
Faith Development Research at Twenty Years¹

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Within a relatively short time period of twenty years, the theory of faith development formulated by James W. Fowler² has attracted attention and inspired theoretical and empirical research in psychology, theology, religious education, and pastoral care. While the United States has been the main center of research, interest in faith development theory has spread steadily worldwide.

The growing reputation of faith development theory had its seismic focus in Emory University's Center for Faith Development; however, the Center in Atlanta never claimed to be the sole faith development research laboratory. The Center never sought to establish rigid research coordination or to propagate a sacrosanct theory and methodology. On the contrary, faith development theory has had a history of widespread dissemination from the very beginning, and, thus, it has experienced not only a great amount of both positive and negative critique but also a creative evolution in theory and research method.

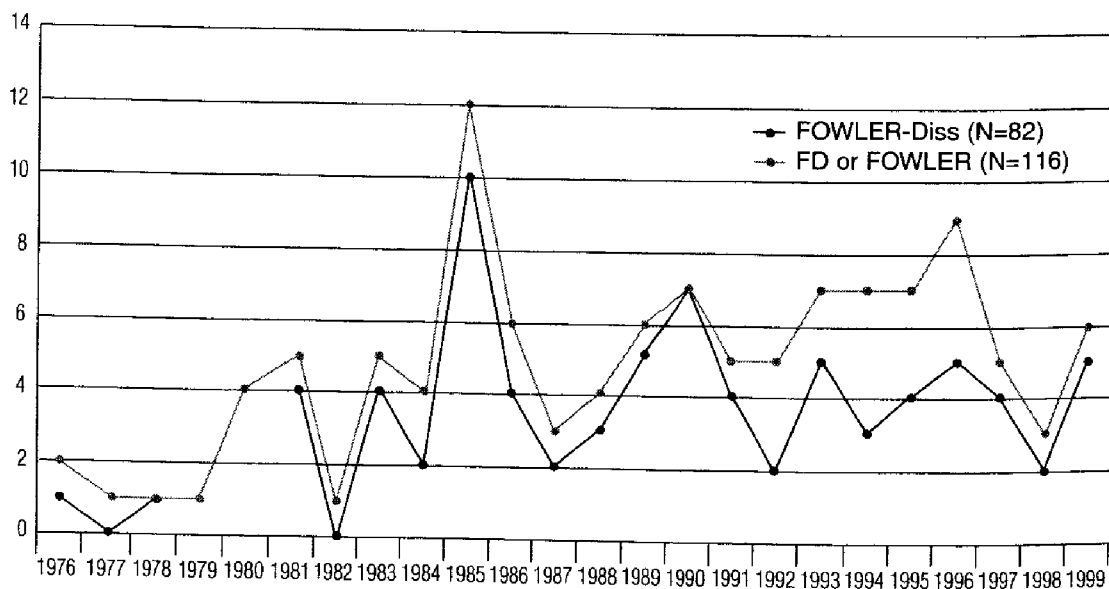
This chapter intends to summarize these past twenty years of dissemination, while also providing an overview of the critique and creative evolution experienced by faith development theory. I will focus mostly on the last decade here, referring for a more detailed account of the earlier years to the reports by Sharon Parks,³ H. J. McDargh,⁴ and Nicola Slee.⁵ I also will provide an account of my comprehensive search of the literature, while paying special attention to the more recent contributions in Fowler's own writings. We can distinguish three directions in the evolution of faith development theory: empirical research, theoretical reflection, and studies on practical application. This leads to the structure of the first part of this chapter. The second part deals with more recent developments and the perspectives for future research. I explicitly invite your critical comments about my portrayal of the last twenty years of faith development research, and I further would appreciate information about any literature that my efforts have not uncovered thus far.

1. Reception, Replication, and Responses, 1981–1999

1.1 Statistical Overview

Within the last twenty years, Fowler's faith development theory has inspired a great number of theoretical and empirical projects. A statistical survey of completed dissertations allows us to assess the influence of Fowler's faith development theory. In my search of the literature,⁶ I found well over a hundred dissertations completed between 1976 and 1999, for which Fowler's faith development theory constituted at least a significant position. Out of this number, I have identified eighty-two dissertations focusing primarily or exclusively on Fowler's faith development theory ("Fowler dissertations"). Figure 1 shows the rise and decline of interest in faith development theory from the early years to the present, including an obvious peak four years after *Stages of Faith* was published. A slight decline in the number of doctoral students focusing exclusively on Fowler's theory also becomes evident in the 1990s.

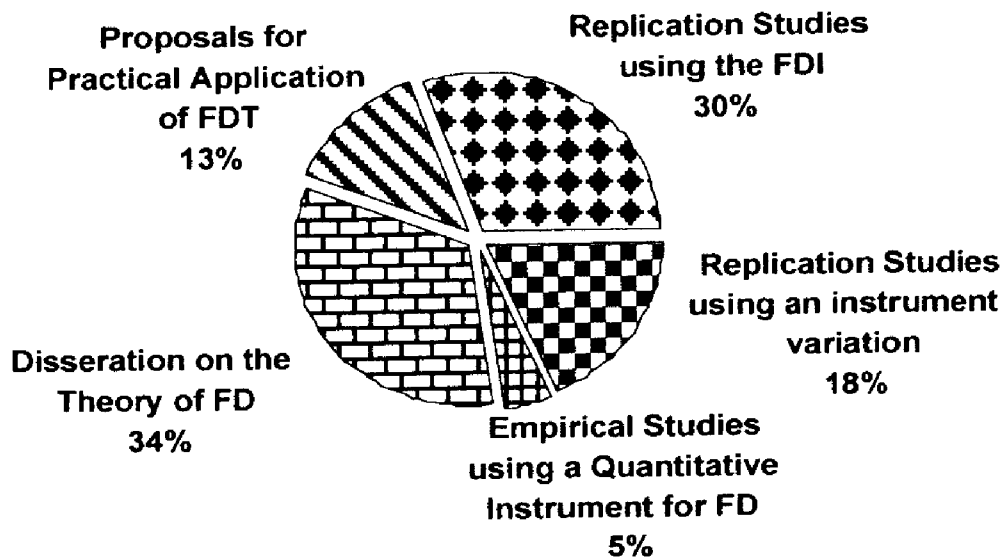
Figure 1: Faith Development and Fowler Dissertations 1976–1999



Within this time period, almost all of the dissertations on Fowler's theory and research were published in the United States, with the following exceptions: five dissertations in Canada, two in Germany, two in England, and one in Finland. Judging from the number of dissertation projects, European theology and European psychology of religion obviously do not appear to have developed an extensive interest in faith development research. To be sure, Fowler's theory of faith development awakened interest in Europe starting almost immediately after the publication of *Stages of Faith*.⁷ This interest has increased over the years⁸ and continues into the present,⁹ however, most of the European contributions issue from the fields of theology and religious education and focus more on theoretical aspects than on research questions. European research on religion appears rather reserved regarding the inclusion of Fowler's theory.

The majority of dissertations dealing with Fowler’s theory are empirical studies. As Figure 2 shows, out of the total of eighty-two studies that I have identified as Fowler dissertations, forty-four (53%) are empirical studies, of which twenty-five (30%) apply the classical Faith Development Instrument, fifteen (18%) apply a variation of the instrument, and four (5%) use a scale-type instrument to measure faith development; twenty-seven (34%) discuss Fowler’s theory; and eleven (13%) deal with questions of applying faith development theory in religious education, pastoral care, and church work.

Figure 2: Dissertations Dealing with Fowler’s Theory



The books and the large number of journal articles on Fowler’s faith development theory have not been evaluated statistically. It is interesting to note that all of the monographs focusing exclusively on Fowler’s theory are dissertations. There are also several other thought-provoking monographs that dedicate at least a chapter or two to Fowler.¹⁰ This means that most of the research on faith development theory is only accessible for a scholarly elite with the resources to locate and finally obtain the texts on paper, microfiche, or as computer files. I shall now go through the various fields in which research and reflection on Fowler’s theory have been undertaken, beginning with a brief look into proposals for the practical application of faith development theory.

1.2 Practical Application Studies: Using Faith Development as a Perspective and Instrument in Practical Work, Especially in Religious Education

A statistical analysis of the most valued books—or “best-sellers”—in religious education, compiled by Woodrow Walter,¹¹ reached the surprising conclusion that the books on Fowler’s theory are the absolute best-sellers in the United

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States. Religious educators have rated three faith development books among the top four, namely Fowler's *Stages of Faith*, Dykstra and Parks's *Faith Development and Fowler*, and Stokes's *Faith Development in the Adult Life Cycle*.

In another dissertation completed in 1996, Nancy Vanlue¹² presents a meta-analysis of dissertations in English that she regards as highly relevant to adult faith development. Vanlue identified sixty such dissertations completed between 1980 and 1994. Twenty-six of the dissertations judged by Vanlue to be highly relevant for adult education are found in my sample of Fowler dissertations as well. This can be taken as another indicator of the special recognition Fowler's faith development theory has received in religious education in the United States.

Especially for the field of religious education, Fowler's theory seems to be a significant source of new insights. The focus on religious education is obvious in both the United States and Europe, even if on a considerably lower level for Europe. A significant number of European dissertations and other contributions address religious education from a faith development perspective,¹³ some of them based on empirical studies. The German project on religious education and developmental psychology also should be mentioned in this context. Based on empirical research in the teacher-student interaction in the Tübingen area,¹⁴ this project has provided an impulse for the further integration of a developmental perspective in religious education.¹⁵

Faith development theory also has been considered helpful for the field of pastoral work. The question of the "modal levels of development" of a congregation or religious group has received some attention in this context.¹⁶ However, the focus on pastoral work and congregations has remained a minor focus for the application of faith development theory.

The case is different for the field of pastoral care, for which Fowler's book *Faith Development and Pastoral Care* has been inspiring.¹⁷ If we include psychological counseling and psychoanalytic treatment, a line of research in faith development that appears very promising in terms of its practical application comes to light: the study of faith development in relation to psychological well-being, coping with crises, and dealing with stress factors. Early research already attempted to put the faith development instrument to work in pastoral assessment.¹⁸ Detailed contributions on this topic have been made in the last decade, including the following: Dale Brown's work on "Doubt and Anxiety in Theological and Psychological Perspective with Implications for Pastoral Care and Pastoral Theology"¹⁹ and Ronald Oliver's study on "Effects of an Acute Traumatic Crisis on Faith."²⁰ Furthermore, empirical studies have investigated the relation between faith development and AIDS,²¹ the faith development of people recovering from chemical dependency,²² the faith development of mothers of multihandicapped children,²³ and that of parents after the death of a child.²⁴ These studies suggest that research on religion and health, or religion and coping, could include at least a subdivision of research on the relation between faith development and health and/or coping. The advantage of including a developmental perspective lies in the

possibility of obtaining a better differentiation between the stages or styles of religion in regard to their influence and effect on health and coping. This also provides a means of overcoming simplifying questions such as “Is religion good for your health?”²⁵ Most of these studies include an empirical research component and thus can be assigned to the group of empirical studies treated below. However, they also include thoughtful proposals for using the faith development perspective within the context of pastoral care and counseling. A theoretical dimension can also be discerned—the relation of faith development to personality theories and psychoanalytic perspectives in particular. This leads us to the next section, which surveys theoretical reflections on Fowler’s theory.

1.3 Theoretical Reflection on Fowler’s Theory

Many of the early critical contributions to the discussion of Fowler’s theory are summarized in Parks’s article on “The North American Critique of James Fowler’s Theory.”²⁶ Parks highlights five areas of concern in the North American critique of Fowler’s theory: its definition of faith, its description of Stage 6, its adequacy in relation to particular religious beliefs, its account for the emotional and the unconscious, and, finally, its adequacy in terms of sociopolitical analysis, particularly gender analysis. I wish to highlight two realms of theoretical discourse about Fowler’s faith development theory here: discussions, some of them highly critical, focusing mainly on faith development theory’s theological adequacy and consistency; and contributions investigating contradictions and correlations of Fowler’s theory with psychoanalytic perspectives on human development.

1.3.1 Theological Concerns with Faith Development Theory

Fowler’s theoretical framework has been scrutinized and critically evaluated from different theological angles. The various theoretical reflections on the basic principles of Fowler’s theory have led to quite a number of attempts to reconstruct Fowler’s theory or at least to suggest significant modifications.

Theological reflection, with special focus on Fowler’s own roots in H. Richard Niebuhr, is the characteristic of some contributions in the early years. With rather positive results, Mark Durrett²⁷ investigated Fowler’s roots in the theology of H. Richard Niebuhr. Though he suggests a modification of Fowler’s structural model so as to more adequately present Niebuhr’s thought on faith as loyalty, his overall conclusion suggests an understanding of Fowler’s theory as an agenda for the formation and transformation of faith in accordance with Niebuhr’s triadic conception of human and Christian faith. With more critical conclusions, One Park²⁸ draws attention to a distortion of the theological dimension in faith development theory. According to Park, Fowler does not do justice to Niebuhr’s discussion of the dark and inevitable side of human nature including meaninglessness and sin.²⁹ Park contends that this deficiency is due to Fowler’s strong alliance with the structural-developmental model, which corresponds to Fowler’s dependence on a highly optimistic view of the

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human being. “His theory would be more balanced and useful for Christian education,” Park concludes, “if it paid more attention to the inescapably conflictual aspects of human being.”³⁰

Romney Moseley³¹ already takes a critical standpoint in his dissertation. In his subsequent research, he has proposed a differentiation of the concept of religious conversion into *lateral* and *structural* conversion—an aspect that Fowler integrated to some extent in his 1981 book. In his later book *Becoming a Self before God*,³² Moseley challenges the philosophical and theological foundations from a Kierkegaardian perspective and claims that Fowler’s theory has missed the dialectical-paradoxical character of faith. We also meet the theme of conversion in Hancock’s dissertation.³³ He focuses on conversion in the faith development theories of Fowler and James Loder, notes similarities and dissimilarities between them, and draws parallels to the identity development theories of Erikson and Marcia. Finally, Hancock draws conclusions for adolescent Christian education. Gregory Hunt³⁴ also investigates the theological foundations of faith development theory and presents a profound critique of Fowler’s theory. After an extensive discussion of strengths and weaknesses in faith development theory, he concludes his dissertation by delineating “a set of foundational theological affirmations for a meaningful theory of faith development.”³⁵

A special focus of critique has been the structuralism of faith development theory. The problem of “structure versus content” is discussed in a fair amount of contributions. George Cristiano devotes special attention to this problem.³⁶ He analyzes Fowler’s theory to determine how much it is influenced by and dependent on the theological works of Paul Tillich and H. Richard Niebuhr, which could be a reason for precluding faith development theory from public schools. He finds that “[B]y exorcising content out of accepted religious concepts Fowler effectively secularized his faith theory, thus opening the door for inclusion into public education.”³⁷ According to Cristiano, Fowler’s theory could qualify as an alternative, for example, to moral development theory, because of its sufficient exclusion of theological and religious content. Though Cristiano contends that there is a lack of clarity regarding faith development’s application in public schools, the advantage of Fowler’s theory is the more decisive inclusion of the affective domain. While Cristiano’s conclusion appears rather critical and skeptical in regard to the content-structure relation, Randy Simmonds, in the dissertation he completed in the same year,³⁸ makes a strong case for an essential relation between structure and content in faith. Simmonds highlights the effect of the contents of faith assuming that “the contents of a person’s faith...are embodied in the faith community to which the person belongs.”³⁹ The results of Simmonds’s empirical comparison of two congregations indicates that “the community modal level of faith was the determinative factor in the difference between the two groups.”⁴⁰ Thus, Simmonds concludes that “the contents of the community’s faith effects the structure of their faith.”⁴¹

My own dissertation⁴² also belongs in this group of critical-constructive contributions to the theory of faith development. I investigated the

hermeneutics of faith development theory and formulated a critique of Fowler's conceptualization of faith, of faith development, and of the research methodology from the perspective of the French phenomenological philosophy of Paul Ricoeur. The conclusions are contextual modifications of the concept of faith and faith development and also constitute a proposal for a new methodological approach in faith development research that can better account for the narrative quality of faith trajectories. Norbert Hahn⁴³ develops an interpretation of faith development theory as a "liberation theology for the middle-class." Assuming that, in the context of U.S. congregations, the metaphor of development opens up much greater access to and potential for institutional transformation than the metaphor of liberation, Hahn aims at the formulation of a model of practical theological transformation. Faith development theory's descriptive, empirical focus thereby shifts from the individual to congregations.

Judging from the following two contributions, my European colleagues appear to be rather critical of the faith development perspective. Gabriele Bussmann,⁴⁴ in her dissertation at Münster, is highly critical of both Fowler's and Oser's theories; she concludes that both theories are incapable of delineating the foundations of Christian faith, which, from her perspective, would require inclusion of the dimensions of experience and function. As an alternative, Bussmann works out a concept of *Vertrauen* ("trust") that would be adequate for theology and religious education when facing the loss of faith in our times. In an equally critical approach, Lauri Oikarinen's dissertation,⁴⁵ completed in Finland, examines the consistency of faith development theory with respect to the philosophy of science and also with respect to its applicability in religious education. Fowler's concept of faith as universal human meaning making and its grounding in structural cognitive patterns is criticized for being inconsistent throughout the stages, especially in the definition of the sixth stage. Oikarinen concludes that "in defining faith and faith development, Fowler uses models based on different kinds of ontology, epistemology, and methodology simultaneously and in some respects without integration. In conjunction with the principles of progressivism and pragmatism Fowler tries to proceed from the immanent reality delineated by empiristic and rationalistic criteria to transcendent reality based upon revelation."⁴⁶ Furthermore, Oikarinen doubts that Fowler's structural approach does full justice to the affective, dynamic, and paradoxical features of the Christian faith tradition and the contextual dimension of faith development. Though finding some value in the faith development perspective, especially in the Stage 5 description, for its capacity to enrich the understanding and evaluation of religious education, Oikarinen concludes: "Fowler's theory is not able to offer a consistent and universal criterion for ideological and religious education."⁴⁷

That European theology is not only critical toward faith development theory but also has some thoughtful new suggestions to offer can be seen in the most recent theoretical contribution, which is also the first monograph on Fowler's theory in theology in the German-speaking world—the reconstruction of faith development theory in Gabriele Klappenecker's dissertation,

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completed at Heidelberg.⁴⁸ On the basis of a thorough analysis of the theories of H. Richard Niebuhr, Kohlberg, and Erikson, Klappenecker reconstructs Fowler's faith development theory in terms of an ethics of responsibility that has implications for practical theology. Klappenecker suggests a reconstrual of Fowler's stages as "stages of responsibility."

This extensive survey of the critical reflections on faith development theory from various predominantly theological standpoints cannot be distilled into a harmonious synthesis. It resembles rather a dissonant orchestra. However, the articulated positions are similar in the seriousness with which they respond to the challenge of a theory that, without denying its roots in theology, adopts its basic principles from structural-developmental theory. Most of these researchers felt the need to both investigate their own theological roots and present various proposals for a reconstruction of faith development theory. This indicates above all that Fowler's theory has attracted attention from many theologians in both the United States and beyond, inspiring them to respond to the challenge it presents. Nevertheless, some common themes emerge: the call to attend to the contents of faith, the critical question of whether or not an optimistic structural logic of development diverts attention from the dark side of the human experience, and the proposal to account for the determinative influence of the context, especially the faith communities, to name but a few. From this variety of critical-constructive contributions, it is understandable that Fowler has engaged primarily in the theological grounding of his perspective. However, to the disappointment of many of these researchers, Fowler has not ventured into major theoretical revisions; rather, he has engaged in deepening and enriching the theological grounding of faith development theory,⁴⁹ proposing its application in pastoral care,⁵⁰ religious education, and the public church,⁵¹ and finally explicates the implications of his perspective for practical theology and for the "public challenges of postmodern life."⁵²

1.3.2 Theoretical Correlation of Faith Development Theory with Psychoanalytic Perspectives

From its early years, faith development theory has evoked reflection on its relation to psychoanalysis. The Jungian perspective was investigated in three of the earlier dissertations. The study completed by Gregg Raduka⁵³ focused on the differences and possible synthesis between Fowler's descriptions of stages of faith development and Jungian stages of personality development. Leonard Bradley's dissertation⁵⁴ investigated possible relationships between personality type as measured by the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and faith development as measured by Fowler's "Faith Development Interview." Finally, Mary Ford-Grabowsky⁵⁵ suggests a concept of the Christian faith developed from the works of Hildegard of Bingen and C. G. Jung as a "critical alternative to Fowler." Ford-Grabowsky⁵⁶ has continued to elaborate upon her critical view on faith development. H. J. McDargh⁵⁷ investigates the relationship between object relations theory and the faith development paradigm. It is very likely due to the fact that Fowler himself has drawn a connection to the

psychoanalytical perspective of Ana-Maria Rizzuto⁵⁸ that the correlation of faith development theory with Rizzuto's psychoanalysis has been discussed increasingly over the years. M. Thompson's thesis⁵⁹ on Fowler and Rizzuto is an example of this type of work. However, we also have the dissertation completed by Renee Penticoff,⁶⁰ who investigated Rizzuto's concept of the God representation as it arises dynamically in early childhood and possibly plays a role in the process of faith and self-becoming. With respect to therapeutic assessment and intervention, Penticoff suggests applying both perspectives in therapeutic assessment and intervention: the God representation in Rizzuto's terms and faith development. Recently, Fowler himself⁶¹ intentionally has included Rizzuto's perspective for his description, especially in reference to the early stages of faith development. Even more recently, the discussion about the relevance of Rizzuto's psychoanalytical perspective has intensified, for example, in her response⁶² to a series of papers⁶³ presented in an American Psychological Association (APA) symposium on "Faith Development beyond the Modern Paradigm" held in Boston in 1999. The studies show that a correlation between psychoanalytic perspectives and faith development theory is not only plausible, but that both sides gain from such a correlation. For faith development theory, it promises to balance out some of the cognitive-structural limitedness and thereby lead to a more comprehensive account of faith development. However, this correlation requires further clarification and still remains one of the desiderata inviting further research.

1.4 Empirical Studies

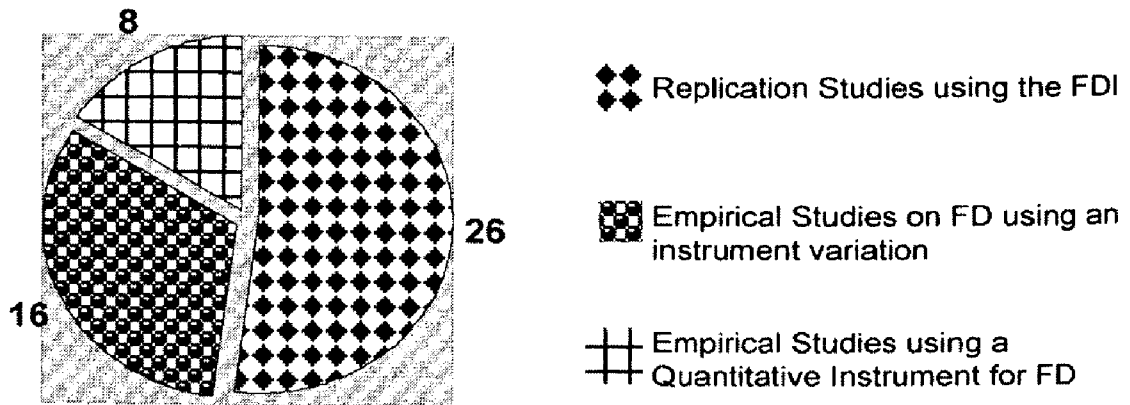
Criticism of Fowler that maintains he had little interest in providing more empirical evidence for his theory⁶⁴ may appear justified, since he has worked more extensively on the theological grounding of faith development theory. However, his texts not only have a theological and practical focus but also contain some advancements and modifications of faith development theory. Finally, this criticism voiced against faith development theory is no longer justified in view of the large number of qualitative replication studies using the faith development instrument. I shall first provide an overview before going into more detail.

1.4.1 Empirical Studies on Faith Development—An Overview

According to Nicola Slee,⁶⁵ eleven empirical studies in faith development qualify as "replication studies" of Fowler's research,⁶⁶ and another eight as what she calls "correlational studies." In contrast, I have identified thirty Fowler replication studies completed before the turn of the century. Twenty-six of them used the classical Faith Development Interview⁶⁷ in their research,⁶⁸ and four of them used a variation of the faith development instrument. The empirical studies in faith development using some kind of creative qualitative method variation based on Fowler's instrument amount to a total of sixteen.⁶⁹ In my opinion, only four of them can be termed replication studies. The

qualitative studies, taken together, add approximately 1,000 Faith Development Interviews to the sample of 359 upon which *Stages of Faith* was based. There have also been some attempts to develop a shorter research instrument, a Fowler Scale or Faith Development Scale, and to use it in part in combination with other measurements.⁷⁰ Figure 3 presents a statistical overview.

Figure 3: Empirical Studies in Faith Development



Only a lengthy chapter or a book could portray adequately the studies and present an overview—or, to the extent that this is possible, a comparison—of the results. This task still awaits another hard-working and excellent doctoral student. What I can do here is highlight some results that speak to specific foci of research.

1.4.2 Research Focus: Correlation of Faith Development with Personality Development

The interest in research on the relation between faith and moral development that was so important in the first decade of faith development research has decreased.⁷¹ There are few new results to report that have not been presented already in earlier searches of the literature. Correlations of faith development with other dimensions of human development have become more interesting—for example, psychoanalytic aspects of the person as they relate to faith development. This, of course, takes up a line of studies that has been mentioned previously. However, with the exception of the dissertations dealing with the correlation of faith development and Jungian psychology, the dialogue has tended toward a theoretical discussion about this correlation and has not yet been put to work and tested in empirical research. This has changed in recent years with two empirical studies that I will mention here.

Victor Clore's study "Faith Development in Adults: Scale of Measurement and Relation to Attachment"⁷² suggests that we understand development as "the progressive appropriation of self and other."⁷³ He assumes that faith relates to attachment, and thus he proposes a new and different model of development, for which he refers to John Bowlby⁷⁴ and to Bartholomew and Horowitz.⁷⁵ Clore reports that "[T]he analysis of the data suggested that faith

development, rather than a linear progression of one stage succeeding another, is better conceived as a continuous two-dimensional process of self and other appropriation."⁷⁶

Another recent empirical study has been completed by John Canavan on "Oedipal Resolution and Locus of Control as Determinants of Stage of Faith Development."⁷⁷ Canavan examined the impact of psychosexual development on faith development and hypothesized specifically that less adequate levels of Oedipal resolution would be related to lower levels of faith development, and that more adequate levels of Oedipal resolution would be related to higher levels of faith development. Canavan also examined the locus of control construct to determine how it relates to faith development. His sample consisted of eighty-three women and fifty men from western Ireland. The results led Canavan to the conclusion that faith development theory has the potential both to enhance the understanding of human development and also to provide a framework enabling clinicians to intervene effectively with religiously oriented clients.⁷⁸

These studies are promising in the sense that they test the relation between psychodynamics and faith development, an aspect that has been hypothesized by quite a number of researchers in the field, including Fowler himself, but that has not been tested empirically in an adequate manner. This line of research could have the capability to test what I have discovered in more recent developments in Fowler's work (see below, 2.1) and in the discussion on faith development.

1.4.3 Research Focus: Women's Religious Development

Some *theoretical* studies (that I could also have mentioned in section 1.3) can be understood as opening perspectives on concepts of faith and faith development capable of accounting for women's faith development. Discussions about imagination and the self can be mentioned within this context.⁷⁹ Theresa Sallnow, in her critical exploration of Fowler's theory with special reference to personalist philosophy,⁸⁰ poses serious questions to the basic framework of faith development theory from the perspective of human development, which according to her should account for the "mystery and uniqueness of persons as the essential foundation for any exploration of human faith life."⁸¹ Therefore, Sallnow seeks to highlight the role of "imagination and responsibility," but concludes that a developmental theory must account for the "paradox and ambiguity in human experience" and also for "the distinctiveness of personal rather than linear time."⁸² Referring more explicitly to feminist theory, but also to psychoanalytic theory, Carol Pitts's investigation "The Self as a Metaphor"⁸³ examines and compares Fowler's, Kegan's, and Kohut's concepts of the self and Keller's feminist theory. She develops the metaphor of the self as a pluriform self, honoring its potential oneness and manyness, which may help not only to improve pastoral care and counseling—her focus is women with Dissociative Identity Disorders—but also to advance feminist and postmodern conceptualizations of the self.

The *empirical* studies in faith development of women present a strong proposal for revising the definition of faith to include a relational perspective, especially with regard to Individuative-Reflective faith (Stage 4). Based on theoretical reflection on the nature of faith and also on the interpretation of interviews with twelve women ministers, Nancy Devor⁸⁴ highlights the relational character of women's faith and suggests that Fowler's stages and logic of development be reworked to include a much more prominent relational perspective. In a parallel perspective, but more focused on a very specific sample, Janice Leary⁸⁵ found in her study of twenty-one mothers of multihandicapped children an ethics of care and responsibility as the outstanding pattern of faith. She maintains that this ethics of care is not valued appropriately in faith development theory, thereby depressing women's scores onto Stage 3.

Two more recent empirical studies on women's faith development confirm these accounts but do not agree with their conclusions. Pamela Morgan⁸⁶ has studied the faith development of women in crisis. Fowler's theory and research instrument were tested in a marginal population of women experiencing mental health crises. Twenty-four women living in an urban halfway house setting were interviewed. Morgan reports that seventy-five percent of the women operate from the Synthetic-Conventional stage of faith development and that all of the women shared stories in which they retold or expanded their Faith Development Interview, focusing on their experiences. Rather than questioning the foundation of faith development theory to do justice to these women, Morgan concludes that the ultimate challenge is that development be the aim of therapy. Margaret Cowden's study "Faith Development in Women: A Comparison of the Moral Development Theories of Carol Gilligan and Lawrence Kohlberg and the Faith Development Theory of James Fowler"⁸⁷ examined Kohlberg's and Gilligan's moral development theories and Fowler's faith development theory in order to determine their implications for a better understanding of faith development in women. From an analysis of in-depth interviews with ten American Baptist clergywomen, Cowden reports that five women showed evidence of a predominant moral orientation toward care, four showed an orientation toward justice, and one an integration of those two. Cowden concludes:

The results of this research suggests that a starting point for future research lies in further analysis of the possible interrelatedness of Gilligan's theory of moral development and Fowler's theory of faith development...[N]either model alone is sufficient to explain the process of faith development in women...[I]n order to obtain a fuller understanding of the dynamic process of faith development in women, Fowler's theory would have to accommodate insights from Gilligan's theory of moral development in order to adequately portray the faith development process in women's experience.⁸⁸

Robin Smith⁸⁹ has studied the professional and faith development of female religious leaders using a qualitative method of narrative analysis. Smith

aims at developing a grounded theory about the faith and professional development of women in religious leadership and concludes that, although there are thematic similarities found in James Fowler's faith development theory and this research, women do not move vertically and permanently through specific stages of faith development. Rather, women experience what Smith describes metaphorically as a whirlpool experience of faith.

It is obvious that most of the studies on women's faith development conclude with a clear proposal to revise the concept of faith and faith development, especially for the Individuative-Reflective stage of faith, as they regard Fowler's description of this stage to be inadequate for women's faith and faith development. In the foreword to the German translation of *Stages of Faith*,⁹⁰ Fowler responded to this critique and suggested a revision of the Stage 4 description to include a concept of relational knowing.⁹¹ The 1993 revised edition of the *Manual for Faith Development Research*⁹² includes "provisional insights and revisions"⁹³ in the form of a contribution by Karen DeNicola, but this revision was not worked into the Manual itself.

1.4.4 Research Focus: Cross-cultural Research

In addition to the cross-cultural studies comprising a major portion of empirical research, there are also theoretical studies that interpret Fowler's faith development theory from the perspective of other faith traditions and cultural contexts. Jose Plackal undertook "A Dialogical Inquiry into the Theory of James W. Fowler from the Cultural Context of India."⁹⁴ U. M. A. Majmudar's⁹⁵ East-West interfaith study interprets the "structures" of Mahatma Gandhi's selfhood and spirituality in the light of James Fowler's theory. Fowler's Western theory is employed as a heuristic guide for examining and interpreting an Eastern man and his spiritual growth. Majmudar's conclusion provides overall support for Fowler's fundamental thesis that faith is a generic and universal feature of human living and meaning making. However, he also sees the need for modifying some stages that he considers somewhat too pro-Western. Though modest, this evaluation also raises questions about the cross-cultural applicability of faith development theory.

On the basis of the three cross-cultural faith development studies⁹⁶ that were available when she completed her article, Slee concludes: "These few studies provide some fascinating, but as yet inconclusive, evidence regarding the universality of Fowler's theory, as well as demonstrating some of the difficulties of translating Fowler's methodology to a non-Western milieu, and highlighting the need for more systematic research using cross-cultural samples."⁹⁷

Some additional cross-cultural research has been completed since then. There is the study of forty Baha'i, a sample of twenty in Canada and another sample of twenty in India, which confirmed the "general validity of the Fowler instrument when applied to the Indian sample; however specific problems arose with the construction of Stage 3 descriptors," indicating that faith development theory is not entirely free of cultural bias.⁹⁸ Two other recently

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completed research projects⁹⁹ using the faith development interview method in Korean and Romanian contexts only need to be mentioned in passing. While both studies had a rather small sample, they report general usefulness and applicability of the faith development instrument within their contexts. Thus, we can report some progress here in terms of the cross-cultural validity and applicability of the faith development instrument. Nevertheless, I agree with Slee that the research is not yet sufficient to provide empirical evidence of Fowler's universality claim, a claim that Fowler has not revoked but also has not repeated lately.¹⁰⁰

1.4.5 Advancement of the Method to Measure Faith Development

As already mentioned, there have been some attempts to develop and implement a shorter research instrument, partially alongside other measurements.¹⁰¹ The instrument¹⁰² used by Green and Hoffman¹⁰² in their research project for measuring the faith stage of their subjects was a newly formulated series of questions that reflected what the authors assumed to be compatible with the questions in the Fowler research tradition. In my opinion, these questions do not meet the standards of faith development research because, on the one hand, they fall back into a closed Christian worldview and, on the other hand, they pose very sophisticated and self-reflective questions. To my knowledge, their instrument has never been used in research again.

The "Fowler Scale" by Barnes, Dole, and Johnson¹⁰³ was the first scale to receive some attention and be used again in research.¹⁰⁴ The "Fowler Scale," a nine-item measure, was constructed for Fowler's Stages 2 through 5. The scale does not measure development in the sense of movement through these stages but allows for a differentiation of Fowler's faith styles (as the authors label the stages). For this scale, we only have initial evidence of validity. It is also not clear what the scores really mean, because we have no construct validity results.¹⁰⁵ In addition, I have the same judgment about Barnes et al.'s "Fowler Scale" as about Green and Hoffman's scale: It cannot be used among non-Christians. Thus, some work and perhaps revision would be required before it can be called *the* Fowler Scale.

For their empirical study about the impact of terminal cancer on the lives of patients and their spouses as a function of the stage of religious faith, Swensen, Fuller, and Clemens¹⁰⁶ have developed the "Stages of Faith Scale" as an instrument for measuring faith development. This scale is taken up by Canavan¹⁰⁷ in his dissertation, which I have already described. The "Stages of Faith Scale" is a very brief five-question selection from the *Manual of Faith Development Research*.¹⁰⁸ In my judgment, this series of questions leaves out important dimensions of the *Manual* entirely, such as the section on relationships (significant others, parents), the openness of value commitment beyond the individual, specific dimensions of religion (prayer, death, sin), and, finally, crises and peak experiences beyond the, nonetheless important, question of hope and faith. I regard this scale as too brief. Furthermore, I could not find any validity testing.

Clore's study¹⁰⁹ has been mentioned as a fresh approach to faith development in terms of a relationship between self and other (attachment). However, Clore also introduced a new methodological approach in his study: an original psychometric measure that he constructed and tested in a rather large sample of 509 subjects. This is a thirty-item scale and is more comprehensive than the "Stages of Faith Scale," but it is, nevertheless, a new measure rather independent from the classical faith development instrument. It still requires validity and reliability testing.

The "Faith Development Scale" (FDS) developed by Gary Leak and his group¹¹⁰ is probably the most recent development of a brief instrument for the quantitative evaluation of faith development. Leak et al. present results of studies to evidence validity. This short eight-item scale would be well-suited for research with larger samples in respect to time limitations. However, the FDS created by Leak and his group has a narrow focus on the institutional environment of Christian churches, family, friends, and belief systems. Here, I voice again the critique of narrowing the focus so that the instrument cannot include non-Christian faith orientations. Persons with a non-Christian new religious orientation would not find themselves represented well. Furthermore, the FDS has a strong focus on formal-operational reflection (Stage 4 competencies), and the style of the questions elicits rather self-reflective statements.

My conclusion about the quantitative instruments for measuring faith development is not positive. While we need a good quantitative instrument, we also need considerable time and energy to revise the instruments that have been developed so far—or to invent new ones—and put them through thorough testing for reliability and validity before going on to design larger research projects.

However, there has been some experimentation with and advancement of qualitative instruments for analyzing faith development. The methodological proposals for including a narrative approach in the analysis of interviews¹¹¹ are interesting, as is the invention of an instrument to use a written narrative in essay form as an instrument. Research strategies for presenting stories to the interviewee have been developed and used.¹¹²

The following empirical research projects have taken a narrative approach. Smith's¹¹³ project has been described above. E. Morgan¹¹⁴ presents "A Narrative Theological Study of Religious Autobiographical Quests" and describes four "journeys in faith" in a local Episcopal Church. Morgan looks at the narrative structure of these reports and attempts to elucidate the "model" or framework in them. Morgan also asks for the ways in which these journeys in faith are integrated with, and contrasted to, developmental stage and faith theories. Caitlin Anderson's¹¹⁵ study explores the role of religion, spirituality, and faith in the lives of three college women. Anderson has used, instead of the Faith Development Interview, descriptive narrative research as a form of interpretive inquiry. For this kind of approach, Anderson derives support from critics of Fowler's theory who suggest the adoption of a narrative lens. In terms of analysis, Anderson looks for narrative structures¹¹⁶ in the participants' stories.

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Sogol Nahavandi¹¹⁷ investigates the process of psychospiritual development and attempts to establish a narrative model of personality development. Anderson presents two case studies, using a new interview protocol that was compiled from two existing interview models—that is, Dan McAdams’s “Identifying Personal Myth Interview Protocol”¹¹⁸ and Fowler’s Faith Development Interview. The results confirmed that, in the later years of life, there is a shift in perspective with regard to one’s personal mythology. Moreover, Anderson concludes that Fowler’s theory and research instrument are universal and applicable, not only to people within Christian or Protestant religious backgrounds. He maintains that the Faith Development Interview can gather scorable and analyzable information even if conducted in a different language and given to people of different ethnicities, belief systems, and cultures.

The narrative approach adopted in these studies is suggestive and appears to yield, according to narrative analysis, in-depth interpretations and comprehensive case studies. Unfortunately, the very small numbers of subjects included in these projects indicate that this procedure consumes even more time and resources than the classical faith development instrument. Such a decided qualitative approach has its price. However, in my opinion, this could be a good way to continue. Looking for a briefer objective measure than the lengthy Faith Development Interview, David Rose¹¹⁹ developed an interesting new method to investigate faith development in large samples—a four-story instrument. The instrument presents four stories that raise issues of faith, and the subjects then respond to belief statements regarding the stories. Finally, David Hoffman¹²⁰ has developed a “Faith Development Essay Instrument” (FDEI), for which she claims reliability, validity, and good agreement with the classical Faith Development Interview.

2. Recent Developments and Perspectives for the Future

2.1 Faithful Change and Postmodern Challenges—Recent Developments in Fowler’s Work

Fowler’s style of reflecting, modifying, and expanding the faith development theory of *Stages of Faith* has not changed significantly. To the disappointment of some empirically oriented researchers, he has not reconstructed major aspects of the theory, which a great number of theoretical and empirical studies would suggest, nor has he engaged in revisions of the faith development methodology. Rather, not long after *Stages of Faith* was written, Fowler engaged in theological, philosophical, and social-scientific clarification of the faith development perspective in search of correlations with other theories and in explicating the value of the faith development perspective for the predicaments in church and society.¹²¹ However, some modest changes can be identified in these contributions, especially in the more recent ones. I would like to bring three of these new developments to your attention.

First, it is possible to identify developments in Fowler’s work that incorporate a psychoanalytic perspective. In his interpretation of the interview

with Mary,¹²² the psychosocial perspective already plays a decisive role, emphasizing the psychodynamic, life history, and also the life world as resources in Mary's journey of faith. Here, Fowler has given theoretical and empirical prominence to Erikson's work, which, as critics say, was not sufficiently worked into the theoretical and methodological core of the faith development theory of 1981. In 1987, Fowler took a significant step toward more seriously integrating psychodynamic models by correlating his own stages of faith with those of Robert Kegan.¹²³ Now, in his book *Faithful Change*,¹²⁴ Fowler has adopted, at least for the early stages of faith, a more psychodynamic perspective. He gives extensive reference to psychoanalytic contributions about infancy and early childhood that offer a rich description of Primal faith and Intuitive-Projective faith. He maintains that a more detailed reference to Erikson's psychosocial description of infancy yields deeper insights into the origin of faith and basic trust. Daniel Stern's¹²⁵ work on the interpersonal world of the infant also allows a more detailed and more precise account of imagination, ritualization, symbolization, and participation in faith as they emerge in infancy. And finally, a more explicit reference to Rizzuto's work results in a detailed perspective on key religious symbols as they emerge and develop in infancy and early childhood. Here, in the fresh description of Primal faith and Intuitive-Projective faith, the "profoundly relational"¹²⁶ character of faith is brought into the foreground. Child development as "a profoundly *interactive* matter"¹²⁷ is unfolded, focusing on emotional, psychodynamic, and interpersonal characteristics. In other words, in this new portrait of faith development focusing on the first stages in infancy and early childhood, Fowler integrates more fully some of the basic dimensions of religion/faith that pure structural-developmental theory has bracketed—*experience, function, and content*.

While I agree with this portrait of the origin of faith in early childhood, I suggest that it be expanded to include the other stages or styles of faith. For I believe that the expansion of the psychodynamic and, even more, of the interpersonal perspective, which has yielded better insights in the origin and early development of faith, would substantially change our perspective on adolescent and adult development. Perhaps then, faith development theory could provide a more profound answer to Rizzuto's questions: "What are the interpersonal and psychodynamic conditions for the emergence of a particular style? What are the narratives, affects, conflicts, defenses, fears, satisfactions that organize to form a particular style?"¹²⁸

A second advancement in Fowler's 1996 book deserves attention. Fowler expands his developmental differentiation between Stages 3 to 5 to an analysis of modern or postmodern societies. This can best be captured in Fowler's own figures.¹²⁹

While he parallels the Synthetic-Conventional faith stage with the orthodox, hierarchical, and external authority structure of society, the Individuative-Reflective faith stage parallels the progressive, social contract type of societal structure, which allows and requires an internal locus of authority and also a rational mediation in public discourse.

Figure 4: Stages of Faith and Organizational Structures (Fowler)

Faith Stage/ Temper	Faith Con- sciousness	Religion	Politics	Organization
Synthetic- Conventional; rooted in pre- Enlightenment; <i>orthodox</i>	Tacit; interper- sonal; non- critical; external locus of authority	"Some of my best friends are..."; assumed superiority; <i>mystery- mastery</i>	Reduced to personal qualities of leaders or reference groups; <i>organic society</i>	Hierarchical authority; information control
Individuative- Reflective; rooted in Enlightenment; <i>progressive</i>	Explicit; autonomous; critical- reflective; internal locus of authority	Dichotomous; competing truth claims; either exclu- sive truth or relativism; <i>demytholo- gizing</i>	Ideological; claim chosen political and economic philosophy as defining self; <i>social contract</i>	Specialization; differentiation of function; rational- bureaucratic organizaiton

Figure 5: Stages of Faith and Organizational Structures (Fowler)

Faith Stage/ Temper	Faith Con- sciousness	Religion	Politics	Organization
Conjunctive; emerging post- Enlightenment outlook; practical postmodern	Multiple perspectives and systems; second naivete; commitment in embraced pluralism	All reality outlooks are constructed; God's reality exceeds our constructs; integrate conscious and unconscious	Multiple realities; multiple systems; beyond ideology; ecological interdepend- ence; covenant	Ecological networks; multi-related project orientation; information- driven; flexibility

The Conjunctive Faith stage's parallel, in what Fowler calls a postmodern societal structure, indicates a way beyond the culture of warlike tension between the orthodox and the progressive model. Of course, this analysis of society leads primarily to the proposal "to claim and model Conjunctive faith in American society" and to call for leaders in the public who "alter the environments of debate and dialogue."¹³⁰ However, this analysis also leads Fowler to an inquiry into theology's potential response to postmodern challenges. What is said only between the lines here, but should be regarded as a major advancement of faith development theory, is its application as a means of understanding social bodies and social conflicts and as a possible and promising answer to the predicaments of modernity. This potential for faith development theory to provide a model for understanding social differentiation and conflict in society and religious communities should not

be underestimated and should be elaborated in methodological terms. If we succeed in making use of this perspective for research in social milieus, it could provide a major contribution to social-scientific analysis.

A third related development in Fowler's thought is reflected in his Boston paper¹³¹ at the APA symposium on "Faith Development beyond the Modern Paradigm." There, Fowler not only engages in an extensive review of the history of faith development theory, he also sketches some answers to the postmodern challenges that have not been addressed by the faith development framework so far—this assumption remained unquestioned in *Faithful Change*—and still require a rethinking of some of the theory's basic principles. If it is true, as I maintain,¹³² that the fundamentalisms of our time are the outstanding incidences to which the project of modernity is exposed, and that these grave disturbances call into question the smooth teleological metastory of modernity¹³³ and the respective metastory of development obliged to it, then faith development theory has a problem as well. Can we still maintain the logic of development consisting of structural stages that are understood as structural wholes, as invariant, sequential, and hierarchical? Fowler responded to these challenging questions in a far-reaching remark:

The most vulnerable feature of formalist stage theories such as Piaget's, Kohlberg's and F[aith] D[velopment] T[heory] lies in the tendency to over trust the structuring power of the formally describable operations of knowing and construing that constitute the stages. In this paper I have said in several different ways that the formal structuring of the stages is, at best, only half the story as regards the shaping and maintaining of a person's (or a group's) worldview. There is both structuring and deconstructing power in the cultural environment with its social and media "surround."¹³⁴

It is this deconstructing power of cultural environment, consisting of such factors as media influences and pluralistic fragmentations, that jeopardizes the achievement of a coherent self. Thus, this could affect not only research results but also the very foundations of the theory itself:

For all these reasons, it is not surprising that interviewers may find fewer adolescents and young adults who show the qualities of synthetic-conventional faith, or construct the coherent critical commitments that go with individuative-reflective faith. It seems that there is a need for an "average expectable environment" of sponsorship support that children and youth need in order to form coherent selfhood and faith. There is a logic to Streib's (1999) turn toward "off-road religion" and toward relinquishing concern with "stages."¹³⁵

To be sure, Fowler did not announce here an inclination to relinquish concern with his stages of faith, but he has proposed to distinguish the stages by including a differentiation of four types cutting across the stages: Totalizing, Rational Critical, Conflicted or Oscillating, and Diffuse Types. This has initiated

an interesting discussion that has not yet reached a conclusion but indicates that there is motion in Fowler's conceptualization of faith development.

Taken together, these advancements in the faith development perspective indicate that Fowler's theory is still in motion, especially with regard to a reaction to the challenges in culture and society and the attempt to provide answers to these challenges. However, the precision work on theoretical revisions of faith development theory, and on research strategies and methodological details in faith development research in particular, are future tasks. In this context, I can locate my own proposal for a revision that I will now set forth briefly.

2.2 Proposed Revision: The Religious Styles Perspective

Based on James Fowler's faith development theory, I proposed a new perspective of structural-developmental theory of religion in a recent article, "Faith Development Revisited: The Religious Styles Perspective."¹³⁶ A first portion of this proposal for modification was published in 1997 in an article in the *Archiv für Religionspsychologie* entitled "Religion als Stilfrage."¹³⁷

In my opinion, it is time not only to call into question the primacy of cognitive development as the motor and guideline of religious development, but also to propose a new model, which I call the typology of religious styles. This revision is aimed at accounting more fully for the life-history and life-world relatedness of religion at its principal interactive, interpersonal origin and shape. Thus, the phenomenologists Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Paul Ricoeur, who provide philosophical perspectives, Gil Noam's developmental perspective that is based on interpersonality, as well as Ana-Maria Rizzuto's view of the psychodynamic development of religion play a significant role for the reformulation. In the article, I present an overview of styles and illustrate this perspective in a figure.¹³⁸

The religious styles perspective, I contend, is able to provide an explanation of fundamentalism that the structural-developmental theories of religious or faith development have not been able to provide, because their framework cannot account for regression, or the kind of partial regression onto, or revival of, earlier rigid styles.¹³⁹ The cognitive-structural theories of development in their traditional form of structural, hierarchical, sequential, and irreversible logic of development result from an all-too-optimistic interpretation of the project of modernity. If left unchanged, they cannot provide us with an explanatory framework for understanding fundamentalism and individual fundamentalist revivals. The modification of the developmental model takes account of the fact that the project of modernity is exposed to disturbances. I am thus sketching out the developmental psychology variant of a fundamental problem of modernity: namely, as already mentioned, that the teleological metastory of modernity is challenged by disturbances that include individual and global fundamentalisms.

2.3 Perspectives for the Future of Research in Faith Development

The future of faith development research, as already indicated above, lies primarily in the adaptation of the qualitative instrument. From my point of view, the leading edge in method development lies in the inclusion of narrative approaches and the accounting for content dimensions. A number of empirical studies already have moved in this direction and included a narrative approach; others also have searched their data for content dimensions in the various aspects of faith. We would need a consistent methodology to integrate these innovative approaches. This would be the methodological counterpart to the more comprehensive inclusion of life history into the model of religious development, at which the religious styles perspective aims as well. These are some tasks to be completed as we proceed in future research.

Second, for future research with larger samples, it would be helpful to have a shorter faith development research instrument that would be able to yield valid and reliable results. The quantitative instruments that have been developed and tested so far have shown insufficient validity for comprehensively covering the dynamics of the development of faith in cross-cultural research. I doubt that they can be applied in research on new religions within our Western societies. However, if we take on the task of investigating milieus in society and religious communities, such a shorter instrument would be useful. Much work also lies ahead of us in this area.

Third, I suggest adding another dimension of innovation in methodology. The attempt to account more fully for the life world, which the religious styles perspective tries to promote, invokes the inclusion of the sociological research tradition on lifestyles.¹⁴⁰ If we avoid the trap of focusing mainly on leisure activities, fashion, and consumer attitudes, a trap into which part of lifestyle research has fallen, lifestyle research can provide an inspiring new dimension in faith development research, as it calls to our attention the simultaneity of *distinction* and *milieu formation*. Thus, it could take up the question of "modal levels of development" that has remained rather marginalized despite some good attempts to address it. In this way, research in faith development could venture further out of its niche and contribute its gift for investigating religious, and religious community, milieus. Such research has already begun in Germany with a study on *Milieus in the Church*.¹⁴¹ Unfortunately, this study lacks a developmental perspective. The rapid generational changes in religious orientation in our times also require an adequate methodological response in faith development research method.

Notes

¹Revised version of a paper presented at the 14th Conference of the International Association for the Psychology of Religion, September 28–30, 2001, in Soesterberg, Netherlands.

²James W. Fowler, *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981).

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³Sharon Parks, "The North American Critique of James Fowler's Theory of Faith Development," in *Stages of Faith and Religious Development*, ed. James W. Fowler, Karl Ernst Nipkow, and Friedrich Schweitzer (New York: Crossroad, 1991), 101–15.

⁴H. J. McDargh, "Faith Development Theory at Ten Years," *Religious Studies Review* 10 (1984): 339–43.

⁵Nicola Slee, "Further on from Fowler: Post-Fowler Faith Development Research," in *Research in Religious Education*, ed. Leslie J. Francis, William K. Kay, and William S. Campbell; (Leominster, Engl.: Gracewing, and Macon, Ga.: Smyth & Helwys, 1996), 73–96.

⁶Though the information about the relatively large number of dissertations has been compiled from my own files and also using other resources including Internet databases, I cannot claim that the statistics are perfect and also cannot exclude the possibility that some contributions may be missing.

⁷See Karl E. Nipkow, *Grundfragen der Religionspädagogik, Bd.3: Gemeinsam leben und glauben lernen* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher, 1982).

⁸See Hans-Jürgen Fraas et al., eds., *Religiöse Erziehung und Glaubensentwicklung. Zur Auseinandersetzung mit der kognitiven Psychologie* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Rupprecht, 1986). Friedrich Schweitzer, *Lebensgeschichte und Religion. Religiöse Entwicklung und Erziehung im Kindes- und Jugendalter* (Gütersloh: Kaiser; Gütersloher, 1987). Karl E. Nipkow et al., eds., *Glaubensentwicklung und Erziehung* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher, 1988). Michael Utsch, "Glaubensentwicklung als Thema der Psychologie. James Fowlers 'Stufen des Glaubens,'" *Wege zum Menschen* 42 (1990): 359–66. Heinz Streib, *Hermeneutics of Metaphor, Symbol, and Narrative in Faith Development Theory* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1991). Jeff Astley and Leslie J. Francis, eds., *Christian Perspectives on Faith Development: A Reader* (Leominster, Eng.: Gracewing; Grand Rapids, Mich: Eerdmans, 1992).

⁹Karl E. Nipkow, Friedrich Schweitzer, Gabriele Faust-Siehl, and Bernd Krupka, "Developmental Research in the Classroom: An Empirical Study of Teaching-Learning Processes," in *Research in Religious Education*, ed. Leslie J. Francis, William K. Kay, and William S. Campbell, (Leominster, Engl.: Gracewing; Macon, Ga.: Smyth & Helwys, 1996), 113–28. K. H. Reich, "Relational and Contextual Reasoning in Religious Education: A Theory-based Empirical Study," in *Research in Religious Education*, 129–44. Gabriele Klappenecker, *Glaubensentwicklung und Lebensgeschichte: Eine Auseinandersetzung mit der Ethik James W. Fowlers, zugleich ein Beitrag zur Rezeption von H. Richard Niebuhr, Lawrence Kohlberg und Erik H. Erikson* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1998). Heinz Streib, "Faith Development Theory Revisited: The Religious Styles Perspective," *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion* 11 (2001): 143–58.

¹⁰Walter Conn, *Christian Conversion: A Developmental Interpretation of Autonomy and Surrender* (New York: Paulist Press, 1986). David G. Creamer, *Guides for the Journey: John Macmurray, Bernhard Lonergan, James Fowler* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1996). Romney M. Moseley, *Becoming a Self before God: Critical Transformations* (Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1991). Sharon Parks, *The Critical Years: The Young Adult Search for a Faith to Live By* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986). Schweitzer, *Lebensgeschichte und Religion*.

¹¹Woodrow J. Walter, Jr., "Books in Religious Adult Education Valued by Professional Religious Adult Educators" (Ed.D. diss., University of North Texas, 1996). Walter's list of the top ten books includes: (1) Fowler, *Stages of Faith*; (2) Nancy T. Foltz, ed., *Handbook of Adult Religious Education* (Birmingham, Ala.: Religious Education Press, 1986); (3) Craig Dykstra and Sharon Parks, eds., *Faith Development and Fowler* (Birmingham, Ala.: Religious Education Press, 1986); (4) Kenneth Stokes, ed., *Faith Development in the Adult Life Cycle* (New York: W. H. Sadlier, 1982); (5) R. E. Y. Wickett, *Models of Adult Religious Education Practice* (Birmingham, Ala.: Religious Education Press, 1991); (6) John L. Elias, *The Foundations and Practice of Adult Religious Education* (Malabar, Fla.: R. E. Krieger, 1982); (7) Sharon Parks, *The Critical Years*; (8) John M. Hull, *What Prevents Christian Adults from Learning?* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1991); (9) Leon McKenzie, *The Religious Education of Adults* (Birmingham, Ala.: Religious Education Press, 1982); (10) Kenneth O. Gangel and James C. Wilhoit, eds., *The Christian Educator's Handbook on Adult Education* (Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1993).

¹²Nancy S. Vanlue, "A Meta-Analysis of the Concepts, Characteristics, and Variables Addressed in Sixty Doctoral Dissertations Highly Relevant to Adult Faith Development [1980–1994]" (Ed.D. diss., Ball State University, 1996).

¹³Selectively, I refer to some contributions in the last decade: Jeff Astley, ed., *How Faith Grows: Faith Development and Christian Education* (London: National Society and Church House Publishing, 1991). John H. Bolen, "Faith Development and Higher Education" (Ph.D. diss., Iowa State University, 1994). Aubrey P. Hancock, "An Investigation of the Element of Conversion in the Faith Development Theories of James Loder and James Fowler with Implications for Adolescent

Christian Education" (Ed.D. diss., New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 1992). Lauri A. Oikarinen, "Development of Human Faith: An Analysis of the Consistency of James W. Fowler's Theory" (Th.D. diss., Helsingin Yliopisto [Finland], 1993). Richard R. Osmer, "James Fowler and the Reformed Tradition: An Exercise in Theological Reflection in Religious Education," *Religious Education* 85 (1990): 51-68. Daniel J. Srinivasan, "Mentoring for Faith Development" (Ed.D. diss., Union Theological Seminary in Virginia, 1996).

¹⁴Friedrich Schweitzer et al., "Religious Development and the Praxis of Religious Education," *Journal of Education for Teaching* 8 (1995): 5-23. Nipkow et al., "Developmental Research."

¹⁵Friedrich Schweitzer et al., *Religionsunterricht und Entwicklungspsychologie. Elementarisierung in der Praxis* (Gütersloh: Kaiser; Gütersloher, 1995).

¹⁶Randy J. Simmonds, "Content and Structure in Faith Development: A Case Examination of James Fowler's Theory" (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1986). See also Clyde E. Lansdell, "Religious Convictions and Interpersonal Relations in a Christian Community" (Ed.D. diss., University of Toronto [Canada], 1980).

¹⁷James W. Fowler, *Faith Development and Pastoral Care* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987).

¹⁸Steven S. Ivy, "The Structural-developmental Theories of James Fowler and Robert Kegan as Resources for Pastoral Assessment" (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1985). Carl D. Schneider, *Faith Development and Pastoral Diagnosis, Faith Development and Fowler* (Birmingham, Ala.: Religious Education Press, 1986), 221-50.

¹⁹Dale J. Brown, "Doubt and Anxiety in Theological and Psychological Perspective with Implications for Pastoral Care and Pastoral Theology" (Ph.D. diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1994).

²⁰Ronald C. Oliver, "Effects of an Acute Traumatic Crisis on Faith" (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1993).

²¹Michael A. Backlund, "Faith and AIDS: Life Crisis as a Stimulus to Faith Stage Transition" (Ph.D. diss., Pacific Graduate School of Psychology, 1990). Susan M. Driedger, "Relationships among Faith Development, Ego Development, and Religious Orientation in HIV+ Individuals: A Construct Validation Study" (Ph.D. diss., Simon Fraser University [Canada], 1998).

²²Nina M. Chychula, "Recovery as an Activity of Faith or Meaning-Making: A Study of the Faith Development of Males Recovering from Chemical Dependence" (Ph.D. diss., Temple University, 1995).

²³Janice P. Leary, "The Relationship of Coping with Chronic Stress and Faith Development in Women: Mothers of Multihandicapped Children" (Ph.D. diss., Boston College, 1988).

²⁴Oliver, "Acute Traumatic Crisis."

²⁵See Harold G. Koenig, *Is Religion Good for Your Health? The Effects of Religion on Physical and Mental Health* (New York: Haworth Pastoral Press, 1997).

²⁶Parks, "North American Critique."

²⁷Mark E. Durrett, "The Triad of Faith and Faith Development: A Study in the Thought of H. Richard Niebuhr with Special Reference to the Work of James W. Fowler" (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 1987).

²⁸One H. Park, "A Study of Anthropology in James Fowler's Faith Development Theory" (Ed.D. diss., Presbyterian School of Christian Education, 1989).

²⁹*Ibid.*, 204; see also 189f.

³⁰*Ibid.*, 204.

³¹Romney M. Moseley, "Religious Conversion: A Structural-developmental Analysis" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1978).

³²Moseley, *Becoming a Self*.

³³Hancock, "Element of Conversion."

³⁴Gregory L. Hunt, "Toward Theological Foundations for a Faith Development Theory with Special Attention to James Fowler" (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1985).

³⁵See *ibid.*, ch. 6; quotation is taken from the Abstract, 307.

³⁶George Cristiano, "An Analytical Assessment of the Faith Development Theory of J. W. Fowler: An Approach to Moral Education" (Ed.D. diss., Rutgers, State University of New Jersey at New Brunswick, 1986).

³⁷*Ibid.*, Abstract, i.

³⁸Simmonds, "Content and Structure."

³⁹*Ibid.*, 207.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 221.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, 208.

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⁴²Streib, *Hermeneutics*.

⁴³Norbert F. Hahn, "Developing Faith—Liberating Faith: Towards a Practical Theology of Congregational Faith Development as a Liberation Theology for the Middle-Class" (Ph.D. diss., Emory University, 1994).

⁴⁴Gabriele Bussmann, "Vertrauen als Handlungskompetenz: Vorüberlegungen zu einer religiösen Entwicklungstheorie dargestellt in Auseinandersetzung mit den religiösen Entwicklungstheorien von F. Oser und J. W. Fowler" (Dr.theol. diss., Katholisch-theologische Fakultät, Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität, Münster, 1990).

⁴⁵Oikarinen, "Analysis of Consistency."

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Klappenecker, *Glaubensentwicklung und Lebensgeschichte*.

⁴⁹See James W. Fowler, *Becoming Adult, Becoming Christian* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984).

⁵⁰Fowler, *Pastoral Care*.

⁵¹James W. Fowler, *Weaving the New Creation: Stages of Faith and the Public Church* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1991).

⁵²James W. Fowler, *Faithful Change: The Personal and Public Challenges of Postmodern Life* (Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1996). Idem, "Faith Development Theory and the Postmodern Challenges," *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion* 11 (2001): 159–72.

⁵³Gregg G. Raduka, "An Investigation of Hypothesized Correspondence between Fowlerian Stages of Faith Development and Jungian Stages of Personality Development" (Ph.D. diss., University of Maryland, College Park, 1980).

⁵⁴Leonard R. Bradley, "An Exploration of the Relationship between Fowler's Theory of Faith Development and Myers-Briggs Personality Type" (Ph.D. diss., Ohio State University, 1983).

⁵⁵Mary Ford-Grabowsky, "The Concept of Christian Faith in the Light of Hildegard of Bingen and C. G. Jung: A Critical Alternative to Fowler" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton Theological Seminary, 1985).

⁵⁶Mary Ford-Grabowsky, "What Developmental Phenomenon Is Fowler Studying," *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 5 (1986): 5–13. Idem, "Flaws in Faith Development Theory," *Religious Education* 82 (1987): 80–93. Idem, "The Fullness of the Christian Faith-Experience: Dimensions Missing in Faith Development Theory," *Journal of Pastoral Care* 41 (1987): 39–47.

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⁵⁸Ana-Maria Rizzuto, *The Birth of the Living God: A Psychoanalytic Study* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1979).

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⁶⁰Renee M. Penticoff, "The Dynamic God Representation and Faith Development: Considering Religious Information in Psychotherapy" (Psy.D. diss., Widener University Institute for Graduate Clinical Psychology, 1996).

⁶¹Fowler, *Faithful Change*.

⁶²Ana-Maria Rizzuto, "Religious Development beyond the Modern Paradigm—Discussion: The Psychoanalytic Point of View," *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion* 11 (2001): 201–14.

⁶³James M. Day, "From Structuralism to Eternity? Re-Imagining the Psychology of Religious Development after the Cognitive-Developmental Paradigm," *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion* 11 (2001): 173–83. Fowler, "Postmodern Challenges." H. J. McDargh, "Faith Development Theory and the Postmodern Problem of Foundations," *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion* 11 (2001): 185–99. Streib, "Religious Styles Perspective."

⁶⁴See C. E. Nelson, "Does Faith Develop? An Evaluation of Fowler's Position," in *Christian Perspectives*, 62–76; C. E. Nelson and Daniel Aleshire, "Research in Faith Development," in *Faith Development and Fowler*, 180–201; Derek H. Webster, "James Fowler's Theory of Faith Development," *British Journal of Religious Education* 7 (1984): 14–18. See also Slee, "Post-Fowler Research."

⁶⁵Slee, "Post-Fowler Research," 75–81, 82–86.

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⁷⁰Michael Barnes et al., "The Formulation of a Fowler Scale: An Empirical Assessment Among Catholics," *Review of Religious Research* 30 (1989): 412-20; John F. Canavan, "Oedipal Resolution and Locus of Control as Determinants of Stage of Faith Development" (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1999); Victor Clore, "Faith Development in Adults: Scale of Measurement and Relation to Attachment" (Ph.D. diss., Wayne State University, 1997); C. W. Green et al., "Stages of Faith and Perceptions of Similar and Dissimilar Others," *Review of Religious Research* 30 (1989): 246-54; Charles D. Hammond, "The Relationship of Faith Development Stages and the Type and Degree of Irrational Beliefs in Adult Church Attendants" (Ed.D. diss., University of Arkansas, 1993); Dennis W. Hiebert, "Schools of Faith: The Effect of Liberal Arts, Professional, and Religious Education on Faith Development" (Ph.D. diss., University of Manitoba [Canada], 1993); Gary K. Leak et al., "Development and Initial Validation of an Objective Measure of Faith Development," *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion* 9 (1999): 105-24; Clifford H. Swensen et al., "Stage of Religious Faith and Reactions to Terminal Cancer," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 21 (1993): 238-45.

⁷¹For example, in dissertations from 1979 to 1992: Cowden, "Faith Development in Women"; Hoffman, "Nurturing Spirituality"; Kalam, "Myth of Stages"; Lansdell, "Intepersonal Relations"; Shulik, "Old Age"; Snarey, "Nontheistic Judaism"; Vanden Heuvel, "Family Interaction."

⁷²Clore, "Faith Development in Adults."

⁷³Ibid., 157.

⁷⁴John Bowlby, *Attachment and Loss*, vol. 1, *Attachment*, and vol. 2, *Separation* (New York: Basic Books, 1969).

⁷⁵Kim Bartholomew et al., "Attachment Styles among Young Adults: A Test of a Four-Category Model," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 61 (1991): 226-44.

⁷⁶Ibid., 157-58.

⁷⁷Canavan, "Oedipal Resolution."

⁷⁸I agree with this conclusion and find Canavan's empirical work a major contribution—despite the critique I voice below about his use of the Stages of Faith Scale of Swensen et al., "Reactions to Terminal Cancer."

⁷⁹See also Parks, "Faith Development and Imagination."

⁸⁰Theresa Sallnow, "Faith in Persons: A Critical Exploration of James Fowler's Theory of Faith-Development, with Special Reference to Personalist Philosophy" (Ph.D. diss., University of Lancaster [U.K.], 1989).

⁸¹Ibid.

⁸²Ibid.

⁸³Carol B. Pitts, "The Self as a Metaphor: Empirical, Psychological, and Theological Approaches" (Ph.D. diss., Emory University, 1995).

⁸⁴Nancy G. Devor, "Toward a Relational Voice of Faith: Contributions of James Fowler's Faith Development Theory, Psychological Research on Women's Development, Relational Feminist Theology, and a Qualitative Analysis of Women Ministers' Faith Descriptions" (Ph.D. diss., Boston University, 1989).

⁸⁵Leary, "Coping and Faith Development."

⁸⁶P. Morgan, "Women in Crisis."

⁸⁷Cowden, "Faith Development in Women."

⁸⁸Ibid., 143.

⁸⁹Smith, "Women Religious Leaders."

⁹⁰James W. Fowler, *Stufen des Glaubens. Die Psychologie der menschlichen Entwicklung und die Suche nach Sinn* (Gütersloh: Kaiser, 2000), 18-19.

⁹¹Mary F. Belenky et al., *Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind* (New York: Basic Books, 1986).

⁹²Moseley et al., *Manual*.

⁹³Ibid., Appendix H.

⁹⁴Jose C. Plackal, "Indian Culture and Developmental Stages of Faith: A Dialogical Inquiry into the Theory of James W. Fowler from the Cultural Context of India" (D.Min. diss., Colgate Rochester Divinity School, Crozer Theological Seminary, 1990).

⁹⁵U. M. A. Majmudar, "Mahatma Gandhi's Trajectory in Truth and Fowler's Theory of Stages of Faith: A Mutually Critical Correlational Developmental Study" (Ph.D. diss., Emory University, 1996).

⁹⁶Kalam, "Myth of Stages"; Furushima, "Project in Hawaii"; Snarey, "Nontheistic Judaism."

⁹⁷Slee, "Post-Fowler Research," 88.

⁹⁸Drewek, "Testing among Baha'is," Abstract.

⁹⁹Farc, "Romanian Context"; Lee, "Korean Context."

¹⁰⁰Fowler, "Postmodern Challenges."

¹⁰¹Barnes et al., "A Fowler Scale"; Canavan, "Oedipal Resolution"; Clore, "Faith Development in Adults"; Green et al., "Perceptions of Others"; Hammond, "Irrational Beliefs"; Hiebert, "Schools of Faith"; Leak et al., "Development and Validation"; Swensen et al., "Reactions to Terminal Cancer."

¹⁰²Green et al., "Perceptions of Others."

¹⁰³Barnes et al., "A Fowler Scale."

¹⁰⁴B. J. James et al., "High Stress Life Events and Spiritual Development," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 27 (1999): 250-60.

¹⁰⁵See Leak et al., "Development and Validation," 106.

¹⁰⁶Swensen et al., "Reaction to Terminal Cancer."

¹⁰⁷Canavan, "Oedipal Resolution."

¹⁰⁸Moseley et al., *Manual*.

¹⁰⁹Clore, "Faith Development in Adults."

¹¹⁰Leak et al., "Development and Validation."

¹¹¹Anderson, "Identity in College Women"; Nahavandi, "Psychospiritual Development"; Smith, "Women Religious Leaders"; E. Morgan, "Religious Autobiographical Quests."

¹¹²Rose, "Measure Four Stages."

¹¹³Smith, "Women Religious Leaders."

¹¹⁴E. Morgan "Religious Autobiographical Quests."

¹¹⁵Anderson, "Identity in College Women."

¹¹⁶See Jerome Bruner, "Life as Narrative," *Social Research* 54 (1987): 11-32; George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

¹¹⁷Nahavandi, "Psychospiritual Development."

¹¹⁸Dan P. McAdams, *The Person: An Introduction to Personality Psychology* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1990); idem, "Biography, Narrative, and Lives: An Introduction," in *Psychobiography and Life Narratives*, ed. Dan P. McAdams and Richard L. Ochberg (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1988), 1-18.

¹¹⁹Rose, "Measure Four Stages."

¹²⁰Hoffman, "Nurturing Spirituality."

¹²¹See Fowler, *Becoming Adult, Becoming Christian*; James W. Fowler, "Stages in Faith Consciousness," in *Religious Development in Childhood and Adolescence*, ed. Fritz K. Oser et al. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1991), 27-45. Idem, "The Public Church: Ecology for Faith Education and Advocate for Children," in *Faith Development in Early Childhood*, ed. Doris A. Blazer (Kansas City: Sheed & Ward, 1989), 131-54. Idem, "Practical Theology and the Shaping of Christian Lives," in *Practical Theology. The Emerging Field in Theology*, ed. Don S. Browning (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1983), 148-66. Idem, "Pluralism and Oneness in Religious Experience: William James, Faith-Development Theory, and Clinical Practice," in *Religion and the Clinical Practice of Psychology*, ed. Edward P. Shafranske (Washington: American Psychological Association, 1996), 165-86. Idem, "The Vocation of Faith Development Theory," in *Stages of Faith and Religious Development*, ed. James W. Fowler et al. (New York: Crossroads, 1991, 1987), 19-36. Idem, "Strength for the Journey: Early Childhood Development in Selfhood and Faith," in Blazer, 1-36.

¹²²Fowler devotes an entire chapter to reproducing and interpreting this interview with a young woman (Fowler, *Stages of Faith*, ch. 22); compare also the evaluation of Nelson and Aleshire, "Research in Faith Development."

¹²³Robert Kegan, *The Evolving Self: Problem and Process in Human Development* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1982).

¹²⁴Fowler, *Faithful Change*.

¹²⁵Daniel N. Stern, *The Interpersonal World of the Infant* (New York: Basic Books, 1985).

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¹²⁶Fowler, *Faithful Change*, 72.

¹²⁷*Ibid.*, 52.

¹²⁸Rizzuto, "Beyond the Modern Paradigm," 205–7.

¹²⁹Fowler, *Faithful Change*, 165, 174.

¹³⁰*Ibid.*, 177.

¹³¹Fowler, "Postmodern Challenges."

¹³²See Streib, "Religious Styles Perspective"; Heinz Streib, "Is There a Way beyond Fundamentalism? Challenges for Faith Development and Religious Education," in *The Fourth R for the Third Millennium: Education in Religions and Values for the Global Future*, ed. Leslie J. Francis et al. (Dublin: Lindisfarne Books, 2001), 177–99.

¹³³See, for instance, Jean F. Lyotard, *Postmodern Fables* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997, 1993) and his designation of this megastory as "negative entropy" in idem, *The Difference: Phrases in Dispute* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988).

¹³⁴Fowler, "Postmodern Challenges," 169.

¹³⁵*Ibid.*

¹³⁶Streib, "Religious Styles Perspective."

¹³⁷Heinz Streib, "Religion als Stilfrage. Zur Revision struktureller Differenzierung von Religion im Blick auf die Analyse der pluralistisch-religiösen Lage der Gegenwart," in *Archiv für Religionspsychologie*, ed. Nils G. Holm et al. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Rupprecht, 1997), 48–69. An English translation of this article has been accepted for publication in the *International Journal of Practical Theology*

¹³⁸Streib, "Religious Styles Perspective," 150.

¹³⁹I have illuminated this in more detail in Streib, "Is There a Way beyond Fundamentalism?"

¹⁴⁰See Annette Spellerberg, "[Review of] Peter H. Hartmann: *Lebensstilforschung*," *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie* 53 (2001): 170–71; Heinz Streib, *Religion und Lebensstil. Die Erlebnisgesellschaft als neuer Horizont der Religionspädagogik?* (forthcoming); Peter H. Hartmann, *Lebensstilforschung. Darstellung, Kritik und Weiterentwicklung* (Opladen: Leske & Budrich, 1999); Friederike Benthaus-Apel, "Religion und Lebensstil. Zur Analyse pluraler Religionsformen aus soziologischer Sicht," in *Religion in der Lebenswelt der Moderne*, ed. Kristian Fechtner et al. (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1998), 102–22.

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