sharpley (2009) that previous religious tourism literature has predominantly looked at the nature, motivations, impact and management of religious tourism, rather on how the traveller's faith influences the tourist experience. This adds a new layer of meaning to previous claims for the need to understand the subjectivities of the tourism experience (for example, Crouch, 2007; Uriely, 2005).

Fourthly, the portraits reveal a wider link between spirituality and well-being, morals and ethics as potential *outcomes*, rather than *constructs* of spirituality. Specifically, the portraits of Laura, Nyla, Charlotte, Amber, Karen, and Lana highlight the notion that through an understanding of self, and what is personally meaningful, one experiences greater inner peace, contentment, motivation, and less stress, fear and anxiety. For example, Laura explained, "I feel a great deal of comfort through resting in my faith; and it gives me a reason to get out of bed as well; I know I am here to help others, and this gives me a drive." There is thus a need to expand the study of spirituality, and travel within one's well-being. As such, there appears a need to re-consider what is meant by 'wellness tourism', a topic that has gained much recent scholarly attention (Deveraux & Carnegie, 2006; Smith & Kelly, 2006; Steiner & Reisinger, 2006). Specifically, if the traveller cannot separate their spirituality from their travel, and how their spirituality influences their well-being, scholars may consider whether all travel comes under the label of wellness tourism.

Fifthly, arguably as an individual's morals and values are also an outcome of spirituality (in conjunction with numerous other sources of morals and values, mostly within an individual's social world), and spirituality is influenced by factors such as age and personality, there is a need to consider how we view travel for religious and spiritual reasons.

248

We often think of travel as pilgrimage driven by religion, but could it perhaps also be seen as missionary travel driven by spirituality? The portraits revealed that those of a religious faith were also driven to travel because of strong morals and values. For example, Laura used the affirmation, "To who much is given, much is required," numerous times to discuss her philosophy on life. Exploration of the extent to which the traveller's morals and values are driven by their wider spirituality, rather than the objective doctrines of religion offer greater scholarly potential.

In conclusion to this thesis, it is hoped that the thesis has put forward a case for using spirituality as a lens through which to examine the personal meaning individuals derive from travel experiences in a context encompassing religious and non-religious views of how travellers seek meaning, transcendence and connectedness. Further, it is hoped that the lens of spirituality is shown here to be a worthwhile avenue for scholarly investigation in the area of tourism.

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What we stand for

- The dignity of every individual - every person is of equal value
- We in the West can offer a lot to disadvantaged communities, and we make this happen, whilst being conscious that it is not our right to impose our value system...and we are very aware that frequently it is us who have more to learn from other communities than we can teach them
- Being good stewards of the Earth and its resources, and conserving them for future generations

What we stand against

- Selfishness and greed
- Exploitation of people and of the Earth's resources
- Any situation that treats people as a means to an end

Meaningful interaction with local cultures

Hands Up is all about people: enriching people's lives through travel and service. We are committed to providing you with authentic experiences with real people…when you help build a house, you can expect to be joined by locals who often come along and lend a hand…and you can even have the opportunity to stay with a host family. Hands Up is your chance to get immersed in the local culture!

Where practical, we have arranged the Volunteer Project for the middle of the trip in order to provide time to learn about the culture before volunteering and to relax and reflect on your experience after the project.

Holidays that make a difference

All Hands Up staff are committed to giving you an enriching travel experience and know what is required to achieve this. The choice of sights will fill your photo album, and our Community Development projects will give you a real sense of achievement and help change lives for the better.

Maximising the amount of the money retained by the local communities

We use local guides and operators, and are committed to mentoring prospective guides, thus promoting their employment prospects. In addition, Hands Up is committed to investing into sustainable development projects within the communities we support. For more information on this, see our 'Community Based Tours' section.

Small group or independent travel

We offer small group and independent travel. If you choose a group tour, we will form the group for you, and you can book in the knowledge that you will be part of a personal, intimate travel experience, as most of our tour groups are restricted to a maximum of 12 travellers.

If you wish to travel independently or with one or two friends (and not with a group that we assemble for you), we can tailor-make your itinerary and arrange the Community Development volunteer project. However, some of the Community Development projects, such as building projects, are only practical for those travelling in a group.

For more information and customised pricing on these, please email us direct at tailormade@handsupholidays.com or phone our free phone number (UK) 0800 783 3554, or + 44 207 193 1062 elsewhere.

Local guides and/or tour leaders

Almost all our guides and tour leaders are born and raised in the country they work in, and are knowledgeable about their country's history and culture, as well as the challenges facing their country today. Expect them to gently challenge your worldview! At the same time, our guides delight in showing you 'off the beaten track' secrets and making you feel welcome and secure.

Eating safely and well

One of the highlights of travelling to exotic locations is the opportunity to tantalise the taste buds. We do our best to ensure that all your meals are delicious, healthy and safe. Many meals are included in the trip price (these are indicated on each itinerary), while we also recognise that sometimes you want the freedom to choose your own dining destination. Your guide will happily make recommendations, if requested.

Real adventure

We aim to provide you with an amazing, enriching adventure that makes a positive difference.

Hands Up Holidays – Enjoy, Experience, Enrich… yourself, and the community

The Concept

Hands Up Holidays is all about giving you amazing holiday experiences that combine eco-sightseeing with a meaningful taste of volunteering.

Here is a sample 14 day trip:

Days 1-5 are with your local, English-speaking guide; exploring your chosen destination and also learning some of the local language,

266

cultural norms and etiquette. Your accommodation is generally 4-5* but we tailor-make trips to suit all budgets.

Days 6-9 are your taste of volunteering days. Here you experience meaningful interaction with local people while you give back through volunteering. This includes (a) being a reading partner, (b) helping at an orphanage, (c) building a house, (d) environmental conservation, (e) repairs and renovations.

Days 10-14 are for reflecting on your volunteer experience, for consolidating any group bonding, relaxing and continuing to explore with your local guide.

All our trips are rated out of 5 for Comfort and Activity level, so you can find the trip that suits you best.

These volunteer adventures are for you if:

- You are interested in having a break, want to explore a destination, and also give something back to a local community.
- You value meaningful interaction with other cultures - achieved through the medium of volunteering.
- You value small group or tailor-made sustainable tourism practices that directly benefit local communities.
- You do not have specific skills, but have a lot of enthusiasm and a positive attitude (OR if you do have specific skills, we will match your skills where possible)

Most of these trips are upmarket, some of them even luxurious in terms of accommodation, as we know that this is your holiday, and volunteering does not have to involve sleeping on the floor; luxury volunteering is our specialty - although we can arrange this if you prefer, and will gladly tailormake a trip to suit your budget and requirements.

The volunteering portion of your trip is generally 4 days out of a 14 day trip - not enough time to save the world, but sufficient to make a positive impact, rub shoulders with the local people, and have your worldview challenged.

It is our hope that after experiencing a Hands Up Holiday voluntourism trip, you will feel inspired to volunteer for a longer period somewhere (even in your home town), or become a lifelong advocate or donor for the Community Development project you got involved with.

Hands Up Holidays is a founding member of the Ethical Tour Operators Group, part of Tourism Concern that is committed to sustainable tourism that benefits local communities and the environment.

Come and join us for your Adventure That Counts!

A message from the Founder - Christopher Hill

"I founded Hands Up Holidays to give you the opportunity to not only see amazing sights, but also to have authentic interaction with local people and give something back in a "hands on" way to local communities through a taste of volunteering.

In my life I have been blessed to have had some incredible travel experiences in over 50 countries, from African sunsets on safari, to swimming with dolphins, to hiking up volcanoes and even gasping for breath in the Himalayas.

But as amazing as those experiences are, my most enduring memories are the times when I have engaged in meaningful ways with the local people: becoming the official photographer at a village wedding in a remote section of North-East Vietnam, sharing chai with Indian farmers, sheeshah with Touareg nomads or copious brandies with gracious Serbian hosts are memories I cherish.

Moreover, when these interactions are overlaid with giving back through volunteering, they became incredibly fulfilling, inspiring…and life changing. Experiences such as helping build a house in South Africa and teaching English to my host family in a home-stay in Guatemala are great examples, and the lifelong friends I have made as a result and the lives changed were the catalyst for leaving my job in the City in London and setting up Hands Up Holidays.

Through volunteering, and the consequent meaningful interaction with local people, I gained an insight into peoples' lives, and was blown away by how whilst they had little materially but were incredibly rich culturally and socially.
I was both challenged and inspired by this, and I decided to adopt a simpler, more contented attitude to life – being grateful for what I have, rather than striving for more and more possessions.

I started working on Hands Up Holidays in 2003 to make it easy for you, fellow travellers, to have incredible voluntourism experiences and dig a little deeper into a community and give back in ways that enable you to make a positive impact in 3-5 days with a taste of volunteering.

I am passionate about you having amazing travel experiences through Hands Up Holidays. Expect to have a meaningful holiday with us, while at the same time being challenged to look at the world in a new light.

That's why we are Hands Up Holidays – Adventures That Count…for you, and the community."

Christopher Hill

Managing Director and Founder

'Amber' meeting #2 Feb 16

- Rapport is very good - scones + soup!
  She said she enjoys talking with
  me

- Talking about 'Sally' for a long time
  after tape stopped - this happened
  last time also - she needs to talk
  to someone - ethics, stressful for
  me

- Inca trail - a life goal - but put on
  hold because of family commitments -
  Sally

- Sally - the meaningful item from
  Peru - important because it is
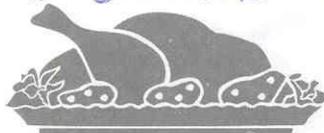
imbued with personal meaning,
  * we take our lives with
  us when we travel -
  do not seperate it

issues to follow up on:
  more of ~~the~~ Amber's
  relationship with Sally -
  impotance of

- How she integrates Peru experience
  back into her everyday life

- Read issues of trust, ethics,
  personal toll on researchers

- Next meeting - 2 months?
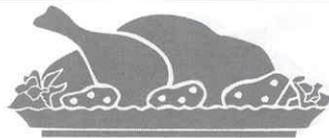
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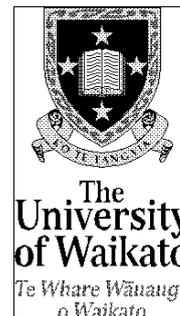
PhD in Tourism and Hospitality Management: Information Sheet

Overview

I am a PhD (Doctorate of Philosophy) candidate in Tourism and Hospitality Management at The University of Waikato, New Zealand. The PhD requires students to investigate and provide significant new insight into a research topic.

Who is responsible?

My name is Greg Willson. You can contact me on 021 170 2051, email me at gbw2@waikato.ac.nz or contact me at the address in the letterhead. My chief supervisor is Dr. Alison McIntosh, who can be contacted at mcintosh@waikato.ac.nz, or by phoning + 64 7 838 4962. My second supervisor is Dr. Anne Zahra, who can be contacted at a.zahra@mngt.waikato.ac.nz, or by phoning + 64 7 858 5087.

What is the research study about?

The goals of this research are to determine the factors that lead people to undertake travel which is more independent from mainstream travel, and to explore any meaningful and personally significant experiences that are gained from this travel.

What will you have to do and how long will it take?

Ideally, I would like to conduct an interview with participants before they embark on their travels. This will take approximately 60-90 minutes. I would also like participants to either compile a journal or keep an audio-commentary of what they are feeling and experiencing on tour. The length of entries is not important, but I would appreciate if entries are made on a regular basis (at least once a day). I would also like participants to take photographs of significant things they encounter on the tour. After the travel, I would like to get a copy of any photographs that hold particular meaning or significance for participants, and their journal (or audio recording). I would then wish to conduct a final interview for approximately 60-90 minutes at a later date to talk to you about your trip upon arrival home. You may also like to compile a poem or create a collage about your travel experiences, and if you do so, I will seek your permission as to whether these can be used in my research outputs.

What will happen to the information collected?

The information received by participants will only be used for academic purposes and will be presented in my PhD, during academic presentations, and published in academic journals. Only myself, and my two supervisors will be privy to any notes and tapes. After my research has ended, all notes will be destroyed and tapes erased. I will keep a copy of my research on file but will treat it with the strictest confidentiality. No participants will be named or identified in research reports. I

would like to send my transcripts of our discussions back to you to ensure that what I have recorded is correct and would also like to discuss with you, my analysis of your journal.

<u>Declaration to participants</u>
If you take part in the study, you have the right to:
- Refuse to answer any question, and to withdraw from the study at any time up until 31 December 2008.
- Ask any further questions about the study that occur to you during your participation.
- Be given access to a summary of the findings from the study when it is concluded.