CHINESE YOUNG PEOPLE AND SPIRITUALITY: AN AUSTRALIAN STUDY

Submitted by

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STATEMENT OF SOURCES

This thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis by which I have qualified for or been awarded another degree or diploma.

No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgement in the main text of the thesis.

This thesis has not been submitted for the award of any degree or diploma in any other institutions.

All research procedures reported in the thesis received the approval of the Ethics Committee (see Appendix A).

Candidate's Signature: _____

Date: _____

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Everything has turned out so naturally that I thank my God for His guidance in the pathway of this study. I should like to dedicate this thesis to Him, as I know for certain that without Him, I can do nothing. I also wish to express my sincere appreciation to those who played a vital role in assisting me with the completion of this thesis.

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ABSTRACT

The research reported in this thesis is concerned with the spirituality of

Chinese young people who attended a Chinese evangelical church in Melbourne,

Australia. This research is a case study conducted in the framework of a qualitative

approach using ethnographic methods, including fieldwork methods with data

triangulation through participant observation, individual interviews and focus group

interviews. Grounded theory was used to analyse data collected. The particular group

of young people were Chinese in race, and Australian born, or had been living in

Australia since early childhood. They attended the English speaking fellowship and

services of a Chinese evangelical church in Melbourne, and their ages were between

fifteen and eighteen years. They were born or had grown up in Australia, and had

been exposed at least to two cultures, the Australian culture in the society, and the

Chinese traditional culture in their family, in which the parents were the first

generation in Australia. This research aimed to find out the characteristics of the

spirituality of the Chinese young people through acknowledging the multicultural

context in which they lived. Thus, it began with a cultural perspective and sought to

study the cultural contexts that account for their distinctive Christian spirituality.

In summary, the research reported in this thesis describes the young

participants' spirituality from their own perspectives, discusses their construction of

identity that led to their distinctive spirituality, and studies their parents' worldviews

and the role of cultural institutions that have affected their spirituality. Finally, it

concludes with development of theories of spirituality related to Chinese young

people in a multicultural society, and proposes ways in which churches and families

may encourage the development of spirituality for Chinese young people in a

multicultural society.

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ACRONYMS used in this thesis

ABS – Australia Bureau of Statistics

CRA – Christian Research Association

VOMA – Victorian Office of Multicultural Affairs

ABC – Australian born Chinese

A+C – A combination of Australian and Chinese Identity

C>A – An identity of more Chinese culture than Australian

A← →C – An identity in between Australian and Chinese culture

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

In a multicultural society such as Australia, research on the life experiences of

immigrant young people has the potential to promote greater understanding of

Australian youth, not just for the particular group that is studied, but also for all young

people whose families have come from different cultures. The research reported in

this thesis studied the interweaving of identity and spirituality among a group of

Chinese young people with whose parents were born overseas.

Section One: Origins and Background of the Research Study

The Aim and Purposes of the Research

The research reported in this thesis is concerned with the spirituality of the

Chinese young people who attended an evangelical[1] Chinese Protestant church in the

city of Melbourne, in the state of Victoria, in Australia. The group of young people

who were the focus of the study were the second generation of Chinese people,

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[1] With reference to Bloesch (1994), the term 'evangelical' is used to describe certain churches against the background of the Protestant movement between the 17th and 19th centuries, which called for a reform in life as well as in doctrine. According to Marsden (1993, p.191), soul winning and church growth are the first concerns for most evangelical churches, which emphasise a) the Bible as the authority, b) eternal salvation only by regeneration, which involves personal commitment to Christ, c) a spiritual transformation. The Chinese evangelical Protestant Christian church in this research claimed herself as an evangelical church, and employed a form of worship while which valuing spontaneity and informality, nevertheless had an identifiable order of service, and was not extremely participatory "charismatic" or "pentecostal" in an overt way.

Australian born, or had been living in Australia since early childhood. They attended the English speaking fellowship and services, and they were aged between fourteen and eighteen years old. Since they were born or had grown up in Australia, they had been exposed at least to two cultures, the Australian culture encountered mostly in their educational and peer environments, and the Chinese traditional culture encountered in their families. The research was a case study, and employed ethnographic methods with data triangulation occurring between participant observation, individual interviews and focus group interviews. Grounded theory was used to gather and interpret the data collected. Within a qualitative framework and approaches drawn from ethnography this research was carried out in order to:

1. describe the young Chinese participants' perceptions of their spirituality,

2. discover and analyse the cultural characteristics that affected the spirituality of Chinese young people in the designated church,

3. develop theories about the spirituality of Chinese young people in a multicultural society, and

4. propose ways in which churches and families may encourage the development of spirituality for Chinese young people in a multicultural society.

Relevance of the Researcher's Background

The author of this study was born in Hong Kong, China, and was an educator in high schools in Hong Kong. She ministered to Chinese Protestant Christian churches in Hong Kong, Taiwan and the United States of America for approximately ten years before coming to Australia in 2000. For the past few years in Australia, she has been involved with various ministries at some Chinese Protestant churches in Sydney and Melbourne, such as a guest speaker at Sunday services, youth fellowship meetings and camps, and coordinator of outreach ministries. These cross-cultural experiences have provided the background for this research in the multicultural city of Melbourne.

Significance of the Research

This research has the potential to make several significant contributions to knowledge about the cultural and spiritual issues of young people in a multi-cultural society.

It does not appear that there have been any previous Australian studies, which are directly relevant to this research. This research may contribute to awareness and understanding of the Chinese younger generation within Chinese Protestant churches

in the multi-cultural society of Australia. Furthermore, this research, which has used

ethnographic methods to study Chinese young people in a multi-cultural context, may

contribute to the development of strategies for nurturing Chinese youth in church

ministries and religious education in multi-cultural cities.

In addition, this research has the potential to raise awareness of issues of

identity among young Australians from different ethnic backgrounds. As many

Australian Protestant churches have already developed ministries for various ethnic

congregations, such as Chinese, Vietnamese, Indonesians and so on, this research has

the potential to contribute to the evaluation and re-development of church strategies

for nurturing the spirituality of these young Australians.

Finally, this research is significant through its attempt to integrate models of

spirituality and the cultural identity of the young Australians from a different ethnic

background.

Section Two: Young People's Spirituality in Australian

Definition of Spirituality

The definition of spirituality that underpins this research is a Christian one,

since the research is set in a Chinese Protestant church. As Lealman (1986) claims,

spirituality represents a particular capacity in human nature for transcendence, in

which according to Pusch (1979), one seeks a personal relationship with God. Other research studies refer to spirituality as a relationship with God in real life situations (Engebretson, 2004; Koester, 2002). It indicates a way of life (Hill, Knitter, & Madges, 1997; Tacey, 2004) and can be expressed through religious practices such as prayer, and personal and communal rituals (Engebretson, 2004, p.269; see also McGrath, 1999). Collins (1999) claims that it is a life of faith, a way of trusting oneself in a committed way to centres of meaning and value beyond oneself. McGrath (1999) concludes that in a Christian framework, spirituality involves the fundamental beliefs of Christianity, and life experience based on Christian faith.

The terms spirituality and religion are sometimes used in an interchangeable way, and there is a close relationship between the two (Engebretson, 2004; Slater, Hall, & Edwards, 2001). Yet, spirituality is not equal to religion (Ratcliff, 2001). While religion refers to a system of beliefs, attitudes, and practices (Koester, 2002), spirituality is concerned with the experience of a personal relationship with God, which can be experienced in real life situations or through religious practices (Engebretson, 2004; Ratcliff, 2001; Tacey 2004). In short, as Tacey (2004) suggests, the relationship between spirituality and religion is that spirituality is the living core of religion.

Taking into account the many ways of defining spirituality, in this research,

spirituality was defined as follows:

> Spirituality is a life of faith, a way of trusting oneself in a committed way to
>
> centres of meaning and value beyond oneself (Collins, 1999). It involves a
>
> relationship with God, and it is concerned with personal and communal
>
> experiences (Harris & Moran, 1998, p.109) in real life situations or through
>
> religious practices (Engebretson, 2004; Ratcliff, 2001; Tacey 2004). It may be
>
> expressed through enhanced relationships with the self, with the others, with the
>
> world and with God (Engebretson, 2004; see also Engebretson, 2002a).

Spirituality encompasses the whole of human life and will develop in a variety

of styles depending on culture, denominations, personalities and gifts (Holt, 1993). As

Collins (1999) claimed, styles of spirituality are influenced by the worldviews in

which they were first formulated. In this research, the influences of Chinese culture

and contemporary western culture, both of which produce different worldviews

respectively, account for the Christian spirituality of Chinese young people in a

multicultural society.

Young People Falling Away From Attending Church

In the 2001 Australian National Census, it was shown that almost 70% of

Australian people claimed that they were Christians, including Catholics (42%),

Anglican (18%), Orthodox (16%) and other Protestant (24%) (Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS], 2001; see also Hughes, 2006). However, the proportion of Australians affiliating with the Christian faith was comparatively less than it was in 1996 (78%) and in 1901 (98%) (ABS, 2001). According to the Christian Research Association (CRA), only three percent of Australian young people attend church regularly (Bentley & Hughes, 1997; see also Engebretson, 2002a). Other research studies show that the majority of young people believe in God but many of them never go to church or worship (Engebretson, 2002a; see also Engebretson, De Souza & Salpietro, 2000). A significant percentage of young people perceive religious affiliation and church practice and membership as distinct from their spirituality[2]. Among today's young people in Australia, there is an increasing rejection of the mainstream churches as mediators of faith and meaning (Engebretson, 2002a, p.59; see also Hughes, 2006).

In Australia, people are becoming more diverse in the ways they meet their spiritual needs. There is no longer a single way of practising one's religion, or a single organizational commitment, and this is explained in part by the emphasis on individualism within society. As Hughes (2002, 2006) claimed, under the influence of consumer culture, religions have become sets of resources and people can adopt

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[2] Engebretson, 2002a, p.69; 43.5% of the group who claimed membership of a religious tradition said that their spirituality was not nurtured by Church attendance, while 53.3% said it was.

whatever elements of faith they choose. Bankson III (2002) pointed out that the impact of consumerisation has diffused into the religious economy, and those who prefer particular types of religious goods will find others who are producing them. Hence, the Church has become one of many "spiritual" institutions and finds itself in a "supermarket situation" (Hughes, Thompson, Pryor & Bouma, 1995; see also Hughes, 2002). The major challenge for today's churches is, then, to identify the characteristics of spirituality among young people, including those of different ethnic backgrounds, within their society and find the strategies that will help to support their spirituality (Hughes et al., 1995; Rossiter, 2001). The focus of the research reported in this thesis was the spirituality of Chinese young people in Australia.

Section Three: Contextual Background of the Study

This section provides the contextual background of the Chinese young people who took part in the research. It includes an introduction to Chinese settlement in Australia, a survey of Chinese Christian history in Australia, and proposes a model for studying the spirituality of Chinese young people in a multicultural context.

Chinese Settlement in Australia

The Australia Bureau of Statistics reports that the resident population of

Australia at February 2006 was projected to be more than twenty million people (ABS, 2006). In 1788, Australia began its history of European settlement with an immigrant population of just over thirteen hundred (Vine Hall, 1994, p.14). In the year of 1999-2000, 45% of the population growth in Australia was from overseas migration (ABS, 2002 August 22), leading to Hugo's (2002, p.24) comment, "There is a tendency for Australia to be categorized as a purely immigration country." The population of Australia has been composed of immigrants since the first settlement in the country, and the increase of population growth by overseas immigration is still significant. Thus, Australia tends to be a country of immigrants! In the year of 2000-2001, Chinese were the second largest immigration group (ABS, 2002 December), and research indicates that Chinese people will become the second largest ethnic group in Australia, after Anglo-Celt, in 2025 (Price, 1999, p.4).

The first group of Chinese immigrants, including 100 adults and 20 boys, arrived in Sydney in 1847 (Law, 1981, p.433). However, in 1879, a small Ming dynasty statuette of Shou Lou, the Chinese god of long life, was unearthed in Darwin. It was embedded more than a meter below the ground suggesting that Chinese sandalwood cutters from Timor may have been in Australia before the Europeans (Perrottet, 1997, p.27). During the "gold rush" period of the 1850's, there was an enormous increase of Chinese people. In particular, Chinese immigrants flooded into

the state of Victoria and headed for the gold fields. Between 1852 and 1859, the number of Chinese in Victoria rose from 2,000 to 42,000. By the end of the decade, many of them returned home or moved on to other gold fields (Armstrong, 1996, p.30). Today there are numerous reminders of the Chinese in Victoria, such as the historic Chinese Joss House, the Golden Dragon Museum and the Museum of Chinese Australian History in Melbourne's Chinatown. Hence, the history of Chinese in Victoria goes back more than 150 years.

Melbourne: the Context

A Situated Context with a Significant Growing Chinese Population

Today, figures show that there are 557,000 Chinese in Australia (ABS, 2003a). While Sydney and Melbourne are the main entry points for new immigrants (ABS, 2004), Melbourne recorded the largest increase in population of Australia's capital cities in the year of 2001-2002, followed by Sydney (ABS, 2006a), with a significant growth in the population of Chinese (VOMA, 2002). The 2001 National Census on ancestries in metro-Melbourne showed that there were about 140,000 persons altogether claiming their ancestry as Chinese (VOMA, 2002a). In the author's local area of Manningham, a shire in the Australian state of Victoria, figures show that 33% of the 107,920 people surveyed were not born in Australia, and that almost one third

were from China (9%) ("One-third residents", 2002). This large increase in the

number of Chinese in Melbourne has made them a significant ethnic group. Chinese

communities and associations run services for Chinese ethnic groups, and the Chinese

Community Association that is currently subsidised by the state government has been

developing various services for the needs of Chinese people in Melbourne. Therefore,

this research is situated in Melbourne because it is a city with a significant and

growing population of Chinese people, and is a highly multicultural city.

A Multicultural Context

Australia is a multicultural society (Jupp, 1998, 2001) and rich in cultural

diversity with people from many different countries having made their home here

(Jupp, 2001). After World War II, the population in Australia increased greatly due to

high fertility and immigration. From the year of 1947 to 2000, the proportion of the

population born overseas increased from 10% to 24%. As well as this increase, there

was great diversification of the population. In 1947, 81% of the overseas-born

population were from the main English speaking countries, but in 2000, this dropped

to 39% (ABS, 2003 January). The National Census of 1999-2000 revealed that nearly

half of the population growth in Australia was from overseas migration (ABS, 2002

August). No wonder it is also called a nation of immigrants (Jupp, 1998; Vine Hall,

1994)! Today, it is claimed, Australia is one of the most multicultural countries in the

world (Jupp, 1998, 2001).

Charlesworth (1992) suggests that a society is defined as having one epistemic structure, one set of values and framework of meaning, and one cultural consensus. Yet, a multicultural society not only tolerates but positively values cultural diversity and change. Until the end of the 1960s, migrants coming to Australia to settle were expected to assimilate into the dominant culture, losing or abandoning their own culture (Jupp, 2001). In 1973, Australia was officially declared itself a multicultural society (Jupp, 2001; see also Blakers, 1990). It was not until 1997 that the National Multicultural Advisory Council was set up, and in the multicultural agenda in 1999, it was stated that Australia was and will always be a multicultural society irrespective of immigrant intakes (Jupp, 2001).

Australian multiculturalism is an urban phenomenon, and multicultural variety is most visible in capital cities, such as Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth, and Brisbane (Jupp, 1998). Thus, with its multicultural distinctiveness, as well as a significant growth in the Chinese population, the city of Melbourne was deemed to be a suitable context for research on the spirituality of Chinese young people in a multicultural society.

Chinese People and Christianity

Christianity first entered China during the Tang dynasty (A.D.635) under the Nestorians. When the Jesuit Matteo Ricci reached China during the Ming dynasty in the 17th Century, he succeeded in indigenising Christianity in China. However, in 1722, the Emperor's proclamation prohibited Catholic missions, and Catholicism was not to return to China until the middle of the 19th Century. The first Protestant missionary, Robert Morrison came to China in 1807 and was the founder of the Protestant Church in China. He had the Old Testament and the New Testament translated into the Chinese language in 1819 (Lin, 1990). The first Protestant Christian in China, Choi Go, was baptised in 1814. The first Chinese Protestant pastor, Leung Fat, was ordained before Morrison left for furlough in 1823 (Yu, 2002). Up to today, then, Chinese Protestantism has been in existence for almost 200 years.

During the 20th century, there were successes and difficulties for the Christian churches in China. The Boxer Uprising of 1900 led to the death of many missionaries as the Boxers sought to drive all foreigners out of the country. However, in the years between 1915 and 1936, as the result of growth in the indigenous Protestant church, the number of ordained Chinese pastors tripled. In 1926 alone, when the number of missionaries began to decline, Pope Pius XI consecrated six Chinese bishops (McCucheon, 1990). Later in the 1950s, imperialism was denounced and the Church

had to purge itself of all foreign influences. The "Three-self's" policy announced by the government promulgated that local churches had to be self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating so as to show their independence from foreign aid and support. In order to retain their protection by the government, the Church was not to interfere in government policies. At that time, both the Catholic Church and the Protestants suffered denunciation and imprisonment for being linked with foreign imperialism. Nevertheless, since the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), there have been more than 81,000 Christian worship centers with more than 21 million baptised adult believers, and over 52 million Christians who were affiliated with the Christian Churches (McCutcheon, 1990, p.139).

Towards the end of the 20th Century, it was believed that more than 50 million Christians were in Mainland China, while there were more than 8,500 Chinese Churches outside Mainland China (Lam, 2002). It is believed that more than 50 million Chinese are multi-cultural, multi-lingual and with multiple nationalities all around the world.[3] Meeting the needs of Chinese people around the world is one of the major tasks of today's Chinese churches.

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[3] With reference to *CCOWE '91 Compendium*, 1992, p.20, the statistics showed 50 million overseas Chinese who are multi-cultural, multi-lingual and with multiple nationalities; thus, after more than a decade, the figure is believed to be more than 50 million.

Chinese Christians and Protestant Churches in Melbourne

By 2001, the number of the Chinese Protestant Churches in Melbourne had increased to more than 60 ("Melbourne Chinese churches", 2001 June) since the Wesleyan Church of Victoria in the gold fields. The first Chinese Protestant Church in Australia was founded in 1859 (Law, 1981). In 1981, there were five groups of Chinese Protestant Christians attending church worship and fellowship (Law, 1981, pp.438-439).

First was the group of Chinese Protestant Christians who attended the Australian Protestant churches mainly with Australians. The Chinese attending these churches were willing to be acculturated into the Australian church. They were either Australian-born Chinese or they had been in Australia for a long time. The second group of Chinese Protestant Christians attended the Chinese Christian fellowships. These fellowships consisted of a small number of Chinese members who had gatherings in their family homes, while some of the members attended the Australian Protestant Churches for Sunday services. The third group attended the overseas Christian Fellowship. Most of these were overseas Chinese students and some came from Asian countries. They had prayer meetings, "cell" groups and fellowship meetings during the weekdays while they attended the Australian Protestant Churches or Chinese Protestant Churches for the Sunday services. A fourth group attended the

Australian Protestant churches with a Chinese congregation. These churches provided the Chinese with opportunities for ministries and took care of the overseas students. The fifth group attended the Chinese Protestant Churches, and one of these Churches with Chinese young people became the focus of this research. Most of the Church members in these Chinese Protestant Churches were Chinese speaking (Cantonese or Mandarin), and they had their own worship and ministries.

After two decades, in some of the Chinese Protestant Churches, there were English services and fellowships for Chinese youth, as well as Chinese services and fellowships for their parents. In other words, some of the Chinese Protestant Churches, including the Church at the centre of this research, had developed bilingual or even trilingual services for the needs of their youth. This was a new model of church ministries and it sought to nurture the particular spirituality of Chinese young people in a multicultural society. This thesis reports on research conducted within one of these Chinese Protestant Churches, so as to discover the characteristics of the spirituality of Chinese young people through acknowledging the multicultural context in which they live. It therefore has the potential to contribute to the well being of these young people as Churches and families understand them better.

There are reasons behind the choices a person makes to attend a particular Church. In the situation of Chinese young people in Australia, questions arise as to

whether they have been given choices by their parents, and the extent to which they find themselves identified with the Church. The two generations, the parents and the young people, may experience differently the process of identifying themselves with the Church, or even with religion and spirituality. What are the differences and what is the gap between them if there are any? What do they need in order to grow in their religious spirituality? Should there be any theory formulated for their growth in a sense of identity and religious spirituality in a multi-cultural setting? These are the related interests of this research.

Section Four: A Schema for Studying the Spirituality of Chinese Young People

A Generation of Two Cultures

Statistics show that 27% of persons born in Australia have at least one overseas-born parent (ABS, 2003a), while in Victoria, among those between twelve and twenty-five years old and born in Australia, 277,671 persons (about 38%) have at least one parent who was born overseas (ABS, 1998). Up until the 2001 National Census in Victoria, there were 32,441 young people aged between fifteen and twenty-four who claimed their ancestry as Chinese (VOMA, 2002), and it was believed that most of these young people lived in Melbourne (Deacon, 2000). Among these Chinese young people, Chinese was one of the languages most commonly

spoken at home (ABS, 1998, 2003). Other statistics indicate that 80% of the Chinese

population speak the language (ABS, 2003a).

However, for those Australian born young Chinese and those who have grown

up in Australia, though they may speak Chinese (either Mandarin or Cantonese), at

home, their main language is English (ABS, 1998). In other words, their mother

tongue, the Chinese language, is a second language, and some may not speak the

language at all (see also Yeung, 2001). Since language is the core factor of culture and

identity (Barker, 1999), it could be argued that these young Chinese have become

more Australian than Chinese.

The group of Chinese young people who were the focus in the research

reported in this thesis were born or have grown up in Australia. They had been

exposed at least to two cultures, the Chinese traditional culture in their family, in

which the parents are the first generation in Australia, and the western culture in

society. Questions arise about which one is the dominant culture in this generation,

and about when the two cultures meet, whether it leads to a new culture and life style

that is different from both cultures. As the western culture confronts their worldview

and the value systems of their parents' traditional culture, either they will come to a

new culture, the Australian Chinese, or they will be acculturated into Australian

culture. In either case, they are a part of Australian society, and both of the cultural

backgrounds contribute to their identity formation that affects the development of

their spirituality. As their identity cannot be defined by one common experience,

either Chinese or Australian, an emphasis on multiplicities of identity and differences

is necessary. A cultural perspective is appropriate in order to investigate the

multiplicities of identity (Barker, 1999; Grossberg, 1996, 1997 reprinted) that lead to

the development of their spirituality.

A Transcultural Perspective for Studying the Spirituality of Chinese Young People

In the twenty-first century, as a result of the processes of globalisation, there is

a set of unpredictable, disjointed and multidirectional cultural flows, rather than a

simple expansion of western institutions and cultural formations to the rest of the

world (Barker, 1999, p.33). Welsh (1999) claims that the old concept of culture

misrepresents cultures' actual form, relationships between cultures, and even the

structure of individuals' identities and lifestyles. Welsh (1999, p.200) suggests the

concept of "transculturality" that aims for a multi-meshed and inclusive understanding

of culture. In the perspective of transculturality, identities comprehend both a

cosmopolitan side, and a side of local affiliation. People can make their own choices

with respect to their affiliations while their actual homeland can be far away from

their original homeland (Welsh, 1999, p.201). Thus, the identity of Chinese young

people in the multicultural society is "transcultural" (Welsh, 1999), comprehending

both traditional Chinese culture from their local affiliations, such as families, and Australian culture in the society.

However, research shows that the identity of young transcultural people such as those who are the focus of this study is not a sum of the two cultures, but that the meeting of the two cultures leads to a new culture and life style through the process of cultural shifts (Khan, 1983; McGrath, 1999; Wallman 1983; Welsh, 1999). While Wallman (1983) and Khan (1983) suggest the identity of young immigrants in a multicultural society as multiplicities of identity, McGrath (1999) claims that they have a spirituality of multiplicities due to the differences in the multicultural society.

Hence this research began with a transcultural perspective and sought to study the two main cultural contexts, the Chinese culture in their family and the Australian culture in the society, as both of these cultural backgrounds affected their identity formation that led to their distinctive spirituality. Figure 1.1 shows the conceptual schema that brought together the influences that bear on the young people who were the participants in the research reported in this study.
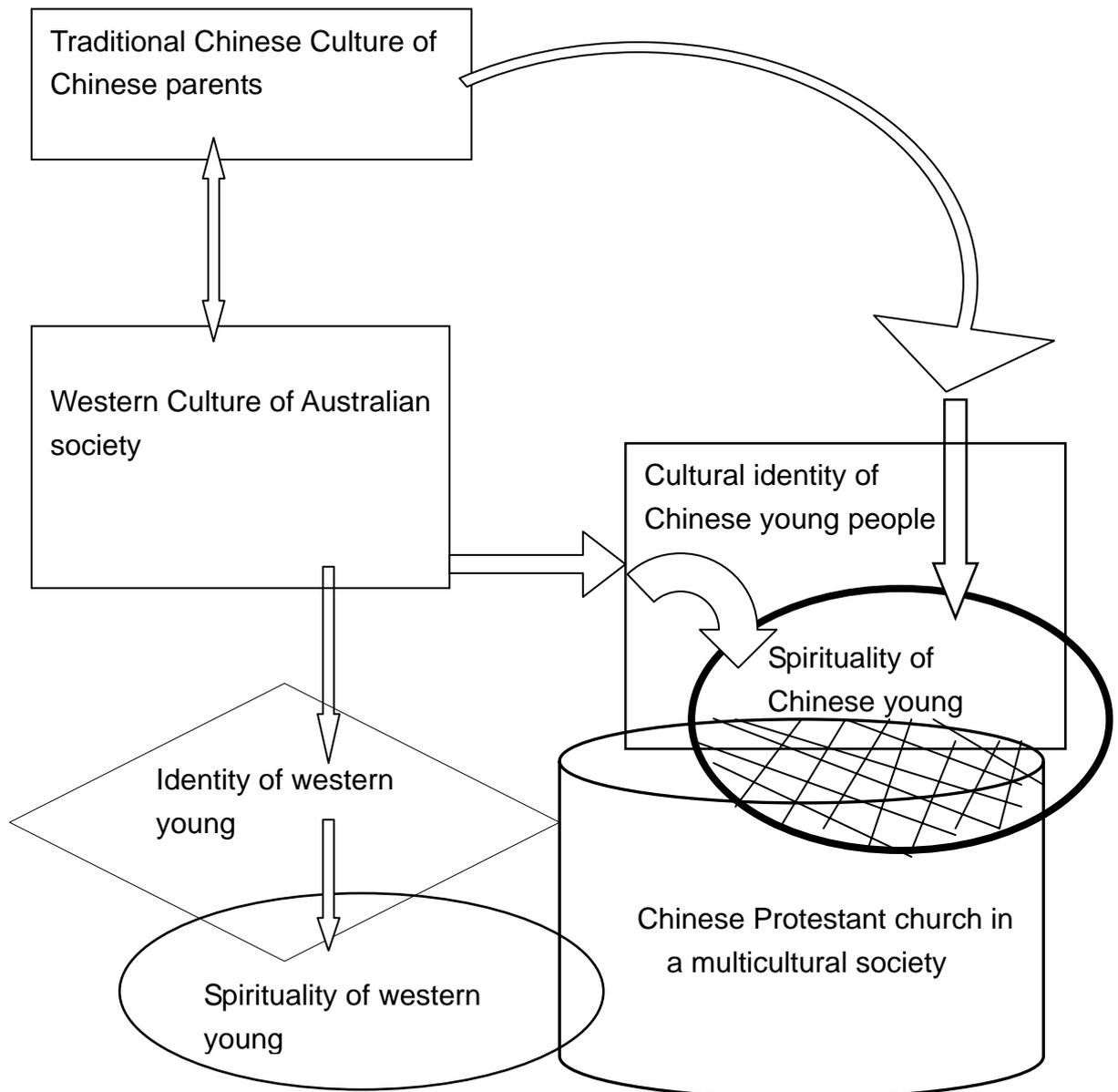
Key:

1. ⟹	Flow of cultural influences
2. ▨	The spirituality of the particular group of Chinese young people

Figure 1.1. An ethnographic model for researching the spirituality of Chinese young people from a Chinese Protestant church within a multicultural society[4]

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[4] A modified diagram from M.Chung, 2003, "A study on the identity and spirituality of the Chinese young people from a Chinese Protestant church in a multicultural society", in *JRE Vol 51* (4),72.

The Conceptual Schema of The Study

Figure 1.1 shows that both the traditional Chinese culture of their Chinese parents and western culture in the society contributed to the Chinese young people's identity formation, which in turn shaped their spirituality. Some Chinese young people attended the Chinese Protestant Church and identified with the Church, which nurtured their spirituality. In a Chinese Protestant church, it is uncommon to find western youth. However, in the Church that provided the context for this study, there were western youth, a fact that suggested that they identified with the Church in some ways, and that their spirituality may have been nurtured in the Church. Nevertheless, this research focused on Chinese young people in the Chinese Protestant Church, and it sought to investigate the cultural factors affecting their identity, the traditional Chinese culture within their families under the influences of their Chinese parents, and the role of their peers and the western culture within the society, factors which combined to form the distinctiveness of their spirituality.

Within a multicultural society, different cultural factors affect the identity formation of Chinese young people. Chinese traditional culture is one of the important factors affecting the identity formation of the Chinese young generation, and the dominant culture of the society is another factor in their identity formation. As Milner (1975) has suggested, the relationships between groups, the values and norms shared

by the groups, and the institutions of compulsory segregation, such as the affiliations with the church communities and schools, are relevant attributes in the formation of identity (see also Hudson, 2000).

Moreover, Wallman (1983) has suggested that the children of immigrants should be given a choice of multiple identities in a multicultural society. The reason for this is that individuals do not necessarily identify themselves by their appearance, behaviour, or by the people with whom they associate. Neither do they need to identify with everyone or anyone they resemble in culture. In a multicultural society, as the children of immigrants are living within two cultures, they may inherit the characteristics of both cultures, the majority and the minority (Wallman, 1983; see also Santrock, 2003). As Khan (1983) adds, a multiplicity of identities is particularly important to the children of immigrants. It is impossible to detach minority experience from that of the majority, as both minority and majority are inter-related (Khan, 1983; see also Castles & Miller, 2003). Therefore, in the case of Chinese young people in a multicultural society, both traditional Chinese culture in their families and the dominant culture within their society account for their identity formation (Khan, 1983; Santrock, 2003).

While young people seek a sense of belonging and identity, religion has a role to play in meeting their spiritual needs (Rossiter, 1988). The group of Chinese young

people in this research attended a Chinese evangelical Protestant Christian church, in which the distinctiveness of their spirituality was reflected due to cultural influences.

Section Five: Structure of the Study

The structure of the study reported in this thesis is as follows. Chapter one provides the introduction, background and context of the research. Chapter two provides a comprehensive review of literature that informs the research questions. It includes literature related to identity and spirituality among Chinese young people. The first section of this chapter includes literature about the factors affecting identity formation, which leads to the development of spirituality. The second section of the chapter reviews materials on characteristics and models of spirituality in a multicultural society against which the findings of the study may be interpreted.

Chapter three discusses the research design that guided the project. This research was a case study conducted in the framework of a qualitative approach using ethnographic methods, such as participant observation, individual interviews and focus group interviews, and a grounded theory approach was taken in the collection and analysis of the data. The fundamental question that drove the research was: What characteristics can be identified in the spirituality of a group of Chinese young people

in a Chinese Protestant congregation in Australia? Questions that related to the key

research question were:

1. What cultural or other factors led those young Chinese to attend this particular

   Chinese Protestant Church?

2. Does the church support their spirituality and in what ways?

3. How do they describe and express their spirituality?

4. To what extent are these Chinese young people affected by the changing

   spirituality of Australian society?

5. How can their cultural identity and spirituality be nurtured through Chinese

   churches in Australian society?

Chapters four, five and six analyse and discuss the findings of the research.

Chapter four describes the young participants' spirituality from their own perspectives.

Chapter five focuses on their construction of identity that led to their distinctive

spirituality. Chapter six studies their parents' worldviews and cultural values, and

chapter seven, the role of their church community, both of which have helped to shape

the spirituality of the Chinese young people. Drawing on conclusions of the study,

reflections and suggestions for further research are given in the final chapter (chapter

eight).

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In the previous chapter (chapter one), the context of the research reported in this thesis was given, alongside a justification of the significance of the research for understanding Chinese young people in a multicultural society. This chapter analyses and synthesises relevant literature in order to demonstrate from where the research reported in this thesis originated, and how it both fits into and extends existing literature. While most of the existing literature concerning adolescent spirituality is not up to date (Smith, C., Denton, M., Faris, R., & Regnerus, M., 2002), it is even more difficult to find research studies on the spirituality of young people who belong to ethnic minorities in the western societies. This fact alone substantiates the importance of this study. In order to provide background on the spirituality of the young people who took part in this research, the researcher has drawn on more general Australian and American studies.

The target group of young participants in the research reported in this thesis, aged between fifteen and eighteen years old were in the developmental stage of adolescence. Their main task was to develop a sense of identity, to which many professionals such as counsellors and educators refer when they talk about the

development of spirituality (Engebretson, 2004; Fowler, 1991; Hill, Knitter, & Madges, 1997; Rossiter, 2005). Thus, the first section brings together, analyses and synthesises literature about the links between identity and spirituality. While the Chinese young people who took part in the research were situated in two cultural contexts, Chinese culture within their families and western culture in the society, these cultures served as frames of reference for their beliefs and values (Collins, 1999; Holt, 1993; Rossiter, 2005). The second section thus reviews literature concerning the factors, from their parents and family culture and the culture in the society, which affected their identity formation and shaped their spirituality. As noted in the previous chapter, the research reported in this thesis is set in a Chinese Christian Church. There was a cultural inheritance, as well as fundamental shared meanings within their Church community, which played a role in their spirituality. The third section focuses on literature concerning the spirituality of young people, including Chinese young people, within a Christian framework. The last section of literature review focuses on literature concerning different styles of spirituality and their significances, as well as the church nurturing models in resonate with young people's spirituality in the multicultural society, in order to provide a background for further discussion about the development of theories for the Chinese young people's spirituality in a multicultural society.

Section One: Spirituality and Identity

Relationship between Spirituality and Identity

Recent research (Engebretson, 2002a, 2004) has shown that young people express spirituality in terms of relationships with themselves, with others, with the world around them and for many, with a Supreme Being. It also suggests that young people develop their own spiritual systems, often away from institutional religion (Engebretson, 2002a, 2004). Rossiter (2005) claims that spirituality and identity are interrelated, and that spirituality is a core expression of identity (2001). Rossiter (2001) also suggests that the formation of identity is linked interactively with cultural elements, and personal and social discourse. The factors, particularly parents and parents' cultural values, which affect young people's identity, also play an important role in their spirituality (Bond, 2005; see also Rossiter, 2005). Other research studies (Santrock, 2003) concur that young people grow up with a set of values, which they begin to question in the process of identity formation, and this contributes to the development of their spirituality (Engebretson, 2004; Santrock, 2003).

Moreover, McGrath, (1999) stresses that spirituality develops differently for individuals and groups due to the differences in social context. Moore (1993) adds that people develop their identities within their own communities (see also Secombe & Zajda, 1999), and that the diverse cultural experiences within their communities

account for the distinctiveness in their spiritualities. Similarly, the distinctive cultural context of a multicultural society, together with the cultural background of their families and Church community, contributes to the identity formation of its young people, and leads to a distinctive spirituality of young people from different cultural backgrounds (Engebretson, 2003 Winter). Hence, there is a close relationship between identity and spirituality, and the formation of identity in different cultural contexts leads to a distinctive spirituality.

A Distinctive Spirituality due to the Identity Formation in a Multicultural Society

The research design described later in this thesis argues that distinctive spirituality is linked with identity. The concept of identity has been used in psychological theory, and it consists of a variety of ideas about what people are (Hudson, 2000), and how they see themselves (Milner, 1975). In a social psychological view, identity is built up from the plans and commitments according to which the individual lives (Alma & Zock, 2002). Hall (1996, 1997 reprinted) and Grossberg (1996, 1997 reprinted) also suggest that identity is constructed upon recognition of some common origin, or shared characteristics with another person or group. Grossberg in particular claims that there is no identity based on only one universally shared origin or experience, but identity is always relational and incomplete in process, a claim with which Barker (1999) concurs.

The relationships between groups, the values and norms shared by groups, and

the institutions of compulsory segregation, are relevant attributes in the formation of

identity (Milner, 1975; see also Secombe & Zajda, 1999). As Shwedder and Bourne

(1984) suggest, the factors that affect identity formation are in relation to the

community to which people are affiliated (see also Alma & Zock, 2002; Hudson,

2000). Castles and Miller (2003) further claim that culture is the main source of

identity, and for the people from ethnic minorities, their ethnic culture shed the

distinctiveness of their identity. In the Australian context, Dixson (1999, p.18) claims

that the source of Australian identity springs from three broad streams, which are

indigenous culture, Anglo-Celtic culture and new ethnic culture[5].

Culture, as Pusch (1988) defines it, is the sum total of ways of living including

beliefs, values, language patterns and communication styles, which is developed

among a group within a particular environment. Lewis (2002, p.13) adds that it is a set

of meanings constructed in the form of language, symbols, signs and text, and is

transitional and open while the meanings created within a small group may operate as

part of a larger society, as in the instance of a Chinese group of Chinese traditional

culture in multicultural Australia. To Espin (1996), the definition of culture refers

either to cultures other than one's own or to the shared culture of one's society. It is

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[5] The new ethnic is a collective term for the different ethnic groups. See M. Dixson, 1999, p.18.

more important and substantive to investigate the meaning, function and possibility of

the act of defining culture and of those who exercise the "culture". This research study

aimed to study the meaning-making of Chinese young people, who were under the

influences of their parents' Chinese culture and the culture within the society. For

Chinese young people, the Chinese culture of their ethnic background, as well as the

culture in the society, are sources of their identity in Australian society (Santrock,

2003).

Wallman (1983) argues that children of immigrants should be given a choice

of multiple identities in a multicultural society. This is because individuals do not

necessarily identify themselves by their physical appearance, behaviour, or the people

with whom they associate. Neither do they necessarily identify with everyone or

anyone they resemble in culture. In a multicultural society, since the children of

immigrants are living within two cultures, they may inherit the characteristics of both

cultures, the majority and the minority (Santrock, 2003; Wallman, 1983; see also

Newman & Newman, 1999; Secombe & Zajda, 1999). Khan (1983) adds that it is

important to look at the relationship between ethnic identities and other social and

cultural identities on a horizontal level, as both minority and majority are inter-related.

It is impossible to detach minority experience from that of the majority (Khan, 1983).

Therefore, Hall (1996, 1997 reprinted) argues that there is a multi-level identity due to

different cultural experiences in a multicultural society (see also Castles & Miller, 2003).

In the same way, Chinese young people in a multicultural society, with parents born overseas, have experienced at least two different cultures, one in their Chinese families, and the other, within the western society. The two cultures, Chinese and western, play important roles in the formation of their identity. In order to understand these Chinese young people, it is essential to address the different cultural values in the two different cultural contexts (Gardener, 1984; see also Santrock, 2003); otherwise, they may have a feeling of "inadequacy" in their identity (Secombe & Zajda, 1999, p.65). While people from ethnic groups will develop "dynamic multiple identities" in a multicultural context (Castles & Miller, 2003, p.39), this leads to a distinctive style of spirituality (M. Chung, 2004). Hence, in the research reported in this thesis, both traditional Chinese culture and western culture were taken into account in considering the formation of their identity, which contributed to the development of their distinctive spirituality.

Section Two: The Factors of Identity Formation that Shaped Spirituality

Introduction

As the preceding section has already noted, spirituality is closely related to

identity, which is, spirituality is influenced by the experience of identity development

in relationship with the self and others (Engebretson, 2004). Manaster (1977, p.231)

suggests, family, friends, and community are the major influences in the development

of young people, whose tasks concern the relationship with family, with peers, and

with other people, while becoming a member of the community (see also Carr-Gregg

& Shale, 2002; Santrock, 2003). This section focuses on the factors that affect the

identity of Chinese young people, and which shape their spirituality. These include

traditional Chinese cultural values, parents and peers, and western culture in the

society.

Traditional Chinese Culture

In the beginning, parents define the child's world (Milner, 1975, p.37), while

different cultural contexts influence young people's development (Dusek, 1996; see

also Newman & Newman, 1999). The role of parents is important in the identity

formation of young people (Santrock, 2003), and so is the parents' culture (Valsiner,

1989; see also Castles & Miller, 2003). In the case of the Chinese young people who

took part in the research, they inherited their parents' worldview including attitudes

and values, while transmission of cultural inheritance took place in the process of

identity formation (M. Chung, 2003a). This shaped their spirituality. The following

are characteristics of traditional Chinese culture, which have influenced the elder

generations.

The worldview of traditional Chinese is past oriented (Li, 1994; Wei, 1971), which indicates a strong desire to preserve traditional values and modes of living, and a tendency to resist change. This is reflected in their ancestor worship, parenting models, family ties, interpersonal relationships and religious beliefs (W. Chung, 2000). Ancestor worship is particularly important because its function is to have the family line continued (M. G. Wong, 1988). A lineage solidarity that functions as a link between the past and present is regarded as important (W. Chung, 2000; M. G. Wong, 1988). This past oriented worldview also explains why there are "China towns" in almost every capital city of western countries.

Another characteristic of Chinese culture is anthropocentrism. This means that traditional Chinese believe that man, god and nature are closely related (W. Chung, 2000). This is expressed in Confucianism and Taoism, which are deeply rooted in Chinese culture (Kraemer, 1938). There are legends of sages and ancient saints, and kings as candidates of gods and sages (Wei, 1971). Hence, ancestor worship and the expression of theocratic conceptions of the emperor are the most influential concepts of anthropocentric value (Kraemer, 1938; M. G. Wong, 1988). The Chinese are submissive to and respect institutional authority, while they also expect protection and care in return (W. Chung, 2000).

Chinese people are family-oriented (W. Chung, 2000; see also M. G. Wong, 1988). Family is regarded as the heart of daily life in Chinese culture. W. Chung (2000) suggests that among Chinese people, the first and primary relationship is expressed in submission to authority through family socialization. Children are taught to submit to the authority of parents, and loyalty to family is expressed in filial piety (W. Chung, 2000; Tey, 1988). Filial piety, as M. G. Wong (1988) describes, is a set of moral principles, which is taught at a very young age and reinforced throughout one's life, including duty, obligation, and importance of the family name, service, and self-sacrifice. Tey (1988) adds that filial piety is based on love and righteousness. Between those of equal status, there is mutual respect, as well as reverence toward the dominant leader and the elders (M. G. Wong, 1988). This is a highly cherished value in traditional Chinese families (W. Chung, 2000), within which parents are the authorities (Cobb, 1998; Rogers, 1972; M. H. Wong, 1989), and the authority in the family is passed from the father to the eldest son (Cobb, 1998; M. G. Wong, 1988). As well as this, children have to submit to other elderly people and teacher's authority (M. H. Wong, 1989). Hence, as Rogers (1972) says, traditional Chinese society is family-oriented, and it is a patriarchal system in which men dominate women, and the older generation dominates the younger generation (see also Cobb, 1998; Pai, Adler, & Shadiow, 2006; M. G. Wong, 1988;).

Chinese people are relationship-oriented and the familial relationship in Chinese society is the foundation for other relationships (W. Chung, 2000; see also Yung, 1997, 2000 reprinted). That is, the primary social relationship takes place in the family, from which the familial relationship extends to the friends of their family members, and then, to the friends of their friends. Chinese families used to extend their kinship through cousin-marriages, thus creating a whole interlocking network of wider family relationships within a village or a larger geographical area (Yung, 1997, 2000 reprinted). As M. G. Wong (1988) has stressed, traditional Chinese family life entails much more than a family in the western sense (see also Cobb, 1998). It is a link to a much larger chain of extended kinship and clan members, bringing large numbers of people together with a common bond, and promoting a sense of solidarity, security and belonging (see also Santrock, 2003). Family relationships link together the members in the family, village, community, county, province, country, and then, nation (Chu, 1971; M. G. Wong, 1988). W. Chung, (2000) claims that this characterises the value of familial relationship, which is *diffused* from family members to their friends, and then to other friends of friends (W. Chung, 2000).

Patrilocal residence is significant by a pattern of extended families, in which many generations and their offspring live under the same roof (M. G. Wong, 1988). Maintaining harmony in these interpersonal relationships is particularly important

(Chu, 1971; see also M. H. Wong, 1989; Pai et al., 2006). Direct confrontation and extreme behaviours are discouraged in order to keep everything in harmony, while patience and conditional acceptance of differences are highly valued in interpersonal relationships.

Furthermore, a 'both-and' type of thinking is derived from the Yin-Yang concept of Taoism, which is both inclusive and relative (Lee, 1989; Wan, 1998). This worldview embraces the way of 'either-or' thinking. Nothing is absolute, but everything can be blended together even though they are not of the same kind. Therefore, it is possible for Chinese people to mix their own culture with the dominant culture in the society and adapt to the social environment (Cobb, 1998; Santrock, 2003).

In a country of cultural pluralism, such as Australia, the traditional culture of any ethnic group is regarded as a part of their history and is expected to be blended and interwoven to contribute to the country (Secombe & Zajda, 1999; Strathern, 1996). The process of inter-cultural exchange takes place within ethnic groups, and leads to cultural renewal within the value systems of each ethnic group (Secombe & Zajda, 1999). Chinese young people may inherit the traditional Chinese culture from their parents, and they are meanwhile confronted with the contemporary culture of their society (Strathern, 1996). Nevertheless, when their parents find themselves

settling into the dominant culture, the young generation may adopt cultures from both their parents and the society without difficulties (Castles, Foster, Iredale, & Withers, 1998; Strathern, 1996). As Santrock (2003) suggests, they may identify in some way with their ethnic culture, and in other ways with the dominant culture in the society. This leads to a new identity formation (Castles & Miller, 2003), and thus a distinctive spirituality of their own (M. Chung, 2003a).

Roles of Parents and Peers

Family and peers are regarded as the primary and most important social groups for young people (Milson, 1972; Schwab, 2000). In a recent Australian research project conducted among middle school students (Engebretson, 2002a), 63 percent of the respondents nominated immediate family or a member of the immediate family as the most important person in their lives to share their thoughts and problems, while 30 percent nominated their friends. Other research studies (Milner, 1975; Milson, 1972; Schwab, 2000) suggest that the role of parents is particularly important in the identity formation of young people, regardless of the ethnic group to which they belong. According to Santrock (2003, p.543), parents are most important figures in the identity formation of young people from ethnic groups, and thus, this also applies to the identity formation of Chinese young people in Australian multicultural context (see also Bond, 2005; Frydenberg, 1997, 1999

reprinted).

Parents as Most Important Factor

Milner (1975) suggests that there are three processes in the formation of identity. These are a) the identification with the parents, b) parental modelling and role learning in relation to parents, and c) the transmission of the parents' whole world-view including the parents' attitudes and values. Parents, therefore, are interpreters and instructors, and young children absorb many of their parents' views automatically and inevitably. Dusek (1996) adds that there is a continuation of parental influences from childhood into youth. During the years of adolescence, the role of parents is the most influential factor, which helps or hinders the average young person in achieving their developmental tasks (Conger, 1979; see also Bond, 2005; Cobb, 1998). As Wildermuth (1990) stresses, the role of parents and family is most important in the process of identity formation, since young people must first learn to define themselves within their families before evaluating their acceptability to others outside their families. According to Conger (1979), when young people begin to become aware of alternative values, beliefs, and ways of doing things other than their families' values and ways of life, this may lead to conflicts between parents and young people. At this stage, parenting styles of the young person's parents become particularly important in the process of identity formation (Cobb, 1998; Conger, 1979;

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Santrock, 2003). Shaffer (2002) agrees that parenting practices affect the relationship between parents and children within the family, and thus, the development of the young people.

Nolla and Patton (1990) claim that most young people want to maintain close relationships with their parents (see also Frydenberg, 1997, 1999 reprinted), although there is a desire for more independence and autonomy. They are generally willing to talk things over with, and listen to, their parents if their parents are ready to listen and try to understand their situation (Nolla & Patton, 1990). Moreover, Rigby (1990) suggests that young people are in need of an ordered family and the exercise of authority by parents is especially important. In the case of the second generation of Chinese young people in a multicultural society, how far do their parents' worldview and cultural values affect their parenting styles, which help to account for their identity formation and shape their spirituality? There are some who suggest that there are three different parenting styles that affect the identity formation of young people: (a) autocratic or authoritarian, (b) permissive, and (c) democratic or authoritative (Nolla & Patton, 1990; Rigby, 1990; Slee, 2002), while some claim that there are four parenting types, (a) authoritative, (b) authoritarian, (c) indulgent or permissive, and (d) neglectful, indifferent or uninvolved (Cobb, 1998; Dusek, 1996; Shaffer, 2002).

Autocratic or authoritarian parenting is dictatorial in style, a very restrictive pattern of parenting (Cobb, 1998; Shaffer, 2002). Parents are very strict and controlling, and young people are expected to respect authority. Punishment is frequently used for disobedience. Young people exposed to this kind of parenting tend to be more rigid and less creative in problem solving. This parenting type brings low self-esteem and an unusual degree of dependency, and often results in aggressive young people. Parents of the permissive or "indulgent" type accept whatever their children decide to do (Cobb, 1998; Dusek, 1996) and seldom exert firm control over their children's behaviour (Shaffer, 2002). Young people have a high degree of freedom but are given little positive guidance (Dusek, 1996; Slee, 2002). Slee, (2002) claims that these young people tend to be poorly organized and often confused. "Neglectful", "Indifferent" or "uninvolved" parents use power-assertive discipline and spend little time with their children (Cobb, 1998; Dusek, 1996). These parents either neglect their children's needs or reject their children. Thus, they know little about their children's interest or their friends (Dusek, 1996). Rigby (1990) claims that weak parental supervision, such as in permissive parenting, is most closely associated with delinquency. However, Dusek (1996) suggests that parental hostility and rejection, which are found in authoritarian and indifferent parenting types, tend to

make young people feel unwanted and worthless. These young people are often more

aggressive and engage more in delinquency.

Parents of a democratic or authoritative style hold authority while they

encourage autonomy and a sense of responsibility. They expect their children to

participate in family decision-making (Shaffer, 2002). This parenting style helps

young people to establish higher self-control, independence, social responsibility and

harmonious family relations (Dusek, 1996; Nolla & Patton, 1990; Rigby, 1990).

Dusek (1996) claims that during the adolescent years, there is an increasing demand

for independence and autonomy. Parents can help adolescents by giving them

responsibilities and privileges. Making them feel they are wanted can help them

through the process of identity formation (Dusek, 1996). Generally, as Rigby (1990)

suggests, young people would prefer positive parenting occasionally backed up by

physical punishment, and autocratic or authoritarian parenting control, to no discipline

at all.

There are cross-cultural differences in parenting style between individualistic

cultures, such as Australian, and collectivist cultures, such as Chinese (Slee, 2002,

p.234). The parenting style among traditional Chinese parents, Rice (1990) suggests,

is authoritarian (see also Cobb, 1998; Shaffer, 2002). Chinese parents are strict with

their children, as they believe that it is the best way to express their love for their

children and to raise them properly (Shaffer, 2002, p. 549). Chinese young people are taught to be submissive to their parents who exercise firm discipline and little communication (Rice, 1990; Shaffer, 2002). Rigby (1990) agrees that Chinese young people are taught not to question their parents' authority or break rules, for this would bring dishonour to their families (see also Cobb, 1998; Shaffer, 2002). Rogers (1972) adds that the father of the family is the one to whom Chinese young people must listen; as in traditional Chinese families, parents are the authorities while the father is the chief. Similarly, W. Chung (2000) claims, Chinese are family-oriented and children are taught to submit to parents without question. This authoritarian parenting style, Shaffer (2002, p.549) commended as "appears" to work well "in China and among recent Asian immigrant families in the United States".

As noted earlier, Chinese people are of the 'both-and' thinking type and thus, they blend in with the western culture and learn western ways of parenting. Chinese parents in a western society learn quickly from the western culture. These parents use more verbal praise, talk to their children, and give them more freedom and choice in their own decision-making (Rice, 1990; see also Cobb, 1998), a situation that reflects their 'both-and' cultural characteristic. Yet, in Chinese families, there is still a strong sense of family ties, with parents' authority remaining unquestioned and the role of parent remains exceptionally important in Chinese families wherever they are (Cobb,

1998; see also Pai et al., 2006). As Slee (2002, p.14) points out, young people may become confused about their identity when their family struggles to maintain its ethnic identity in the face of Australian mainstream culture. For those with parents born overseas, their identity development is in relation to how well their parents have blended into the Australian mainstream culture.

Peers as Another Important Factor

As well as the role of parents, being a member of a peer group is an important criterion for identity formation (Bond, 2005). The concept of peer groups refers to social relationships that exist between young people (Slee, 2002). Peers are needed to create a reliable and manageable framework for their individualized behaviour (Slee, 2002) while at the same time, being accepted by one's peers gives the young person a feeling of security, direction and significance (Mourant, 1991). For young people, being one of the peers is particularly important (Bond, 2005). They view themselves as a group. They dress in similar fashions and hairstyles, enjoy similar forms of music and entertainment, and even create new habits and speech (Rigby, 1990; see also Dusek, 1996). They seek and share communal interests and experiences (W. Connell, Stroubant, Sinclair, R. Connell, & Roger, 1975) so as to create a sense of group identity (Rigby, 1990).

Being accepted by one's peers gives the young person a feeling of security,

direction and significance (Mourant, 1991). Mourant (1991) suggests that the influence of a peer group with constructive values, can help the young person, although Slee (2002) questions whether the value and norms of their peer group are mature enough to aid these young people to grow. Mourant (1991) adds that when the value system of the peers is different from that of their parents, peer group pressure is a problem both for the young people themselves and for their parents. Rigby (1990) agrees that the influence of peers can operate as a counterforce to parental influence, inciting rebellion and causing them to seek a counter-cultural alternative value system. However, as Nolla and Patton (1990) stress, parental support can override the effects of poor peer relationships. Mourant, too, finds that it is very important for young people to have parental support in keeping their lives under control (see also Kostanski, 2003).

Nevertheless, parents and peers are two reference groups for young people. Parents are the primary source of reference, while the peer group is a reference point for information relating to the type of clothes to wear, dating and social events (Slee, 2002, p.438). In other words, peers' influences dominate in some aspects of social behaviour while parents' predominate in basic social and moral values (Dusek, 1996, p.333). In the case of Chinese young people with parents born overseas, the traditional Chinese culture is likely to deeply affect their social values and morals, while their

peers play an important role in their social behaviour.

As previous studies suggest, young people identify closely with their own kind (Connell et al., 1975). For peer group formation, Dusek (1996, p.311) claims, social class and ethnic group membership are the two important factors, while ethnic group membership becomes increasingly important during adolescence (see also Santrock, 2003). Peers, then as Schwab (2000) illustrates, consist of those who belong to a homogeneous life context or a specific social background, for example the homogeneous peers of Russian Germans and Bosnian young people in Germany. Hence, it is not surprising to find homogeneous peers of Chinese young people in Australia.

Research on city youth in Sydney (Connell et al., 1975) shows that the differences between migrants and Australians are most often related to cultural factors, and that migrant youth are far from integrated within the Australian community. The research suggests that young migrants are more inclined to stay under the parental wing either because they find problems in merging with their Australian peers, or because a culturally determined pattern of family ties precludes the peer group and friendship patterns.

Nevertheless, Rice (1990) shows another side of contemporary Chinese young people in America. They are more vocal than the previous generations, and more

inclined to speak out and to rebel against authority. As Wildermuth (1990) suggests, a person's self-image is largely based on his or her interpersonal relationships within society. If they feel unaccepted by others, they may approach the social situation in self-defeating ways or they may be unlikely to initiate new relationships and may appear passive in establishing interpersonal relationships within the society. However, if their local communities are recognised and fostered and if schools and other education or training institutions develop relationships with their communities, they can achieve a sense of belonging and establish satisfying interpersonal relationships within the society (Blakers, 1990). Santrock (2003, p.544) agrees that one who has a higher level of ethnic identity is more positive toward one's own ethnic group, as well as members of other ethnic groups.

In summary, in the case of Chinese young people, parents and peers play different roles in their identity formation, a factor which leads to the formation of their spirituality, while both are regarded as the primary factors (Milson, 1972). As well as this, the society in which they are situated also plays a role in the development of their identity and affects their spirituality (Hughes et al., 1995).

The Western Culture within Society

Young people need to identify themselves in relation to the secondary groups to which they belong such as nation, class and city, as well as the primary groups like

family and friendship groups (Milson, 1972; B. Newman & P. Newman, 1999). As

Blakers (1990) claims, young people need to feel themselves part of the society,

which, as Milson (1972) suggests, has three distinct but related purposes with young

people. These are: a) to communicate culture, b) to perpetuate a recognizable identity

for the community, and c) to gain support for existing structures of power. The

features of societies and the normative patterns, the stability and wealth of the society,

which are under the impact of globalisation, postmodernism, consumerism and

popular culture, are most likely to affect young people's experiences (Milson, 1972).

Globalisation

Entering the twenty first century, globalisation is increasingly drawing

individuals, regions and nations together to recognise and respond to each other

(Shanahan & Treuren, 2003, p.1; see also Featherstone, 1995). Thus, people become

more connected in the process of globalisation. According to M. Lewis (2003, p.169),

globalisation relates to the ease and speed with which knowledge, technology, people,

ideas, goods and services, and capital move from country to country. This widens the

form of cross-border transactions and deepens the international character of economic

activity (M. Lewis, 2003). Barker (1999, p.34) concurs that globalisation refers to the

increasing abundance of global connections, which allows social relations to be

stretched across time and space throughout the globe. This results in an extension

outwards of a particular culture to its limit, the globe, and a compression of cultures,

in which different cultures pile on top of each other without specific rules

(Featherstone, 1995). One perspective on the process of globalisation is that of

Americanisation, with the assumption that all particularities and local cultures give

way to the influences of American culture (Featherstone, 1995). P. Bell and R. Bell

(1998) claim that Americanisation is a process by which people from other cultures

acquired the American language, citizenship, customs and ideals. This implies a

synchronisation of all particularities into a symbolic hierarchy, and the world becomes

one place with a hybrid culture (Featherstone, 1995; Kraidy, 2002). Another

perspective is that globalisation provokes reactions that seek to rediscover the culture

of particularity and locality, because the growing intensity of contact and

communication between nation-states leads to cultural clash (Featherstone, 1995). As

Featherstone (1995) remarks, a global culture on the one hand is the sense of various

cultural particularities juxtaposed together on the same field, while on the other hand,

those different cultural particularities do not fit together. Therefore, rather than the

simple expansion of western institutions and cultural formations to the rest of the

world, the outcome of globalisation is a set of unpredictable, disjointed and

multidirectional cultural flows (Barker, 1999, p.33-34). This suggests that the

formation of identity is more complex (Barker, 1999).

Since globalisation is neither uniform in its effects nor universal in its reach, it imposes impacts differently on particular regions and cultures (Shanahan & Treuren, 2003). M. Lewis (2003) suggests that a process of internal globalisation has been taking place in the multicultural context of Australia, with an increased demand for news and content from other states in Australia due to an increase in intrastate migration. Thus, this is a transitional time for cultural regrouping (Dixson, 1999). Concerning the identity formation of young people in Australia, Dixson (1999) raises the awareness of a new identity synthesis, in which the source of identity in Australia springs from indigenous, Anglo-Celtic and new ethnic cultures. As J. Lewis (2002) agrees, new localised identities will be a resistance against the marshalling order of hierarchies.

In the process of globalisation, a relentless detraditionalism takes place, and collective orientations give way to individualism (Featherstone, 1995; Hudson, 2000). Young people tend to break away from traditional values and seek a new way of a life of their own (Feartherstone, 1995; see also Castles & Miller, 2003). As Hughes (2002) stresses, in contemporary western society, young people have autonomy in their thinking, choose their own way of living, and even create their own cultures in terms of ways of life and patterns of behaviour. It is sometimes suggested that young people of this generation are totally lost in the process of identity making because of the

erosion of truth claims, rules and authorities under the influences of globalisation (A.

D. Smith, 1990; see also Cheung, 2000; Leung, 1999; Su & Hung, 2000).

Postmodernism

Postmodernism is another significant cultural feature in western society, which

affects the identity formation of today's young people and shapes their spirituality.

Miles (2000) suggests that the appeal of postmodernism can partly be explained by

the fact that there is no definitive understanding of what constitutes postmodernity,

which is itself a highly contested term. The emergence of postmodernism was in the

arts in the 1960s, and then in certain academic and intellectual fields in the 1970s

(Featherstone, 1991). According to Featherstone (1991), there is no agreed meaning of

the term postmodernism, but it directs our attention to changes taking place in

contemporary culture. Lyotard (1999, 2000 reprinted, p.145) stressed that the 'post' of

postmodernism does not carry the meaning of coming back, but of *ana*-lysing, and

ana-mnesing, of reflecting. Miles (2000) puts it in another way, that postmodernism

reflects the move from a highly rational and rigid society to a highly irrational and

flexible 'pseudo-society', a reality which can be constructed by any given meanings

and images. Moreover, postmodernism provides a new concept, which not only draws

people's direction to see the unnoticed aspects of reality, but also forms that reality at

the same time (Featherstone, 1995). Hence, in the case of young people in Australia,

including Chinese young people, their identity under the impact of postmodernism has become a form of subjective feelings (A. D. Smith, 1990), and they can construct their reality, and identities, a fact that leads to a spirituality of distinctiveness.

Consumerism

Postmodernism gives rise to the consumer culture in the western society (Featherstone, 1991). Young people simply pick and choose the direction in which they wish to go (Hughes, 2006; Miles, 2000). Featherstone (1991) claims that there are three main perspectives on consumer culture. The first one is that consumer culture is premised upon the expansion of capitalist commodity production, and has resulted in the growing salience of leisure and consumption activities in contemporary western societies. The second is a more sociological view with focus upon different ways in which people use goods in order to create social bonds or distinctions. The third perspective is the question of the emotional pleasures of consumption. Dreams and desires become kinds of cultural imagery and particular sites of consumption, and these lead to excitement and pleasures of various kinds (Featherstone, 1991). Moreover, images, signs and symbolic goods are used to summon up dreams, desires and fantasies in consumer culture. Thus, today's' young people can construct their own realities while they are given numerous alternatives (Engebretson, 2002b). As Featherstone points out, the structure of today's consumer culture is flexible. In the

twenty-first century, young people no longer depend on sub-cultural affirmation for the construction of their identities. While consumption is used as a means to define their realities, they construct lifestyles that are as adaptable and as flexible as the world around them, and thus, consumer lifestyles are significant for the young generation in western society (Hughes, 2006; Miles, 2000). In the case of Chinese young people, their identity is affected by the consumer culture, and is not bound by their sub-cultures, but has significant flexibility. This contributes to their style of spirituality.

Popular Culture

In addition, the natural consequence of the free choice provided by an unfettered market, which is integral to the consumer culture, is popular culture (Turner, 2001). Popular culture is shapeless and intrusive, as Casey (1997) claims. Featherstone (1991) suggests that it is manifested in a number of ways, especially in the clothes people wear, in the shopping centres in which they purchase goods, the television they watch, and in the music to which they listen (Casey, 1997). Popular culture has become the site where shared meanings are constructed and contested by and for a specific national culture. The young people in Australia, as Craik (2001) suggests, find their identities through popular cultural forms, especially media products, such as the Internet, music video, and television. Today, the popular use of

ICQ (inter-person communication through the internet – 'I seek you') reflects their

values and belief systems. They can construct their ideal identity in the site of ICQ

through the internet; they can create their own stories while communicating with

others in front of the computer; they can pretend to be someone else and their real

identity remains unknown; they can identify themselves through various forms, and

their interpersonal relationships are distant as a result (W. L. Chan, 2000; Leung, 1999;

see also Engebretson, 2002b). Hence, as Featherstone (1995, p.120) suggests, young

people have become a new tribe, who have temporary fluid identities dwelling within

transitory relationships. Under the influence of popular culture, they pick up

"whatever" readily available meanings they prefer (Hughes, 2006), construct their

own meaning system, and then sustain their own way of life as long as they like

(Hughes, 2006; Rossiter, 2005).

Summary: The Impact of Western Culture in the Society

In summary, young people within western society are under the impact of

globalisation, postmodernism, consumerism and popular culture. It is suggested that

this generation of young people, including Chinese young people, have become a

rootless generation and their identity is in crisis (Cheung, 2000; Leung, 1999; Su &

Hung, 2000). They seek relationships but they fear to face their own selves; they seek

meaning but in vain; they create their own meaning of life but it does not last (Cheung,

2000; Leung, 1999; Su & Hung, 2000). As Hung (2000) suggests, these young people long for love and care, and there is a need in their spirituality to seek eternity, a real faith, and a destiny to which to commit (Su & Hung, 2000).

Section Three: Spirituality of Chinese Young People in a Christian Framework

Introduction

According to Fowler (1991a), the spirituality of young people needs to go through the stage of conventional faith, in which a synthesis of beliefs and values takes place. This supports their personal identity and helps them to unite with others in emotional solidarity (Fowler, 1991; see also Hill, Knitter, & Madges, 1997). As de Lorimier (1973) claims, the main task of young people is to search for identity and find meaning for one's life. They need to feel a sense of belonging to a group, and therefore, the relationship between the individual and the group is important (de Lorimier, 1973; see also Harris & Moran, 1998, p.117-118). On the one hand, the community to which they commit contributes to the synthesis of beliefs and values in their identity formation (see also Rossiter, 2005), while on the other hand, within the community to which they feel they belong, they can find their identity and meaning in life (Hudson, 2000). The research reported in this thesis is set in a Chinese Protestant church, and therefore, the Church community of the participants had a role in their

identity and spiritual formation. Therefore, this section of the literature review focuses on the spirituality of Chinese young people in a multicultural context in a Christian framework.

Definition of Spirituality

In a broad sense, spirituality is seen as the personal quality of being aware, connected, and committed to a life of well being for others, as well as for oneself (Sechrest, 2003, p.41). It involves the whole person and gives expression to everything one does (Warren, 1983). Going beyond this broad approach, the definition of spirituality that underpins this research was a Christian one, since the research was set in a Chinese Protestant church.

In a Christian worldview, as Lealman (1986) claims, spirituality represents a particular capacity in human nature for transcendence, in which according to Pusch (1979), one seeks a personal relationship with God. Collins (1999) adds that it is a life of faith, a way of trusting oneself in a committed way to centres of meaning and value beyond oneself. Other research studies refer to spirituality as a relationship with God in real life situations (Engebretson, 2004; Koester, 2002). It points to a way of life (Hill, Knitter, & Madges, 1997; Tacey, 2004) and can be expressed through religious practices such as prayer, and personal and communal rituals (Engebretson, 2004, p.269; see also McGrath, 1999). In a Christian framework, as McGrath (1999)

concludes, it also involves the fundamental beliefs of Christianity, and life experiences based on Christian faith.

The terms spirituality and religion are sometimes used in an interchangeable way, and there is a close relationship between the two (Engebretson, 2003 Winter; Rossiter, 2005; Slater, Hall, & Edwards, 2001). Yet, spirituality is not equal to religion (Ratcliff, 2001). While religion refers to a system of beliefs, attitudes, and practices (Koester, 2002), Christian spirituality is concerned with the feeling of a personal relationship with God, which can be experienced in real life situations or through religious practices (Engebretson, 2004; Ratcliff, 2001; Tacey 2004). As Tacey (2004) suggests, spirituality is the living core of religion.

Hence, taking into account the many ways of defining spirituality, in this research, the concept of spirituality represents the particular capacity in human nature, which seeks a personal relationship with God (Lealman, 1986; Pusch, 1979). The definition of spirituality, upon which this research is based, is as follows:

Spirituality is a life of faith, a way of trusting oneself in a committed way to centres of meaning and value beyond oneself (Collins, 1999). It involves an understanding of God, and it concerns personal and communal experiences (Harris & Moran, 1998, p.109) in real life situations or through religious practices (Engebretson, 2004; Ratcliff, 2001; Tacey 2004 September), which

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foster and sustain the relationship with God (McGrath, 1999). Spirituality may

be expressed through relationships, the relationships with the self, with the others,

with the world and with God (Engebretson, 2004; see also Collins, 1999;

Engebretson, 2002; Harris & Moran, 1998).

Spirituality encompasses the whole of human life and will develop in a variety

of styles depending on culture, denominations, personalities and gifts (Holt, 1993). As

Collins (1999) claims, styles of spirituality are influenced by the worldviews in which

they were first formulated. In this research, the influences of Chinese culture and

contemporary western culture, both of which produce different worldviews

respectively, help to account for the Christian spirituality of Chinese young people in

a multicultural society.

Quest for Spirituality in Australia

While today, young people are aware of a vast range of belief systems through

the mass media, they are able to compare their beliefs with others, and at the same

time they begin to question traditional religious beliefs (Engebretson, 1999; Hughes,

2006). Results from the 2001 Australian National Census show that almost 70% of

people said that they were Christians (ABS, 2004), including Catholics, Orthodox,

Anglican and other Protestant. However, the proportion of Australians affiliating with

the Christian faith was considerably less than it was in 1996 (78%) and in 1901 (98%) (ABS, 2001). There is a tendency that that young Australians are falling away from Church practice (Hughes, 2006). While research studies suggest that the majority of Australian young people affirm belief in God, the Church is not regarded as a vehicle through which they may express their beliefs (Engebretson, 2002b). Rossiter (2001) agrees that many young people are inclined not to see religion as having a place in the way they work out their identity, values and purpose in life. In the past, most of the support networks for meaning and identity had plausibility and force, and many young people searched for the meaning of life in religious convictions and in the Church (Rossiter, 2001). However, social change has led to the breakdown of the symbols and rituals that once helped young people to find meaning. Today's young people are exposed to a vast range of belief systems and lifestyles. It is argued that traditional ways have lost their authority while there are so many alternative ways of thinking and doing things (Engebretson, 1999; see also Rossiter, 1988, 2005). Nevertheless, research studies suggest that young people have not rejected all authority (Hughes et al., 1995, p.73), and that they are open to talk about religion and spirituality (Hughes, 2006). They are willing to follow authority when they find someone who truly responds to their quest for spirituality (Hughes et al., 1995, p.73). The most important thing to note is that they are spiritual beings and have a deep need

for intimacy and belonging, which builds a platform for genuine spirituality (Engebretson, 2002a).

A Transcultural Perspective

As research studies (Khan, 1983; Secombe & Zajda, 1999; Wallman, 1983) suggest, children of immigrants in a multicultural society are living within two cultures, and they may inherit the characteristics of both cultures, the majority and the minority (see also Santrock, 2003). The young generation of Chinese, with their parents born overseas, is living within two cultures in Australia (Law, 1989; Tsui, 1989; Yeung, 1989). They speak in English and think in English. On the outside, they are seen as Chinese while inside, they are western (Ho, 1989; Tsui, 1989; Yeung, 1989;). They are under the influence of both the western culture and their parents' traditional Chinese values (Rice 1990). As Wallman (1983) and Khan (1983) claim, both cultures are interwoven in their identity formation, and in the process of their identity formation, there are 'cultural shifts' (M. Chung, 2003a; Featherstone, 1995; Wallman, 1983). They are bi-cultural (Santrock, 2003), but this does not mean that they inherit both cultural traits in an equal way (M. Chung, 2003a; Secombe & Zajda, 1999). They may identify themselves as both Chinese and Australian, or of neither one, developing a new identity of their own (M. Chung, 2004 September), which comprehends traditional Chinese culture from their local affiliations, such as family

and church, and western culture in the society (M. Chung, 2004 September; see also

Featherstone, 1995; Wallman, 1983). As Rice (1990) suggests, there is a mixture of

some traditional and contemporary cultural traits, which form the specific identity of

Chinese young people in a multicultural country (see also Castles & Miller, 2003).

This specific form of identity leads to their distinctive spirituality.

Rossiter (2001) claims that young people tend to go beyond common

boundaries with little reference to traditional beliefs and values, and draw elements of

spirituality, identity and lifestyle in trans-religious, trans-ethnic, and trans-national

ways. Welsh (1999) suggests a concept of transculturality, which aims to provide a

multi-meshed and inclusive understanding of culture. This helps us to understand

people in a multicultural society, who make their own choices with respect to their

affiliations, while their actual homeland can be far away from their original homeland

(Welsh, 1999, p.200-201). This transcultural perspective also suggests that young

people in the multicultural society can intermix the cultural traits from different

cultures and make them into their own identity (Welsh, 1999; see also Castles &

Miller, 2003). Hence, the identity making of Chinese young people in a multicultural

society is best understood in this transcultural perspective, that they live between

cultures and their identity formation is in a process of cultural shifts (M. Chung,

2003a; Featherstone, 1995), which has the potential to develop into a distinctive

spirituality.

Therefore, the research reported in this thesis began with a cultural perspective, which was a transcultural one, in order to study the cultural factors that affected the formation of the young peoples' identity, which led to their distinctive spirituality.

Chinese Young People of Chinese Protestant Churches in a Multicultural Context

As noted in the previous chapter, the research reported in this thesis was set in a Chinese Protestant Church, and the focus was on the spirituality of the Chinese young people who attended the church. As Crotty (1992) claims, religion is a cultural pattern as well as a meaning-seeking activity. In Churches, it is not surprising to find a variety of cultures and relationships, which reflect human consciousness and memories (Crotty, 1992). Research (Clarke & Hunt, 1992) has shown that many ethnic congregations of the first generation in the Uniting Church tried to preserve elements of their traditional culture. The worship of the first generation reflected the practices of their homeland although there were additional English services designed for the younger generation. The rationale behind the services in different languages was that they could enable the cultural groups to remain together in the same Church pattern (Clarke & Hunt, 1992), and this also applies to the Chinese Protestant Churches in Victoria. One reason is that in the Chinese Protestant churches, family is

regarded as important as a basic unit for building up the church (Ho, 1989). A second

reason is that family is the core value in Chinese traditional culture and it is important

for Chinese parents to have the younger generation present (Ho, 1989; K. Wong,

1989). Therefore, it is the parents' responsibility to keep their children along with

them at the same church.

Hill, Knitter, and Madges (1997, p.61) suggest that in a Church community,

one can share with others beliefs and common experiences (see also Hughes, 2006;

Rossiter, 2005), and find support from other people (Hill, Knitter, & Madges, 1997).

With common beliefs and values, young people in the Church community come

together to share their common spirituality (Hudson, 2000; Hughes et al., 1995). The

participants in the research reported in this thesis attended the Chinese Protestant

church in which they shared a communal experience of Christian faith within the

Church community (Hill, Knitter, & Madges, 1997). What is their common

spirituality? How visible is Chinese culture within their Church community, and how

far does it affect their common spirituality? These questions are embedded in the

research conducted for this thesis and are addressed in the following chapters.

Section Four: Styles of Spirituality and Church Nurturing Models

Introduction

As discussed in the earlier section of this chapter, spirituality encompasses the whole of human life, and will develop in a variety of styles depending on culture, denominations, personalities and gifts. This section discusses the styles and tasks of young people's spirituality in order to provide a backdrop to the multifaceted spirituality of the Chinese young people who are at the centre of the research reported in this thesis, and the church models and approaches in nurturing the young people's spirituality in a multicultural context.

Spirituality of Programmatic, Pneumatic and Autogenic

Collins (1999) claims that styles of spirituality are influenced by the worldviews in which they were first formulated, and that there are classical and historical worldviews. The classical worldview emphasizes universal principles and necessary conclusions while the latter emphasizes changing circumstances and contingent conclusions (Collins, 1999). The approach of the historical worldview is typically postmodern, and the concept of postmodernism is hard to describe accurately since its meaning differs according to different contexts (Collins, 1999).

According to Collins (1999), the three models of spirituality operating in

western Christianity for the twenty-first century are the programmatic, pneumatic and

autogenic. In programmatic spirituality, the experience of God comes in and through

the Church. Programmatic Christians seldom read the scriptures because they are

afraid of going astray as a result of private interpretation. Spirituality is expressed in

terms of the sacramental and hierarchical models of the people of God (Collins, 1999,

p.25). Pneumatic Christians experience God through affective prayer, and the

worldview is historical in nature while its focus is on experience rather than authority

(Collins, p.26). The pneumatic model of spirituality is expressed in the Church seen as

herald and mystical communion. Autogenic spirituality, which means "originating in

the self" (Collins, p.28), primarily emphasizes meaning and intelligibility with its

focus on the immanence rather than the transcendence of God (Collins, p.29).

Autogenic Christians are selective in what they take seriously (Collins, 1999).

A Journey-Spirituality

Warren (1983, p.62) suggests that a person's history develops his or her own

spirituality. Young people are in stage of transition and there are characteristics of the

journeyers in their spirituality (Warren, 1983). They need a time of passage from one

stage of life to another in the experience of relationships (Warren, 1983). Through the

journey of life stages, they find intimacy and sense of belonging (see also

Engebretson, 2002), which develops alongside their identity achievement (see also

Rossiter, 2001). Thus, this journey-spirituality is a spirituality of "gradualness" (Warren, 1983, p.65), and young people need people who care, to be their coaches, counsellors and planners in the stage of development (Warren, 1983). Similarly, other research studies report that young people begin to search for the relationship between their beliefs and their life (Hill, Knitter, & Madges, 1997), and they seek to put faith into action (Engebretson, 2004). Therefore, they need friends, mentors, heroes, and leaders, and they appreciate those adults who are attentive to their problems (Hill, Knitter, & Madges, 1997).

A Spirituality of "Engaged" and "Pragmatic"

To Tacey (2003), the spirituality of young people is both internal and external. It is not only a private ego journey, but also an extension of oneself in relation to the surrounding world (see also Harris & Moran, 1998). On the one hand, young people desire to have personal experiences of the transcendent that will build up their inward faith (Tacey, 2000). On the other hand, they search for relevance between their beliefs and real life experiences (Tacey, 2000). They are in need of guidance, vision and values in relation to the world surrounding them (Tacey, 2003, p.65). Thus, Tacey suggests a spirituality that is both "engaged" and "pragmatic" (Tacey, 2003, p.66), which is expressed as a need to be engaged in the world, and to find out how to live in the world, and how to know themselves in relationship to others (Tacey, 2000; see

also Engebretson, 2004).

Consumerist Spirituality in Western Society

In western society, with its emphasis on personal freedom and individualism, Alma and Zock (2002) remark that relativism has much influence in the daily life of young people, and thus, personal resonance has become a source of spirituality. There is no absolute truth and there are no rights or wrongs; everything is relative. Choices and preferences become subjective. Therefore, young people can create their own cultures in terms of their ways of life and patterns of behaviour. This gives rise to a consumerist approach to religions, which become sets of resources, and individuals can adopt whatever elements of them they like (Featherstone, 1995; Hughes, 2002, 2006). As Turner (2001) suggests, young people have entered a free choice market, and they are free to choose what they believe to be true. "Consumeristic attitudes" thus, characterise the style of their spirituality (Hughes, 2006; see also Bridger, 2001). In consequence, Churches have become one of many institutions and find themselves in a "supermarket" situation (Hughes et al., 1995). They have to "produce" the types of religious resources that people desire to consume (Bankson III, 2002; McGrath, 2002). This results in fragmentation of beliefs, a significant condition in the spirituality of western society (M. Chung, 2004; Hughes et al., 1995).

Resolutions: Church Models and Approaches of Nurturing Young People's Spirituality

To resonate with young people's spirituality in a multicultural society, Wilkerson (1997) suggests four approaches of multicultural religious education, the liberationist approach, the community of faith approach, the public-church approach and the social science approach. The liberationist approach emphasises on critique and aims to identify with the oppressed. The community of faith approach emphasises the entire experience of the faith community, and the church provides for the ethnic minority young people an opportunity to learn their ethnic culture and affirm their ethnic identities. This approach helps to foster Christian and cultural identities. The public-church approach speaks from the traditional social-reform orientation, and extends beyond concern for the quality of Christian family life to reform and reconstruction of the church and society as the democracy of God. This approach brings church members and society together for social justice, and therefore, fosters an attitude of inclusiveness and helps people aware of their won ethnicity and history as members of one among many equal groups. Lastly, the social science approach is to care for the individual as a person and care for the relations within the group. This approach establishes foundations for multiculturalism in any religious context (Wilkerson, 1997).

As Wilkerson stresses, the four theoretical approaches are not adequate in

themselves; however, these provide principles and directions, and bring new insights into an integrated or a multicultural church-nurturing model. To nurture the spirituality of Chinese young people within a multicultural society, the church community, at least needs to be aware of the traditional culture of their ethnicity, fosters their Christian and cultural identity which is a complex of Chinese and Western cultures, and relates them to the society. An integrated approach is therefore, necessary.

Compared with Wilkerson's (1997) four approaches, Fowler's (1991) Public Church Model is an integrated approach, which combines Wilkerson's community of faith approach, public-church approach, and social science approach. Fowler's Public Church Model aims to foster Christian identity and commitment. This model requires grounding in the Christian tradition, including denominational or confessional particularity, and manifests a diversity of membership, which means an acceptance of racial, ethnic, class, and within confessional bounds, theological differences (Fowler, 1991). This Public Church Model also has a mission to relate the members to the society by combining Christian commitment with vocation in public (Fowler, 1991). Theoretically, Fowler's Public Church Model provides guidelines and principles for nurturing the spirituality of young people from different cultural backgrounds.

For the spirituality of Chinese young people in a multicultural society, Ho (1989) stresses that Chinese Protestant churches should take root in the combination of two cultures, to help them stay together with their families in the Church. W. M. Chan (2000) adds that the churches should act cross-culturally to meet young people's spiritual needs. As the western society is changing, the churches on the one hand have to face the challenges of contemporary culture, and on the other hand, they need to see young people in a new perspective. The ways in which they perceive the spirituality of the younger generation lead to the models they choose to nurture their spirituality.

Leung (1999) suggests the following principles of an ideal model of nurturing young people's spirituality. First, there are core values that are unchangeable, but cultural practices can be adapted to the needs of young people. The emphasis is to live out the core values through different cultural practices in different contexts (Leung, 1999; Su & Hung, 2000). Second, there are many ways of doing things. To meet the spiritual needs of young people, we have to use their language and talk in their ways. There is never a way that is too new! Experience of God should not be limited to the worship style of thirty years ago, nor should it be restricted to the use of organ or traditional hymns (Leung, 1999; Su & Hung, 2000).

Furthermore and thirdly, the main tasks of young people in our society today are the establishment of independence, sexual adjustment, peer relationships, and preparation for a vocation, to which the development of identity is central (Mussen, Conger, & Kagan, 1974). In the process of their identity development, there are both internal and cultural resources for self-understanding and self-expression (Rossiter, 2001). While spirituality is a core expression of identity (Rossiter, 2001), the church model of nurturing Chinese young people's spirituality basically needs to address the development of their religious identity.

This section concludes with Hung's (2000) description of the needs of young people in relation to the meaning of Christian beliefs:

What this generation need most, is a congregation of people who have love, truth, and spirit, responding to Christ's calling and walking in today's path of the cross. The most meaningful of Christian faith, is not in the increase of many followers but in living as Christ's disciples. (Su & Hung, 2000) (Translated in English)

It is the purpose of the research reported in this thesis to identify the characteristics of the spirituality of Chinese young people, and develop theories about the spirituality of Chinese young people in a multicultural society.

Conclusion

To conclude, the literature presented in this chapter has demonstrated the following points. First, spirituality and identity are closely related. Identity formation in different cultural contexts leads to distinctive spiritualities. Thus, it is important to look into the different cultural factors that affect young people's identity formation. Therefore, the research reported in this thesis began with a cultural perspective. Secondly, Chinese young people in a western society of a multicultural context are under the influence of two main cultures, Chinese traditional culture from their parents and the western culture in society. These affect their identity formation and lead to a distinctive spirituality of their own. Thirdly, the spirituality of Chinese young people in the research reported in this thesis focuses on Christian spirituality, since the research is set in a Chinese Christian Evangelical Protestant church, in which the group of Chinese young people shared aspects of a common spirituality. They shared the same beliefs and values, as well as a communal experience of Christian faith within their Church community, which played a role in their spirituality. Lastly, there are different styles and tasks of spirituality. An appropriate church model of nurturing the Chinese young people's spirituality in a multicultural society needs to address (a) their core values and beliefs, (b) different cultural practices in different contexts, and (c) the development of their religious identity.

This literature leads directly to the research questions, as stated in chapter one, which are:

1. What characteristics can be identified in the spirituality of a group of Chinese young people in a Chinese Protestant congregation in Australia?

2. What cultural or other factors led those young Chinese to attend this particular Chinese Protestant Church?

3. Does the church support their spirituality and in what ways?

4. How do they describe and express their spirituality?

5. To what extent are these Chinese young people affected by the changing spirituality of Australian society?

6. How can their cultural identity and spirituality be nurtured through Chinese churches in Australian society?

The following chapter presents the research design, which enabled these questions to be examined.

CHAPTER THREE

THE RESEARCH DESIGN

Introduction

This research was designed as a case study, and was conducted in an interpretative paradigm with a qualitative methodological framework. It employed ethnographic methods, such as participant observation, individual interviews and focus group interviews. A grounded theory approach was employed for data analysis and theory generating. This chapter describes and justifies the theoretical framework of the study and the methodology used for the data collection and analysis.

Section One: A Philosophy of Social Research

Epistemology: Constructionism

The philosophy of social research urges the researcher to clarify concepts (Williams & May, 1996, p.4) and to "validate particular research methods" (Brewer, 2000, p.28). Different ontological and epistemological assumptions about philosophical investigations lead to the construction of different research methodological frameworks, within which specific techniques and procedural rules are required (Brewer, 2000; Williams & May, 1996). This research was conducted in the approach of constructionism and this led to the use of a qualitative methodological

framework in an interpretative approach.

Constructionism is multidisciplinary in nature, and is used as an approach to the social sciences including philosophy, sociology, linguistics and education (Burr, 1995, 1998 reprinted; Glassner, 2000). It is concerned with knowledge formation between participants in social relationships, and its focus is on the construction of meaning (Hruby, 2001). The ontological assumption is that the world is a creation of the mind (Williams & May, 1996, p.70). Its nature is "that what exists is what we perceive to exist" and "it can be revealed by observation" (Burr, 1995, 1998 reprinted, p.3). Thus, as Hruby (2001) claims, constructionism is concerned with shared meanings, as well as the constitution of life worlds. Burr (1995, 1998 reprinted, p.4) suggests that it is through daily interactions that people construct the world. Within the constructed world there are common ways of understanding, all of which do not come from objective reality but from other people, both past and present and which are historically and culturally relative (Burr, 1995, 1998 reprinted). The epistemological assumption is, then, that knowledge is seen not as something that a person has but as something that people do together (Burr, 1995, 1998 reprinted). It is constructed by both "observable phenomena" and "descriptions of people's intentions, beliefs, values and reasons, meaning making and self-understanding", through "a communal process" (Henning, 2003, p.23). This research was situated in such a

constructionist approach in order to study the perceptions of Chinese young people about their spirituality, and what shared meanings about their life situations they held.

Constructionist enquiry was deemed appropriate for this study because it began with questions about the nature of people or society, and then considered how people constructed certain phenomena or forms of knowledge through interaction. In the theoretical framework of constructionism the orientation of study is social life in natural settings, where "the experiencing, observing, describing, understanding, and analysing of the features of social life in concrete situations" takes place (Brewer, 2000, p.33). The task is, first, to experience and observe what is happening naturally, and second, to analyse people's meanings "from their own standpoint" including "the feeling, perceptions, emotions, thoughts, moods, idea, beliefs and interpretations" (Brewer, 2000, p.33).

Theoretical Perspective: Naturalism

In social research, there are two main models of inquiry, the scientific based on positivism, and the humanistic based on naturalism, or post-positivism (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). To a positivist, the world is a fixed and unchanging reality, and exists independently of people's perceptions (Brewer, 2000; May, 1997). Facts may be recorded and analysed (May, 1997), and the epistemological assumption is that, knowledge of social life can reveal only that which is externally observable through

the senses (Brewer, 2000, p.30). While positivism has an important place in research, it was not considered to be an appropriate paradigm for this study that sought to enter the life worlds of Chinese young people.

Naturalists argue that the knowledge people have of the social world affects their behaviour (May, 1997, p.12). To a naturalist researcher, society is a constructed reality that is reconstructed by people through interpretative processes (Burr, 1995, 1998 reprinted; Brewer, 2000; May, 1997). The contexts, which exist as the "object world" (Bowers, 1989, p.38), shape the interpretative processes. In the object world, objects have no inherited meaning, but their meaning is derived from people who act towards them (Bowers, 1989; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Each individual's object world is different. However, individuals can understand and interact with each other through social processes (Bowers, 1989). As Bowers (1989) suggests, cultures, social classes, religions, and clubs are distinct groups because of the object worlds they share and the interpretation they give to these. This sharing helps to conform the understanding and action among the members within the group. In other words, in a naturalist approach it is assumed that people construct shared meanings, which become their shared interpretation of reality and the shared perspective on their known world (Locke, Spirduso, & Silverman, 1993).

Individual action is always contextual while "society is the sum total of

processes engaged in by individuals who are acting as if a social structure exists and are thereby creating that structure in all its complexity" (Bowers, 1989, p.42). In a multicultural society, the spirituality of Chinese young people exists within a very complex context. In order to find out the characteristics of this "complexity" of spirituality in their naturally occurring "multi-context", it was deemed that a naturalist model of inquiry was required. As noted earlier, this research began with the question, "What characteristics can be identified in the spirituality of a group of young Australian Chinese in a Chinese Protestant congregation?" and from this overriding question, the sub questions were derived.

1. What cultural or other factors lead those young Chinese to attend this particular Chinese Protestant Church?

2. What support do they find for their Chinese cultural identity in the Church?

3. How do they describe and express their spirituality?

4. To what extent has the spirituality of these Chinese young people been affected by Australian society?

5. Does the church support their spirituality and in what ways?

6. How can the cultural identity and spirituality of young Chinese be nurtured through Chinese churches in Australian society?

The responses to these questions are unlimited and there are chances to

discover the "unexpected factors" (Neuman, 1997, p.19) that affect the spirituality and identity of Chinese young people in a multicultural society. Only by using qualitative research methodology and methods, can the researcher tap into the experience of the participants and reconstruct their shared interpretation of spirituality within their shared complex contexts and content. Therefore, this research began with a constructionist inquiry that led to the use of a naturalist perspective on the research and to a qualitative methodological framework and methods.

Section Two: Qualitative Research Methodology and Methods

The philosophy of constructionism and its naturalist approach requires the methodology of naturalism, which is an interpretative paradigm (Brewer, 2000; Williams & May, 1996), and this is in turn led to the use of qualitative research models for the collection and analysis of data (Silverman, 2000). As Lancy (2001) reminds us, "When one follows the qualitative paradigm, one buys into an entire philosophy of inquiry" and "follow(s) a particular qualitative research method" (p.8). Since this research was situated in naturalistic inquiry, a qualitative methodological framework with the practices of an interpretative approach was required.

Qualitative Methodology: An Interpretative Approach

Qualitative research is wide ranging (Flick, 2002), and it covers interpretative practices in research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003b; Van Maanen, 1983). The designs of qualitative research are naturalistic, and the focus is to study the "naturally occurring phenomena in their naturally occurring states" in depth and detail (Pattons, 1990, p.41; see also Bouma, 2000), and to gain insight into how meaning is created (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). The data is complex and can be approached only in context (Morse & Richards, 2002, p.43). The aim of qualitative research is to give in detail a description of what is happening in a group, in a conversation or in a community (Bouma, 2000, p.173), as well as to create theory that provides explanation and even prediction through data analysis (Morse & Richards, 2002, p.60; see also Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Compared with positivist research, qualitative research allows more continuous reflection on the research in progress and more interaction with the participants in the research (Bouma, 2000; Patton, 1990). The subjectivities of both the researchers and those being studied are essential features of qualitative research, while researchers' reflections, as well as their impressions about their actions and observations in the field form part of the interpretation in the research process (Flick, 2002, p.6). The emphasis is on processes and meanings that are not rigorously

examined or measured in terms of quantity (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998).

While quantitative research is designed to give numerical results, which can be reported in tables, graphs and charts stating the number, the proportion and the trends, qualitative research has a different goal (Bouma, 2000). Qualitative researchers are regarded as the principal instrument to draw out the conclusions of the study (Lancy, 2001). They have to seek a method across disciplines in order to record their own observations accurately while in the process uncovering the meanings their subjects bring to their life experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). In contrast, the quantitative researcher is excluded from the research process as an intervening variable (Patton, 1990). Quantitative studies emphasize the measurement and analysis of causal relationships between variables, but not the processes (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). Nevertheless, qualitative and quantitative methods are not mutually exclusive (Aspin, 1996; Patton, 1990). A combination of the two methods is often used to find out a more complete understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Aspin, 1996; Leedy, 1997; Punch, 1998).

The pre-assumptions about qualitative research with reference to Denzin and Lincoln (1998, p.23) are as follows:

1. Qualitative researchers have assumed that qualified competent observers can with objectivity, clarity, and precision report on their own observations of the

social world, including the experiences of others.

2. Researchers believe in a real subject, or real individual, who is present in the world and able, to report on his or her experiences. Researchers can blend their observations with the observations provided by subjects through interviews and life story, personal experience, case study, and other documents.

It was appropriate for this research to employ a qualitative methodological approach. The spirituality of Chinese young people is subject to a complex array of influences. In this case, the report cannot be presented in tables, graphs and charts stating the number, the proportion and the trends. The data is situated entirely in their everyday context and requires analysis of words or images (Flick, 2002). A qualitative methodological framework allows the researcher to study the process of the meaning making of Chinese young people in depth and detail, to develop insight and understanding of their cultural background, and to draw theoretical inferences through data collected and analysed.

This research addresses lived experience and human group life is the process in which people create their meaning (Travers, 2001). Meaning has an inter-subjective character, that is, "people are active in interpreting and responding to the people and objects they encounter in the world" (Travers, 2001, p.22). As Flick (2002, p.17)

claims, the empirical starting point is the subjective meanings that the individuals attribute to their activities and their environments. The use of an interpretative approach in this research allowed the researcher to reconstruct the subjective viewpoints of the participants (Bowers, 1989).

Burr (1995, 1998 reprinted, p.161) stresses that the reflexivity of the researcher is particularly important in describing and interpreting "an account of an event", and people's "interactions with each other" in the events. With an interpretative approach, the researchers need to meet the following requirements. They have to ask people for their views, meanings and constructions in such a way that they can relate them in their own words. In addition, meanings are often complex, taken for granted and problematic, so the questions asked have to allow for depth. At the same time, the researchers have to address the social context, which gives meaning and substance to their views and constructions (Brewer, 2000, p.35). In short, it is through interactions that the researcher discovers the realities of subjects, the nature of the objects in their world, and the ways they construct and experience their world (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p.35). Methods commonly used such as interviewing, observing and analysis of textual materials (Bouma, 2000; Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Henning, 2003; Leedy, 1997; Punch, 1998), were adopted in this research.

Furthermore, for this research, its context of a multicultural society and the

participants of Chinese young people had led to a "multicultural" research process in studying their spirituality from different perspectives. Thus, a qualitative methodological framework in an interpretative approach with multi-dimensional methods was required. Ethnographic fieldwork methods such as participant observation, individual interviews and focus group interviews were, therefore, used for data collection, whereas grounded theory was used for data analysis and theory generating.

A Case Study using Ethnographic Fieldwork Methods

There are many methodological practices in qualitative research (Punch, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003a) and various strategies of inquiry lead to the use of specific methods for data collection and analysis (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003a). Some strategies employ similar methods and it is the application within each method that makes the difference (Morse & Richards, 2002). However, it is common to combine different methods due to their consistency of orientation (Punch, 1998; Silverman, 2000) and for the purpose of triangulation. In this research, a combination of methods was used. Case study using ethnographic fieldwork methods for data collection and grounded theory for the data analysis were adopted in this research for their consistency of orientation.

Case Study

As Neuman (1997, p.351) claims, a site is a context in which events or activities take place, whereas, a case can extend beyond the boundary of the site and links to other social settings. This research was conducted in the field site of the Church with its focus on studying the case of the spirituality of Chinese young people. The definition of a case used in this research draws on Brewer (2000):

> A case is defined as any phenomenon located in time and space about which data are collected and analysed. It can comprise single individuals or a group, particular events or situations, a specific organization, social institution, natural societies or global process (p.76).

Case studies can be quantitative or qualitative depending on their different modes of philosophical inquiry (Yin, 1994). In keeping with other approaches in qualitative research, case study research then, becomes a strategy more than a method (Punch, 1998; Yin 1994), as in this research. As Brewer (2000) states, there is no necessary linking between a case study approach and data collected through ethnography. However, all ethnographic research involves case study (Brewer, 2000. p.77), and a case study using an ethnographic approach is common (Birley & Moreland, 1998).

The significance of a case study is the in-depth investigation (Punch, 1998;

Ragin, 1994;) into a single phenomenon bounded by time and activity (Leedy, 1997).

Its aim is to understand the case in its natural setting in depth, recognizing its

complexity and its context (Punch, 1998; Yin 1994). On the other hand, its focus is

holistic while it aims to preserve and understand the wholeness and unity of the case

(Punch, 1998). Combined with other research approaches, as Punch (1998) claims, it

contributes to the understanding of the phenomenon as a whole picture. This research

adopted a qualitative theoretical framework using ethnographic fieldwork methods for

data collection, and case study was required in order to investigate the spirituality of

Chinese young people in a multicultural society in depth, and to understand its

complexity within the whole context.

Moreover, case study allows the researcher to find out if there is a relationship

between two or more variables within the entity (Bouma, 2000), and has become a

research tool to reflect the existing theoretical perceptions and writings (Yin 1994). In

this research, case study was used together with ethnographic fieldwork methods, in

order to produce thick description of the cultural contexts in which the participants

were situated, and to develop theories through data analysis as well. In fact, case

study and ethnographic fieldwork methods are consistent in their orientation (Punch,

1998). They both aim at an in-depth investigation in a natural setting, with a holistic

perspective, recognizing the complexity and the context. Therefore, both of them can

be used in the same investigation.

While case study involves a limited number of cases, or just a singular case, in a restricted field or setting, it aims to make theoretical inferences rather than to apply them to a wider population (Birley & Moreland, 1998). As Brewer (2000) suggests, in order to make empirical generalization, a researcher needs to have similar individual projects designed in different fields so that he or she can make comparisons and build up a body of cumulative knowledge. Nevertheless, as Punch (1998) claims, whether a case study should seek to generalize, and claim to be representative, depends on the context and the purposes of the particular project, especially on how the data is being analysed. The development of abstract concepts and propositions that put the analysis above simple description contributes to theoretical generalization (Punch, 1998). Hence, the process of data analysis plays a very important part in the development of theories. While this research employed case study using ethnographic fieldwork methods for data collection, it aimed to develop theories grounded within data collected and analysed (Birley & Moreland, 1998).

There are three different types of case study: intrinsic, instrumental and collective (Brewer, 2000; Punch, 1998). In an intrinsic case study, one particular instance of the phenomenon is studied because the researcher wants a better understanding of the particular case. Thick description of the case is developed so that

readers can experience those happenings and draw conclusions (Stake, 2003). An instrumental case study is used to facilitate the understanding of theoretical debate or social problem. A particular case is examined in order to give insight to an issue or refine a theory. The collective case study, which involves several cases of the instrumental case study, is a study of several instances of the same phenomenon in order to identify common characteristics. There can be generalisations in intrinsic case studies (Stake, 2003), as well as in instrumental and collective cases (Brewer, 2000; Punch, 1998).

However, some limit the use of case study to an exploratory study, which aims to explore the phenomenon deeply for the purpose of building a description of what is going on (Bouma, 2000, p.91; Mintzberg, 1983, p.109). As Brewer (2000) stresses, case study is distinguished by the exploration of the case as it presents itself naturally in the field, as well as by the researcher's involvement and participation. The case study reported in this research is both an intrinsic case and an exploratory study. It also had certain dimensions of ethnography for it involved the researcher's participation and produced thick descriptions (Brewer, 2000). The use of ethnographic methods in this research allowed greater speculation and provided an arena for explanation (Burns, 1990).

A case is chosen for its unusualness in some way in order to elaborate new

ideas, whereas typical or undistinguished cases are chosen due to the value of representativeness (Burgess, 1984; Ragin, 1994). As Brewer (2000) suggests the researcher can ensure the representation of findings through sampling the research case and site, the time frame spent there, and the events and the people to be studied. For this research, the case and site was selected for its typicalness, in order to ensure the representativeness of the findings. The church selected for this research was one of the few Chinese Protestant churches that had been established for more than twenty years and had both English and Chinese congregations. While the Chinese young people attended the English congregation, most of their parents attended the Chinese congregation at the same time. The two generations stayed under the same roof of the church though attending different congregations, a pattern which has become one of the Church models for nurturing the second generation of Chinese young people for the last two decades. In addition, the focus of the study was on the spirituality of Chinese young people who were born or had grown up in Australia. They were under the influences of at least two different cultures, the Chinese traditional culture from their parents and the western culture in the surrounding society. This case and site, therefore, had the value of representativeness.

In summary, this research was conducted with a combination of strategies. It was a case study using ethnographic fieldwork methods and it involved grounded

theory for data analysis. As Silverman (2001) suggests, methods drawn from different theories can give an objective truth, providing that they begin with a theoretical model, and their data accounts for structure and meaning within the same conceptual framework. A combination of methodological strategies that are consistent in their orientations contributes to the findings of research respectively (Punch, 1998). In this research, the use of ethnographic methods contributed to reflection on the characteristics of their spirituality from the perspectives of Chinese young people, illuminated how their cultural contexts led to their distinctive spirituality, and developed theories from the data that were collected and analysed. The use of case study contributed to building up the study on the spirituality of Chinese young people in the field setting as a whole picture and providing an arena for exploration and explanation (Burns, 1990). Together with grounded theory for data analysis, the case study aimed to develop theories grounded in the data collected.

Ethnographic Fieldwork Methods

Traditionally, ethnography is conducted in a culture unfamiliar to the researcher and focuses on a single setting (Morse & Richards, 2002). However, there are different forms of ethnography (Morse & Richards, 2002; Tedlock, 2003), such as focused ethnography, which primarily evaluates or elicits information on a special topic or shared experience. In focused ethnography the researcher focuses on common

behaviours and experiences resulting from their shared features, which enables the researcher to apply the assumptions from a shared culture (Morse & Richards, 2002). Other forms of ethnography include autoethnography that legitimates the researcher's use of his or her own experience (Morse & Richards, 2002; see also Tedlock, 2003) and critical ethnography that examines cultural knowledge and action with the aim of forcing society to identify and act on values and ethical and political issues (Morse & Richards, 2002). Participatory action research follows the ethnographic methods of conducting field research using the strategies of interviews and observations. Visual ethnography uses video or film for recording the scene, the daily lives of participants, interviews, and those events that cannot be accurately stored as field notes (Morse & Richards, 2002). While the research reported in this study is not ethnography as such, it adopts the traditional ethnographic approach with its focus on a single setting and uses ethnographic fieldwork methods for data collection. As Tedlock (2003, p.166) claims, ethnography has been "enshrined as a method". The use of ethnographic methods has been extensively used in various disciplines, such as cultural studies and education (Tedlock, 2003; Wiersma, 2000) since anthropologists developed ethnography (Burns, 1990; Leedy, 1997). This research adopted ethnographic methods with reference to Van Maanen (1983) and Leedy's (1997) descriptions of ethnography:

This (ethnographic) approach allows the fieldworker to use the culture of setting to account for the observed patterns of human activity (Van Maanen, 1983, p.38). The goals are to discover cultural patterns in human behaviour, describe the perspective of members of the culture, and study the natural settings in which culture is manifested (Leedy, 1997, p.159).

Ethnography, according to Neuman's (1997, p.346) definition, means describing a culture and understanding another way of life from the "native" point of view. It is based on the theory of culture that assumes cultural beliefs, values, and behaviours are learned, patterned, and transmitted within a group (Morse and Richards, 2002, p.49). It employs naturalistic inquiry with a holistic emphasis (Morse & Richards, 2002; Wiersma, 2000), uses an interpretative approach (Leedy, 1997; Travers, 2001), commits to cultural interpretation (Punch, 1998), and emphasizes context (Wiersma, 2000). Reflexivity is particularly important in describing "the fact that when someone gives an account of an event", and people's "interactions with each other" in a given setting (Burr, 1995, 1998 reprinted, p.161). Thus, it requires extensive time on fieldwork study (Leedy, 1997), with a focus on describing a culture or a subculture, in which the relationship between culture and behaviour is under study (Bouma, 2000; Brewer, 2000; Burns, 1990; Leedy, 1997).

As Neuman (1997) claims, ethnography is a kind of fieldwork research that

builds on the constructionist perspective. Its typical features are: a strong emphasis on exploring the nature of a particular social phenomenon (Flick, 2002), unstructured empirical materials, a small number of cases, and a style of analysis and writing that stresses description and interpretation (Punch, 1998), as well as a "thick description" that describes all features of the culture (Morse & Richards, 2002, p.150). Theory may emerge with its ground in the data through empirical description (Van Maanen, 1983; Wiersma, 2000).

Nevertheless, as Wiersma (2000) stresses, ethnographic research seeks to make theoretical inferences rather than apply them to a wider population. To Van Maanen (1983), there are first and second order concepts in ethnographic research. First order concepts are the factual descriptions of an ethnographic investigation in a field setting while second order concepts are the theories used to organize and explain those first order facts (Van Maanen, 1983). Thus, as Flick (2002) and Tedlock (2003) agree, ethnography, which starts from the theoretical position of describing social realities and their meaning making, aims at developing theories. While the research reported in this thesis does not claim to be an ethnography as such, ethnographic methods were adopted in this research because it aimed at both empirical description of cultural contexts and theory development.

Beliefs and behaviours are embedded within a cultural group (Morse &

Richards, 2002; see also Wiersma, 2000).   The use of ethnographic fieldwork

methods enables the researcher to have first-hand interaction with people in a field

setting and gives the researcher a better understanding of their beliefs and behaviours

(Tedlock, 2003). Thus, it allows the researcher to produce empirical descriptions of

the cultural forms, perspectives, characteristics and patterns (Denzin, 1989). As noted

in the previous chapter, the participants in this research were Chinese young people

either born or having been in Australia since their early childhood. The cultures of

their natural contexts, including the culture within the society and the one within their

family, contributed to their identity formation, which led to their distinctive

spirituality. In order to investigate the cultural contexts that affected their spirituality,

it was appropriate to use ethnographic fieldwork methods, which were participant

observation, individual interviews, focus group interviews, and textual analysis

(Bouma, 2000; Leedy, 1997; Punch, 1998), while the criteria of site-based fieldwork

and data triangulation were met (Brewer, 2000).

    Participant observation.

        Participant observation, as Brewer (2000, p.59) defines it, is "a way of

gathering data through participation in the daily life of informants in their natural

setting: (through) watching, observing and talking to them in order to discover their

interpretations, social meanings and activities". Participant observation, together with

interviews, is mainly used in the context of fieldwork research (Flick, 2002). It is

characterized by the observer who becomes "a part of the situation being observed"

(Leedy, 1997, p.159), and at the same time "influences what is observed" (Flick, 2002,

p.139). In participant observation, researchers use their position in a group and their

own experience of a process in order to collect information about the group. They

study not only what is going on "out there" but also their own reactions, feelings and

understandings in relation to the process (Bouma, 2000).

The researcher, who is regarded as the main instrument of data collection in

participant observation (Sanday, 1983), has to identify with the people under study but

at the same time, keep a distance that allows adequate observation for data collection

(Brewer, 2000). There are three phases of participant observation (Flick, 2002). First,

the descriptive observation at the beginning of the research, during which the

researcher gains access to the field, becomes familiar with the setting, grasps the

complexity of the contexts, and develops research questions and lines of vision (Aspin,

1996; Flick, 2002). Second, the focused observation, that is focusing on the most

essential processes and problems, and third, selected observation towards the end of

the data collection. Its aim is to find further evidence and examples for the study

(Flick, 2002). On the whole, participant observation is a time consuming method,

which involves recording all the observations (Aspin, 1996), and producing the field

notes in detail in order to obtain thick descriptions for future analysis (Flick, 2002).

In the research reported in this thesis, participant observation was used as one data collection method. The researcher attended services and fellowship activities to observe the young peoples' specific ways of participation, to understand their reactions and feelings in different situations, and to make these into descriptive notes, while observing the whole phenomenon. Data collected in the participant observations were recorded in the form of note taking and dairies. An example is given below (Figure 3.1).

```
Date: 6/7/2003 (Sunday)
Participant observation 1
Youth Sunday service
Time: 10:50am – 12:30pm

    At the main entrance, there was the reception. Several Chinese members were
there giving out the program of the Chinese service. I had to pass through them with
greetings before I could get to the other entrance of the room where the youth Sunday
service was to be held. The floor plan of the church was as shown...
```

Figure 3.1. An example of data collected from participant observation

Not all phenomena can be observed in particular situations, and the researcher's gathered knowledge in participant observation is based only in part on the observation of actions (Flick, 2002). In this study, participant observation was

supplemented with interviews with participants that allowed the reconstruction of biographical processes or the background of practices (Flick, 2002; Travers, 2001). Thus, in this research, individual interviews and focus group interviews were implemented, in line with participant observation so as to reconstruct the phenomena in a more holistic perspective.

Interviews.

Interviewing is a significant method of data collection, and it is generally used to access the perceptions, meanings, definitions of situations, and constructions of reality of those being interviewed (Punch, 1998). Positivists acknowledge the interviewer-interviewee interaction as strictly defined by research protocol and treat interview data as an access to facts about the world. Constructionists see that interviews are processes through which interviewer and interviewee are actively engaged in constructing some version of the world (Silverman, 2001). While using interviews in ethnographic studies in the perspective of constructionism as in this research, the aim in relation to the participants is to "learn their terminology and judgments", and to "capture the complexities of their perceptions and experiences" (Patton, 1990, p.290). The advantages are: (a) there is a high proportion of returns as respondents are usually willing to co-operate; (b) information obtained is usually more complete than from other methods if rapport is established between the

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interviewer and the interviewee; (c) information obtained can provide the basis for the development of a questionnaire; (d) the interviewer can judge which areas are sensitive and ask or phrase questions accordingly; (e) misinterpretation of questions can be avoided, as the opportunity is available to clarify questions (Aspin, 1996, p.27).

There are different types of interviews. As Punch (1998) claims, the main dimensions of the variations are the degree of standardized structure in the use of the interview. At one end of the continuum, interviews are standardized and structured while on the other end, they are unstructured and open-ended. The selection of interview types is based on the purposes and questions of the research. May (1997) identifies the four main types of interviews mainly used in social research, the structured interview, the semi-structured interview, the unstructured or focused interview and group interview. Patton (1990) puts them in different terms as standardized open-ended interview, general interview guide approach, informal conversational interview, and focus group interview.

The use of structured interviews is common in research. It relies on a uniform structure, in which each person is asked the same question in the same way while the interviewer has to remain neutral, not giving any prompt or interpreting meanings during the process (May, 1997; Patton, 1990). Flexibility and variation in response are

minimized (Punch, 1998). However, the unstructured, focused, or informal conversational interview, is of an open-ended character and allows the interviewees to talk about an issue in their own terms (May, 1997; Patton, 1990). As Patton (1990) claims, it is a major tool used in combination with participant observation in order to pursue information in whatever direction appears to be appropriate. Compared with structured and semi-structured methods, it is the most open-ended approach to interviewing (Patton, 1990), and there is the most flexibility for the discovery of meaning as the interviewee is more free to talk about the topic from his or her own perspective (May, 1997). Both the structured and unstructured interviews are useful in different ways. For this research, it was considered more appropriate to use the semi-structured interview for both the individual and the focus group interviews, for the following reasons.

The semi-structured interview lies between the focused and structured methods. On the one hand the interviewer collects the same information from the participants by covering the same materials (Patton, 1990). On the other hand, there are guided topics and subject areas designed for the interviews. The interviewer is free to "establish a conversational style", yet "with focus on the particular subject" (Patton, 1990, p.283). In other words, the interviewer is free to probe beyond the answers in order to seek both clarification and elaboration, and the interviewees can answer more

on their own terms than the structured interview permits (May, 1997, p.111). It provides "qualitative depth by allowing interviewees to talk about the subject in terms of their own frames of reference" (May, 1997, p.112). Compared with the structured interview method, it gives the interviewer a greater space to understand the context and content of the interview (May, 1997).

This research used the method of semi-structured interviews for individual interviews, as well as focus group interviews. Interviewer guided questions were asked in order to understand more deeply the perspectives of the Chinese young people within their own frames of reference, while at the same time standardized format questions were used in order to gather data for a complementary understanding of their contexts and content. In the question design of this research (see Appendix K - Question Design), interview questions 1-7 aimed to gather the background information of the young participants, while questions 8-13, to find out what cultural or other factors led them to this particular Chinese Protestant Church, what values they held, and if they found any support for their cultural identity in the church. Questions 14-18 aimed to describe their perception of spirituality from their own perspectives, and to see if the Church could support their needs. Questions 19-22 aimed to start them talking about their spirtiuality, to discover whether they were affected by the changing spirituality of Australian society, and if so, to what extent.

Questions 23-33 aimed to investigate how the cultural identity and spirituality of young Chinese can be nurtured through Chinese Churches in Australian society. The following table (table 3.1) shows examples of questions asked in the individual interviews.

Table 3.1

Questions for Individual Interviews

Part A
What cultural or other factors lead those young Chinese to attend this particular Chinese Protestant Church?
1. Are you a Christian?
2. Are your parents Christians? If so, do your parents attend the same church with you?
3. What language do you speak at home? What language do you speak in this church/ fellowship? ……
Part B
What support do they find for their Chinese cultural identity in the Church?
1. What are "Chinese" values? How important are they to you?
2. What are "Australian" values? How important are they to you?
3. Do you see yourself as Chinese, Australian, neither or both? What makes you think this way? ……

In this research, focus group interviews were used in order to study the group norms and dynamics about the subject studied (May, 1997). As Patton (1990, p.334) suggests, a focus group interview is neither "a group discussion" nor "a

problem-solving session" but the participants are to reflect on the questions and make additional comments on hearing others' responses. In the process of focus group interviews, the interaction within groups plays an important part in affecting individuals' actions and opinions. Thus, the use of focus group interviews provides "a valuable insight into both social relations in general and the examination of processes and social dynamics in particular" (May, 1997, 114).

In the focus group interview, the role of the researcher is as a moderator or facilitator more than an interviewer, because he or she stimulates people to express their views, perceptions, motives and reasons (Punch, 1998). The data collected from the focus group interviews may not be the same as those from the individual interviews. Yet, it is not a matter of true or false in the data, for different methods are used to present different perspectives on the same issues (May, 1997; Silverman, 2001). As Silverman (2001, p.114) stresses, "interviews offer a rich source of data", whereas, group interviews are claimed to be "data-rich" (Punch, 1998, p.177). Moreover, Bouma (2000) argues, "focus groups combine the strengths of in-depth group interviewing and observation in a group context" (p.181). The use of focus group interviews, together with participant observation and individual interviews, was appropriate in order to discover the various opinions about identity and spirituality among the Chinese young people, as well as the attitudes towards their congregations

and their church as a whole. Examples of questions asked in the focus group

interviews are shown in the following table (Table 3.2).

Table 3.2

Questions for Focus Group Interviews

What cultural or other factors lead those young Chinese to attend this particular Chinese Protestant Church?
1. Are you a Christian? How long have you been a Christian? 2. Are your parents Christians? If so, do your parents attend the same church with you? 3. How long have you been attending the church/ fellowship? 4. Have you ever been to other churches before? Why this one, then? What leads you to attend this church/ fellowship?
What support do they find for their Chinese cultural identity in the Church? 1. What are the "Chinese" values? How important are they to you and to your parents? 2. Do you see yourself as Chinese, Australian, neither or both? What makes you think this way? 3. What are the characteristics of this church? 4. What can a Chinese church do for the young Chinese? ……

In this study, which used ethnographic methods, interviews with open-response

questions were required for both the individual and focus group interviews, in order to

study how the participants conceived of their world, how they interpreted the

important events in their lives (Leedy, 1997), and how they reacted to various issues

and situations (Bouma, 2000). The interviews were semi-structured in order to collect

data about both content and context.

Textual materials.

It is common to use information kept in records and official reports in studies

that employ ethnographic methods (Bouma, 2000). Data collected from textual

materials can be used together with other data from interviews and observations,

which serve as data triangulation (Punch, 1998). In ethnographic studies, the use of

natural and detailed textual materials is particularly important for understanding the

participants' cultures and contexts (Punch, 1998), as well as their daily "bureaucratic

practices" (Silverman, 2001, p.123). When textual materials are accessible and easy to

collect, it allows an early start on data analysis (Silverman, 2001). As May (1997,

p.177) claims, alongside other methods, documentary data "yield valuable insights

into societies and the dynamics of social life". For this research, together with

participant observation and interviews, textual materials of the past, such as

documents, bulletins, newsletters and the book of *20ᵗʰ Anniversary Special Edition*,

were used in order to understand the events and relationships (May, 1997) between

the Church and the Chinese young people.

Criteria for Ethnographic Methods

Data triangulation for reliability and validity.

All investigative methods impose perspectives on reality through the type of data collection they use, and they tend to reveal something different about the same symbolic reality (Brewer, 2000). In ethnographic research, it is essential to present the perspective of participants and reflect the reality of their experience with the support of the data collected (Burns, 1990)*.* In order to improve the correspondence between analysis and the reality that it tries to represent faithfully, the use of triangulation is required. This may be data triangulation, investigator triangulation, theoretical, and methodological triangulation (Brewer, 2000; Denzin, 1989). In this research, data triangulation of participant observations, interviews and textual materials was adopted.

In the triangulation of research methods, partial views are put together to form a complete picture. The use of triangulation was to overcome the inherent weaknesses of a single measurement instruments (Denzin, 1989, p.234) and reduce the likelihood of misinterpretation (Stake, 2003). As Silverman (2001) suggests, triangulation of data within the same qualitative methodological framework improves validity and reliability (Silverman, 2001), and enables the researcher to employ the same methods to maximum advantage (Denzin, 1989, p.237). Therefore, triangulated data is always

within the same theoretical framework, and in this research, it has helped to assure reliability and validity.

Denzin and Lincoln (1998, p.27) suggest that qualitative terms such as "credibility", "transferability", "dependability" and "confirmability", should replace the usual positivist criteria of validity, reliability and objectivity. Nevertheless, Silverman (2001) claims, validity is an appropriate term for both quantitative and qualitative data. In this study, for easy understanding, the terms of "validity" and "reliability" are used.

Reliability, in terms of positivist research, is based on two assumptions. First, the study can be replicated, and second that two or more similar interpretations or findings can be obtained by using the same procedures (Burns, 1990; Wiersma, 2000). In research using ethnographic methods, it is difficult to achieve replication in the findings, and no observations or interpretations are perfectly repeatable (Stake, 2003). However, the use of triangulation serves to clarify meaning by identifying different perceptions of an observation or interpretation (Stake, 2003, p.148), and particularly helps to reduce artificial responses to questions about attitudes and opinions (Aspin, 1996; Burns, 1990).

Denzin (1989) suggests that the use of three dimensions in one investigation for data triangulation can improve reliability. The first is the selection of individuals

for "aggregate analysis". The second is to study the interactions that take place in small groups and families. The third is to observe collectivity, such as an organization, a group or a community (Denzin, 1989, p.238). In this research, the three dimensions for data collection were: first, the individual interviews with the Chinese young people, their youth leader and their parents; second, the focus group interviews with the participants in their congregation, and third, participant observations at the fellowship meetings and at church services.

The use of data triangulation in ethnographic research contributes not only to verification but also validation of the analysis (Burns, 1990). In addition, the researcher's prolonged involvement in the field, with data support from different informants or groups can reduce artificial responses from informants (Burns, 1990), and systematic field notes, with etic and emic analysis, improve the reliability and validity of the research findings (Silverman, 2001). Etic analysis is focused on rich descriptions based on the conceptions of the researcher who is the outsider of the group (Morse & Richards, 2002, p.49) while emic analysis is focused on the specifics of the case from the perspectives of those being studied (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). The use of etic and emic analysis brings together the complexity of the case as a whole picture from both the perspectives of the insider and the researcher (Brewer, 2000; Silverman, 2001).

Hence, in this research, data triangulation of participant observation, individual interviews and focus group interviews was used. The field notes obtained through the researcher's participant observations, and the data collected through individual interviews and focus group interviews, were put together in order to improve the correspondence between analysis and the reality, and to reflect the perspective of participants with the support of the data collected.

Site based fieldwork.

Site based fieldwork is another criteria for conducting ethnographic research (Brewer, 2000; Morse & Richard, 2002, p.50). Site-based fieldwork involves prolonged engagement of the researcher in the natural setting under study (Leedy, 1997; Punch, 1998). In ethnographic research, as it is crucial for the researcher to establish the relationship with the participants in the field for data collection, site based fieldwork is always required (Brewer, 2000). In this research, it enabled the researcher to establish a relationship with the participants in order to collect data through participant observations and interviews (Flick, 2002; Leedy, 1997). As well as this, site based fieldwork was used to minimize the artificial responses of the data collected through the ethnographic methods of participant observation and interviews, and to improve the validity of the findings (Brewer, 2000). Thus, in this research, site-based fieldwork was required.

For the selection of a field site, Brewer (2000, p.80) suggests five criteria. First, it is important that the site allows the researcher to move from simple to complex situations and other sub-sites. Secondly, it allows access to everyone. Third, the researcher should be able to keep a low profile in the field. Fourth, the researcher can have free entry and fifth, the researcher is permitted to participate in the activities. Neuman's (1997, p.351) criteria for selecting a site are: the richness of data, unfamiliarity and suitability. It is necessary to have a web of social relations and various activities in the field site for the research study. As well as this, the researcher should be unfamiliar with the site so that it is easier for him or her to distinguish the cultural events and social relations. In addition, it is important to consider the suitability of the researcher's personal characteristics, the time and the skills needed.

Hence, with consideration of the criteria mentioned above, the field site in this research was selected and regarded as suitable for this study. It was a field site that everyone could access. It permitted the researcher to have free entry, from Church services to youth fellowship groups, while the researcher could keep a low profile. The researcher was welcome to join the Church ongoing activities and it was a site of rich data. Furthermore, the field site was one of the Chinese Protestant churches that was started in 1983 and had both Chinese and English congregations, and there were at least two different cultural groups. In order to study the spirituality of Chinese

young people, it was a typical site as mentioned before. Before the research began, the

researcher had been to the church several times and made acquaintance with some of

the church members. After gaining permission for entry, the researcher was allowed

to stay with the church, attending their services and youth group activities over the

course of one year for data collection and analysis through participant observations,

textual materials, and interviews with Chinese young people, their leaders and the

parents who belonged to different congregations of the same church. Since the

researcher is Chinese, the entry to the field site was smooth and natural, and this

minimized the negative effects during participant observations and interviews with the

participants.

Grounded Theory For Data Analysis And Report Generating

Grounded theory emerges from the theoretical framework of symbolic

interactionism (Bowers, 1989, p.43). At first, grounded theory was presented as a

coherent and complete method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). However, divisions appeared

between the two founders in 1990s and it became two distinct sets of procedures.

Schatzman (1991), a colleague of Glaser and Strauss, developed another form of

grounded theory, dimensional analysis, which allows for the explicit articulation of

the analytic process and provides an overarching structure to guide analysis (Morse &

Richards, 2002, p.57). Today, This common interpretative strategy is widely used in

qualitative research (Silverman, 2001; Punch, 1998), with the key goal to seek the core concepts and to create new theoretical concepts from the data collected (Leedy, 1997).

Punch (1998) addresses grounded theory as both a strategy for research and a method for data analysis. On the one hand, it tends to seek characteristics, conditions, causes, antecedents and consequences of events, and responses as a way of drawing them together in an integrated theory (Morse & Richards, 2002, p.56). On the other hand, it relies on detailed qualitative data collected in order to develop theories (Charmaz, 2003). It is "at best" to develop theory on the ground of "good observational work" (Silverman, 2001, p.71) and detailed exploration with theoretical sensitivity probably leads to theory development (Morse & Richards, 2002).

As Flick (2002) suggests, a grounded theory approach gives preference to the data and the field under study, and its focus is on the interpretation of data. By compiling and organizing the data collected, the researcher is able to construct a picture of the group's cultural and perceptual world from the perspective of the individuals under study (Burns, 1990; Wiersma, 2000). Thus, grounded theory, which provides a systematic analytic approach to qualitative analysis (Charmaz, 2003), was used in this research in order to generate theory through data collected, as well as to identify and analyse the perspectives of the individuals under study.

To deal with the data collected, the process involved codification, classification and thematization (Bouma, 2000). There are three major types of coding, open coding, axial coding, and selective coding (Leedy, 1997). Open coding refers to the process of breaking down data into significant blocks, then comparing, conceptualising and categorizing the meaningful segments of text until patterns start to emerge and cross-tabulations start to make sense (Birley & Moreland, 1998; Leedy, 1997). The use of axial coding puts the data back together in new ways after open coding, by making connections between categories. In selective coding, the researcher selects the core category, then, relates it with other categories systematically, validates those relationships, and fills in categories that require further refinement and development (Birley & Moreland, 1998). While more data is put into the matrix, existing patterns may be reinforced or modified as a result (Birley & Moreland, 1998). For coding the data, Bouma (2000) suggests the use of classification and thematization, which summarises and categorises the data into groups, patterns, and themes, with description and interpretation of the researcher's observation (Bouma, 2000). This enables the researcher to read the records of interviews and observations systematically, and to identify the key issues, concepts and opinions for generating the report (Bourma, 2000). Thus, in this research, classification into categories was involved in data codification.

In the process of data analysis, there are three main operations of coding, memoing and developing propositions (Punch, 1998). Coding refers to putting tags, names or labels against pieces of data, which may be individual words or chunks of data. The functions of the labels are to index data and provide a basis for storage and retrieval. After basic coding is advanced coding, which is more interpretive and makes inferences beyond data (Punch, 1998). Memoing is the intermediate operation that begins along with coding for the recording of ideas and produce proposition (Punch, 1998; Charmaz, 2003). Through memo writing, raw data are put into memos that help to look at the data and codes in new ways. It is a crucial process that links analytic interpretation with empirical reality. Its significance is to provide an ongoing record of theory development, and that theoretical memos are used to highlight important decisions about "selective and theoretical sampling, shifts in the focus of interview questions" (Bowers, 1989, p.51). As analysis proceeds, memos become more integrated and propositions develop (Bowers, 1989). The drawing of conclusions and verifying data aim to integrate what has been done into a meaningful and coherent picture of data (Punch, 1998).

In this research, line-by-line coding (Bowers, 1989; Charmaz, 2003), and selective and focused coding (Birley & Moreland, 1998; Charmaz, 2003) were used for the analysis of interview transcripts and field notes. As Charmaz (2003) claims,

line-by-line coding helps to find out the background ideas that inform the research

problems and thus provides a starting point for building up analysis. It enables the

researcher to remain attuned to the views of the subjects studied, instead of imposing

the researcher's own beliefs on the data. Classification and thematization were used in

memo writing that re-organised the selective codes. Data were summarized and put

into themes and patterns, with description and interpretation of the researcher's

observation in the process of data analysis. When categories of synthesis emerged and

turned the descriptive data into conceptual analysis, the memos became integrated and

propositions developed. The reports of this research included diagrams of the process,

with summary typologies, indicating the presence or absence of selected factors

(Morse & Richards, 2002). The following section of this chapter will detail in

practical terms how the data was collected and analysed.

Section Three: The Research Process of This Study

Entering The Field

Ethnographic research is always conducted in the field setting and the stages

include selecting a site, gaining access to the site, and then the fieldwork such as data

collecting and analysis (Neuman, 1997). This research began by selecting a relevant

research site and case (Burgess, 1984; Ragin, 1994). As justified in the preceding

section, the case and site was selected for its suitability (Neuman, 1997) and typicalness (Burgess, 1984; Ragin, 1994) for this research study. The researcher had been in contact with some Chinese Protestant churches in Australia for some years before the research began. One of the Churches that had been established for more than twenty years and then developed with both Chinese and English congregations became the site of this research, for a case study of the spirituality of Chinese young people. After the ethics approval had been granted (see Appendix A), the researcher attended the services and fellowship activities over the course of one year in order to observe the worship practices and interactions of the Chinese young people.

This research was conducted with reference to the distinct stages and phases of an ethnographic research suggested by Morse and Richards (2002) for collecting different types of data. In the first phase, the researcher made contact with the church. The researcher attended their Sunday services several times before seeking verbal consent from the chairman of the deaconate meeting in order to begin the research at their church. After verbal consent was given, the researcher sent a formal letter to the deaconate meeting for confirmation (Appendix B). Then the researcher began attending the church where there were the Chinese and English congregations, so as to have a general understanding of the settings and the participants, and collect data for the research study.

The Participants for the Interviews

The participants in the interviews included the Chinese young people, the Chinese parents, and the youth leaders who attended the Chinese Protestant church. All were invited to participate by the researcher after she had outlined the aims of the research. The criteria for selecting the desirable young participants to take part in the individual interviews and focus group interviews were as follows: (a) their age was between fifteen to eighteen years old, (b) they were attendees at the church, (c) they were dependent on their parents who were not Australian born Chinese, and (d) they were available and willing to take part in the interviews. Altogether ten young people who fit into the above categories were finally selected. They either identified as Christians or, in the case of one participant, had not yet fully accepted Christianity at the time of interview, and their parents either attending the same church or not.

The parents selected for the individual interviews were those who were (a) not Australian-born Chinese, (b) attended the same church with their children, (c) were available and willing to take part in the interviews. Altogether eleven parents participated in the interviews. Nine of them took part in the interviews individually while the other two parents attended the interview together. The two youth leaders who were the key persons in the development of the English congregation and youth ministries in the church were selected for the individual interviews.

For the focus group interviews, there were two groups of Chinese young people, one of five and the other of four. The participants who took part in the focus group interviews included four members of the English congregation, who were involved with the ministries to the English congregation or youth groups, two in each group. All the participants were invited to reflect on the questions and make additional comments upon hearing others' responses.

The Process

The following diagram (Figure 3.2) summarises the research process reported in this thesis, which began with participant observation for data collection. During participant observations, the role of the researcher was to enter the world of the Chinese young people so as to understand the phenomenon from their perspectives but still maintaining the objectivity needed to observe and process data (Bowers, 1989, p.44). Data collected were in the form of descriptive notes with the time, date, location, and identities of people and circumstances involved, as well as the researcher's reflections and comments. After each observation, field notes were synthesised and summarised immediately, including interpretations and questions that came to mind. An example was given earlier in this chapter (see Figure 3.1).

```
Research Process Using Ethnographic Fieldwork Methods

                          STAGE 1:
                          DATA COLLECTION

Participant              Interviews:              Textual materials
observation              In-depth interviews
                         and focus group

Field notes              Transcripts              Textual analysis

Data                     Other sources: Artifacts and Literature
Collected                collection

STAGE 2:
DATA                                    Open Coding    Selective Coding
ANALYSIS
                                                                       Memo
Repeated                                                               writing
Process
for each
category                        Classification into categories

STAGE 3:
PROPOSITIONS
AND THEORY        Propositions and Discussion of
INFERENCES        findings with critical reflection
                  on literature
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Figure 3.2.   Summary of the research process

As Brewer (2000) stresses, one of the main features of ethnography is a range of data collected from different sources. When the researcher became familiar with the routines in the setting and the participants were more comfortable with the researcher, individual interviews and focus group interviews began to take place. As described and justified earlier in this chapter, the method of semi-structured interviews was used. On the one hand, standardized questions were asked in order to gather data for a complementary understanding of the Chinese young people's contexts and content. On the other hand, the researcher asked questions in such a way that the participants shared their perspectives from their own frames of references. All of the interviews were recorded and transcribed for further analysis. At all times care was taken to protect the confidentiality of the data. Codes instead of names were used. Permission was sought for audiotaping, and information letters (see Appendix C and Appendix D) and consent forms (see Appendix E and Appendix F) were used. A statement of ethics approval is included as Appendix A.

Alongside participant observations and interviews, textual materials were collected, such as bulletins and newsletters, in order to understand the events and relationships between the church and the Chinese young people. Data triangulation of participant observation, interviews and textual materials was used in order to assure validity and reliability.

When there had developed a trusting relationship between the participants and

the researcher, the researcher received a clearer understanding of what was happening

in the setting, and the data became more focused. Then, the researcher focused

primarily on data analysis, and data collection for resolving ambiguities and verifying

previous data. At this stage, grounded theory was adopted. Methods included

line-by-line coding, classification and thematization for building up categories,

subcategories and dimensions, and memo writing that led to theoretical formulations.

The data analysis started with line-by-line coding (see Figure 3.3). The

researcher put the data into groups and segments, and gave tags for selective and

focused codes where classification and thematization were used.

…I: Have you /been to other churches before/T5?

Y2: /Yes, there's a time when I joined the other church because we didn't have youth group all

the time. /T5   I joined a small group in Syndal Baptist for half a year – a year and half

I: Why then you still choose to come to this church?

Y2: /I think it's because of security like/ it's in my comfort zone/T5-R1, also because I've/ lots of

friends from childhood /T5-R2and /my parents come here/T5-R3 and /they can drive me

here/T5-R4./ I like here/T5-O.

I: Which service do you attend?

Y2: /I attend the English services/T4.

I: Have you ever been to the Chinese one?

Y2: Yes, I have, a few times. Because/ occasionally we have a combined services/T4, for

example like anniversary and so on, we'll attend that one. (Other than that?) Not really. /I usually

go to the English service/T4.

Figure 3.3.   An example of line-by-line coding in interview transcripts

Then, the researcher summarized the data and put them into themes and patterns, as shown the following table (Table 3.3).

Table 3.3.

An Example of Categories and Themes

Identify with cultural values: traditional Chinese &/ or Australian (Y2)			
Both-and values	Neither one values	Identify with Aus/ C/ Both/ N	Remarks
Both are of same importance: Chinese background in Australia: experience both cultures		- Identify with Chinese background - Chinese culture are important but "Aussie values (Aussie cultures) are more important to me." - "tend to be more of Australian culture" as born up in Australia. - "See myself as Chinese, but a bit Australian"; - "can't see myself as a completely Chinese because I can't speak the language well." - More Aus than Chinese in the way of living: "Disagree at the high expectation of academic achievement	- "Would disagree with some Chinese culture but still think Chinese culture is important." - Reject some Chinese values especially the expectation in academic achievements

When synthesis began to emerge, the descriptive data were put into categories. Conceptual analysis followed and propositions were developed. Data summarisation and categorisation were presented in the form of tables and diagrams, including diagrams of the process, with summary typologies indicating the presence or absence of selected factors (Morse & Richards, 2002), as well as the researcher's description and interpretation in words. The following is an example of the report generating process. (Figure 3.4)

Identity: Identify with Australian/ Chinese/ Both/ Neither

- *"Chinese culture are important* **(cultural customs; Identify with Chinese background)** *but "Aussie values* **(Aussie cultures)** *are more important to me* **(the values)**"
- *"I tend to be more of Australian culture* **(identity, cultural values)** *as born in Australia* **(birth place as a factor)**.*" "tend to be more of Australian culture* **(identity – cultural values)** *" as born up in Australia* **(place of birth).**
- *"See myself as Chinese* (identity)*, but a bit Australian* (identify with Chinese with a bit Australian) *";*
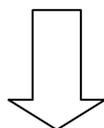
Identity: Identify with Australian/ Chinese/ Both/ Neither

More Australian than Chinese (A > C)

- *"When I was younger (age factor), I thought I was more Australian (identity) – Y8.*
- "*Chinese culture are important (cultural customs)" but "Aussie values* (Aussie cultures) *are more important to me* (the values)" - Y2
- *"I tend to be more of Australian culture* (identity, cultural values) *as born in Australia* (birth place as a factor)." – Y2
- *"I am more Australian than Chinese (identity)" – Y4*

Factors affecting identity

1. Friends or peers: lost the Chinese culture or retain the culture

    The girl he's dating "reactivated my 'Chinese' inside": "I want to learn the Chinese culture, as well as the language." – Y9

     "I can fit in both Australian and Chinese, having both groups of friends." – Y9

    "I feel more comfortable when I am with Asian friends."   - Y10

Figure 3.4.   The generating process of research findings

The final stage was the summarization and presentation of the findings, which

will be presented in the following chapters, using tables and diagrams, together with

description and interpretation. An example is shown as follows (Figure 3.5).

Findings on identity of Chinese young people

Research results show that there are four main categories of identities among
Chinese young people. First Australian Born Chinese (ABC), second, a mixture of
Australian and Chinese identity, third, Australian, and fourth, a new culture that is neither
Australian nor Chinese.

I.   Australian born Chinese (ABC)

For the identity of ABC, the responses are as follows:
  "(I am) Australian born Chinese." (Y10)

  "I'll define myself pretty much as an ABC (Australian born Chinese)." (Y9)

Their reasons for the identity of ABC are as follows with coding of analysis in
blankets:
  "(I am) Australian born Chinese **(the identity)***"; "my background is Chinese*
  (ethnic origin) *but I was born in Australia* **(place of birth; citizenship)***."* (Y10)

Figure 3.5.   An example of the research findings on the Chinese young people's
            identity

Conclusion

The following table (Table 3.4) summarises the epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodologies and methods that have informed this study.

Table 3.4.

A Summary of Methodology and Methods used in the Research

Epistemological assumptions	Constructionism
Theoretical framework	Naturalism, interpretivism, symbolic interactionism
Methodological approach	Qualitative Methodological approach using case study
Methods of collecting data	Ethnographic fieldwork methods including in-depth interviews, focus group interviews, participant observation and textual materials
Methods of data analysis and Generation of Theory	Grounded theory

This research began with the question, "What characteristics can be identified in the spirituality of Chinese young people in a multicultural society", and it was conducted in a naturalist, interpretative paradigm with a qualitative methodological framework. A case study using ethnographic fieldwork methods, including participant

observations, interviews and textual materials for data collection, was adopted. Grounded theory was employed for data analysis and report generating.

To conclude this chapter, the use of the methodology and methods in this research was justified, but the participants in the field, including the Chinese young people, their youth leaders and the parents, who showed their positive attitude and warm welcome to the researcher, played a very important role in enabling the researcher to proceed with data collection and data analysis. Table 3.5 shows an overview and timeline of the conducting of the research.

Table 3.5.

An Overview and Timeline of the Conducting of the Research

Proposed date	Work to be done	Actual work	Researcher's Remarks
6/3/2003	Proposal to present	Presented at ACU	
24/3/2003	Seek ethics approval from the research services at ACU	Approval form received dated 2/7/2003	Data collection started on receiving the ethics approval
24/3/2003	Seek consent of the church for data collection	Written consent dated 17/6/2003 received	Consent letter to the church sent on 15/5/2003
28-30/3/2003	Join the Church camp (both parents and young people are going to join the camp)	Was invited as a guest to the camp	Special event
04/2003 – 04/2004	Attended the church services and youth groups meeting	Participant observation began in July, 2003	Data collection began after ethics approval confirmed
05/03 – 09/03	Interviews with parent	Interviews began from 9/7/2003 to 6/1/2004	Nine interviews with 11 parents
05/03 – 09/03	Interviews with young people	Interviews began from 13/7/2003 to 28/09/2003	10 young people
05-12/2003	Interviews with youth leaders	Interviews on 3rd and 4th August, 2003	2 youth leaders
10/03 – 12/03	Focus group interviews	1. 26/10/2003 2. 4/12/2003	2 Groups, one group of four and the other of five
25/12/2003	Christmas joint service (both parents and young people, Chinese and English speaking congregation)	As proposed	Special event
25/4/2004	20th Anniversary Sunday services	25/4/2004 (Sunday) from 11:00am to 1:30pm	Joint services: Chinese and English congregations worship together
04/2003 – 12/2004	Data analysis to start after data collected	Data analysis began after the first interview in July, 2003	The youth Baptism Ceremony was held on 24/7/2004 (Saturday) night, almost one year since the first interviews
1-10/2005	Generating research findings	As proposed	
11/2005	Presentation of the research & examination	Final presentation of research findings on 19/12/2005	Submission of thesis in May/June

The following chapters of this thesis identify and analyse the research findings. Chapter four describes the young participants' spirituality from their own perspectives. Chapter five focuses on their construction of identity that led to their distinctive spirituality. Chapter six studies the parents' worldviews and cultural values, and chapter seven, the role of their church community. The final chapter then draws together the conclusions of the study, as well as reflections and suggestions for further research. Throughout the following chapters, many quotations from participants, both teenagers and adults are provided. These are given in the exact words used by the participants, and a decision was made not to correct grammar or sentence structure. In addition, the decision was made to combine findings and their discussion together in discrete chapters, chapter four and five dealing with the findings related to the young people, chapter six dealing with findings related to the parents, and the next chapter dealing with findings related to the church community. It was deemed that presenting findings together with analysis in this way would ensure clarity and allow for a final gathering of perspectives in the last chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

SPIRITUALITY OF CHINESE YOUNG PEOPLE

Introduction

As discussed in chapter three, data triangulation of individual interviews,

focus group interviews, and participant observation was used, and this helped to

reduce artificial responses from the participants, and contributed to verification and

validation of the data analysis. In addition, at the time of individual interviews, the

participants were told that their identities would not be disclosed. They might choose

not to answer any questions if they did not feel want to, and they could withdraw at

any time (see Appendix E – Consent form to participants). They could express

themselves freely and truly in terms of their own frames of reference during

interviews. This chapter presents the findings related to the first aim of the research

reported in this thesis, which was to describe the spirituality of Chinese young people

in their own perspectives.

As discussed in chapter two, "spirituality" in the research reported in this

thesis is understood within a Christian framework. For most Christians, spirituality

refers to a relationship with God in real life situations (Engebretson, 2004; Koester,

2002), involves adherence to greater or lesser degree with the fundamental beliefs of

Christianity, and an interpretation of life experience in light of Christian faith

(McGrath, 1999). It is a way of life (Hill, Knitter, & Madges, 1997; Tacey, 2004) and may be expressed through religious practices such as prayer, and personal and communal rituals (Engebretson, 2004, p.269; see also McGrath, 1999). Spirituality and religion are sometimes used in an interchangeable way (Slater, Hall, & Edwards, 2001; Engebretson, 2004), but spirituality is not equal to religion (Ratcliff, 2001). While the term religion is used to refer to a system of beliefs, attitudes, and practices (Koester, 2002), spirituality in a Christian framework is concerned with a personal relationship with God. As Tacey (2004 September) suggests, spirituality is the living core of religion. Therefore, the definition of spirituality in this research, as previously stated in chapter two of this thesis, is as follows:

Spirituality is a life of faith, a way of trusting oneself in a committed way to centres of meaning and value beyond oneself (Collins, 1999). It involves an understanding of God, and it concerns personal and communal experiences (Harris & Moran, 1998, p.109) in real life situations or through religious practices (Engebretson, 2004; Ratcliff, 2001; Tacey 2004 September;), which foster and sustain a relationship with God (McGrath, 1999). It may be expressed through relationships, with the self, with others, with the world and with God (Engebretson, 2004; see also Collins, 1999; Engebretson, 2002; Harris & Moran, 1998).

The first section of this chapter presents the young Chinese participants' definitions of spirituality. The second section describes their awareness and experience of God within their real life situations, in the Church community, and in the religious practices through which they searched for relevance between beliefs and life experience. The third section discusses the young participants' spiritual needs expressed in terms of relationships, and the fourth section focuses on the factors that affected their spirituality.

Section One: Young People's Definitions of Spirituality

This section presents the young Chinese participants' perspectives about spirituality. In their perspectives, spirituality was a relationship with God involving faith and belief, which included changes and spiritual growth.

A Relationship with God

All of the young participants were aware of and felt related to God, including one young participant who did not give a definition of spirituality. Among the young participants, some described spirituality as "beyond what you can imagine" (Y2), or something "you can't see" (Y2, Y4). Some regarded spirituality as important because it was beyond physical materials (Y6), and was about things that could last (Y7).

They felt a sense of being connected to God and that they could communicate or have contact with God in a non-physical way. As one young participant (Y5) asserted, "The *relationship* with God is *like a telephone line*. Whenever I have the problems, the other line is always open (God can be reached)."

Four of the young participants claimed a relationship with God, Jesus or the Holy Spirit in their definitions of spirituality. Some examples of their assertions were as follows:

> "You have the Holy Spirit in you and you have the *connection* (which indicates a relationship with God)." (Y8)
> "Spirituality is how God can *touch* you and *contact* you rather than physical…it's a *relationship* with Jesus that you can't see (a relationship with non-physical communication)." (Y6)

Other young participants felt "related" to, or "connected" with God, which indicated an awareness of a relationship with God, by knowing (Y7, Y10), believing (Y2, Y9) and having faith (Y4, Y1). For example, one of them (Y10) claimed that she felt spiritually *touched* when someone spoke about God. In a sense, the participant (Y10) felt related to God as she was getting to know more about God through the speakers. Another participant (Y1) suggested, "It's a kind of *relationship* with God…like total *faith* in Him…*rely* on Him, *trust* in Him." This reflected a degree of commitment in the relationship with God, and was more than just knowing about God.

Hence in the research reported in this thesis, the young participants referred to spirituality as a relationship with God while they found that they could know about God, and that they could communicate with God in a non-physical way.

Having Faith and Belief

Among the young Chinese participants, faith or belief emerged as essential in a spirituality that involved relationship with God. Five of them defined spirituality as a relationship with God concerning "faith" or "belief" (Y1, Y2, Y4, Y6, Y9). The other young participants expressed their spirituality in ways that required faith or belief (Y3, Y5, Y7, Y8, Y10), for example, when they talked to Jesus (Y3) or to God (Y5), came to know God (Y7), felt connected with God through the Holy Spirit (Y8), and felt touched by God through someone speaking (Y10).

Faith and beliefs were inter-related, and yet, they were distinct from each other. As Hill, Knitter and Madges (1997) stress, there can be changes in beliefs, but one can still have faith and remain strong in commitment. Fowler (1991) claims that faith dynamically involves both the construction and the reception of beliefs. While religious faith characterizes a depth of personal commitment in the relationship with God, beliefs refer to the content of the religious tradition (Hill, Knitter, & Madges, 1997, p.45). When one stops believing in prayer or the value of going to church, the relationship with God may be weakened (Hill, Knitter, & Madges, 1997, p.46). This

was evident in the responses of some young participants, who claimed to believe in God, but felt less committed in their relationship with God when they had not gone to church for a while. The following table (Table 4.1) is constructed from the young participants' perspectives about spirituality, a relationship with God that involved faith or belief. Hence, as shown in the table, in the research reported in this thesis, the young Chinese participants perceived faith and beliefs as the essential elements in their spirituality, which focused on a relationship with God, involved a belief in what they could not see, and a commitment to a relationship with God, which might vary in depth among the participants.

Table 4.1.

A Relationship with God that involved Faith or Belief

Faith or belief found in the participants' assertions	Researcher's Remarks
"It's (Spirituality's) a kind of relationship with God and maybe have like total *faith* in Him. Um, rely on Him, trust in Him." (Y1)	The use of words like *total faith*, *rely on*, and *trust* indicated a degree of commitment in the relationship.
"Being able to have *faith* in something that you can't see." (Y4)	"To have faith in something" was used to describe spirituality, which indicated a belief in and commitment to the existence of a relationship.
"We can't exactly see God and we rely on our *faith* to know that He's there." (Y6)	*Faith* was seen as the core of the relationship with God.
"It's something you can't see but you just *believe*." (Y2)	A belief was regarded as essential.
"Everyone will have a *belief*. It's just where your belief would put in." (Y9)	A belief was the main concern in spirituality.
"Just like in the relationship with Jesus like *talking to Him*. Just being a Christian." (Y3)	"Talking to Jesus," indicated a belief in God, who was out there.
"The relationship with God is like a *telephone*... Whenever I have the problems, *the other end of the line is always open*." (Y5)	The metaphor of a telephone line indicated a belief that God was always ready to listen.
"Being to know yourself more… then, *knowing* God also." (Y7)	*Knowing* God concerned a search for belief, which was regarded as important in spirituality.
"You have the Holy Spirit in you and you *have the connection*." (Y8)	*Having a connection* with the Holy Spirit indicated a belief in the relationship with the transcendent.
"Sometimes, when someone speaks and it's very *touching*." (Y10)	There was a feeling of being related to God, which involved a belief.

A Journey with Spiritual Growth

Fowler (1991) has argued that there are seven "stages" of faith[6], and the data

gathered from the young participants suggested that they were in the stage of what

Fowler would term "conventional" faith, and their spirituality was in a process of

growth. As Fowler suggests, in the stage of conventional faith development, a

synthesis of beliefs and values takes place, personal identity is supported, and young

people develop a sense of belonging to a community. Other studies support the

viewpoint that spirituality develops alongside growth in faith (Hill, Knitter, & Madges,

1997; Jordan, 2002), a position that the research reported in this paper supports. Some

of the young participants expressed their spirituality as a journey in which they

experienced a growth in their relationship with God and in faith. One of the young

participants claimed,

> "(It is) sort of *spiritual growth* (that indicates a growth process), like I want to
> be more devoted, and to pray… and read the bible well… and maybe having
> like total *faith* in Him (God)." (Y1)

Another young participant (Y2) suggested,

> "I was still undergoing the *process of change*." (Y2)

This was evident in the testimonies given by some of the young participants and other

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[6] J. Fowler's (1991, pp.17-18, 102-115) seven structural developmental stages of faith are: (i) Prima
Faith (infancy), (ii) Intuitive-Protective Faith: (Early childhood), (iii) Mythic-Literal Faith (Childhood
and beyond), (iv) Synthetic-conventional Faith (Adolescence and beyond), (v) Individuative-Reflective
Faith (Young adulthood and beyond), (vi) Conjunctive Faith (Mid-life and beyond), (vii)
Universalizing Faith (Mid-life and beyond).

young people of the congregation in the baptism ceremony[7] the following year after

the interviews. Concerning their faith in their relationship with God, in the baptism

ceremony, they declared that they had gone through a process of searching. Their

relationship with God was described as a life journey in which their spirituality was

growing. For example, one of the young participants testified in the baptism ceremony

that she felt a growth in her spiritual life (Y4). One of their leaders claimed that her

relationship with God had grown dramatically. Other young participants asserted that

there was a gradual change in their spiritual life. When they came to know or

experience more about God, there was a growth in faith concerning their relationship

with God, and they felt closer to God. Hence, in the research reported in this thesis,

spirituality was observed as a journey, in which one could grow spiritually and

become close to God.

Summary: Young Participants' Definitions of Spirituality

In the perspectives of the young participants, the definition of spirituality was

summarized as shown in the following figure (Figure 4.1). This refers to a

relationship with God, which involves faith (a personal commitment) and beliefs (the

content of the religious tradition). This spirituality develops as the young participants

come to know and experience more about God.

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[7] Some of the participants and some youth leaders gave testimonies at CCCV Baptism Ceremony (the English Congregation) on 24th July 2004.
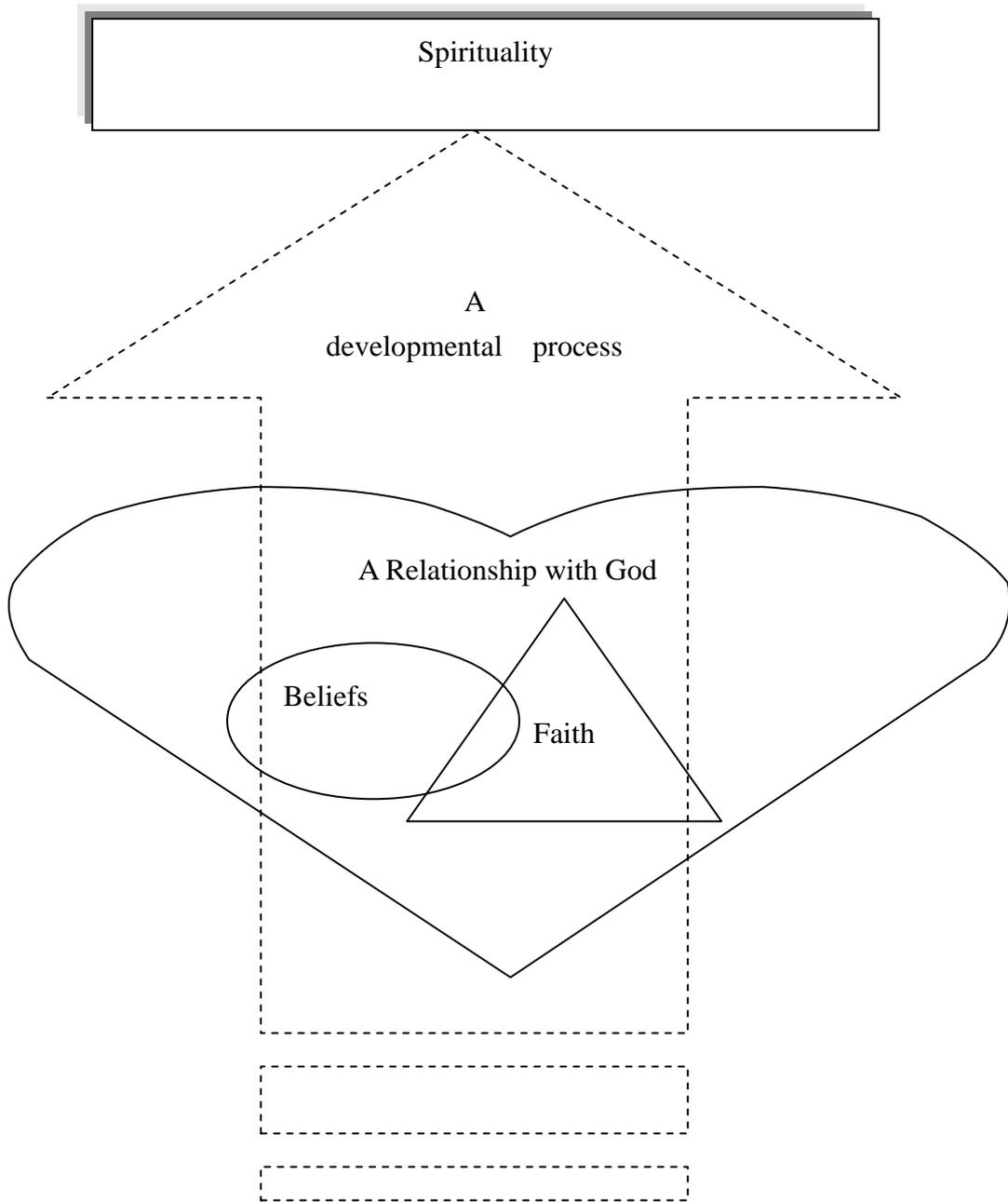
Figure 4.1. Diagrammatic illustration of the process of spiritual development as described by the young Chinese participants[8]

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[8] A modified diagram with reference to M. Chung (2006), "A study of the spirituality of Chinese young people in a multicultural society" in *Journal of Religious Education 54* (1), p.60.

Section Two: Awareness and Experiences of God

This section focuses on the young participants' awareness and experiences of God. All the ten young participants who participated in the individual interviews felt aware of and experienced God in various situations and conditions, such as real life experiences, church activities, religious practices, involvement in ministries, and being baptised. Through these situations, there was observed a search for relevance between beliefs and experience, a search, which fostered and sustained their relationship with God.

In Real Life Situations

Seven of the young participants spoke of real life experiences, such as in times of trouble, struggling with some problems, or experiencing blessings, when they were aware of God's presence and felt close to God. One of them (Y4) claimed that experience of God and acknowledgement of God were interdependent.

> "Everyday is a kind of experience. It depends on whether or not we acknowledge…and the way God responds is so awesome that because He really exist our expectations and what we think." (Y4)

One young participant (Y1) experienced God's blessings through her family's immigration to Australia:

> "I feel very *blessed* by Him (God)…because… my parents… *came here*, I was

so lucky. I think something good has come out of it."

Some other participants were aware of God's presence and felt closer to God in times of problems and troubles. Their assertions were, for example as follows: -

"I have a *problem* now and I *remember God*. It's good in a way as just like God reminding me, 'Hey, I'm still here, you know, don't block me out'." (Y2)
"I feel *close to God*… while *struggling for something*." (Y10)
"I had a lot of *problems* and I prayed about it and I asked God to help me. I read the bible and I felt *God was speaking to me* through the Bible." (Y7)

Another participant (Y9) suggested that his past experience of God had fostered his faith in God. He asserted,

"One thing I learn from the past that I feel I can trust God. No matter how things will turn out, He will prepare the best." (Y9)

Hence, these participants were aware of and experienced God in real life situations.

Participating in Church Activities

All of the young participants were aware of and experienced God when attending activities in the church community, such as in worship, youth group meetings, Church camps, and Christian conferences, which involved religious practices, such as sermons or testimonies, hymn singing, bible reading and prayer.

Sunday Worship

Five participants (Y6, Y7, Y8, Y9, Y10) observed that it was during worship time that they were aware of and felt close to God. The songs or sermons in the

worship, made them aware of the presence of God. The following were some

examples of their comments.

> "Last time it was during *worship*, I was doing the sheets for the projector. I was *touched* and was going to cry. Usually through *songs* in worship, I am really touched. We had another study section about a song, which is about how *God is always there* when you need Him. I was really touched by that." (Y6)
> "When I am in the *worship*. There were *songs* that really hit me and reflect what I've done that weekend... I asked *God* for forgiveness and… I do feel someone who *forgives* what I have done." (Y9)
> "Sometimes, when *someone speaks* (in worship and fellowships) and it's very *touching*." (Y10)

It was observed that in worship, it was important for the young participants to feel

that they could relate to God through songs and sermons, and this sustained and

fostered their relationship with God.

Youth Group Meeting

As well as Sunday worship, four of the young Chinese participants suggested

that they felt related to God in youth group meetings. In the youth meetings, they

shared with one another their life experiences, and from these they learned how God

worked for different people. As they claimed, this helped them grow spiritually:

> "At church we have cell *groups* through that… it's a group of girls and we talk about what's been happening in our lives and we just share our problems and what's been happening and joys and stuff…that's been helping me *grow* (in relationship with God)." (Y1)
> "In the last couple of years like the start of cell groups and *youth groups* that is a really good help for our *spiritual growth*." (Y4)

It was considered to be important that they felt related to each other in the youth groups through the sharing of life experiences among themselves, a sharing which enhanced their relationship with God. As one of the young participants (Y3) asserted,

> "Just to *see how everyone cares one another* so much and how *God works* on other people (in small groups)." (Y3)

At Christian Conferences and Church Camps

Furthermore, six young participants felt related to God at big Christian events, such as Youth Alive[9] and Hill Song[10], and one young participant felt close to God at Church camps. They observed that at Christian conferences and Church camps, they met with different people who came together to worship the same God, and this fostered their relationship with God. The following were two examples:

> "I feel *God is closer* is when we have *camps*, like church camps. *Everything and activities are doing for God* and *I feel closer* (to God)." (Y8)
> "When in the big stadium where there are so many Christians and all come here *for the same thing* and *it's very great* (a feeling related to God and people). " (Y6)

Some of the young participants described Hill Song and Youth Alive as big music

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[9] Youth Alive is a Christian music concert, at the end of which a message is given in order to encourage young people to commit their lives to God. The one held in Melbourne, on 16th August 2003, attracted about 12,000 people, including the researcher together with some of the young participants.
[10] Hill Song is a Christian conference, and the programme includes seminars and worship services which challenge people to establish a relationship with God. Some of the young participants attended the one held in Sydney in 2003, which attracted about 20,000 people.

ministries (Y6, Y7) because there were thousands of people (Y3, Y6, Y7). They felt

encouraged when they saw so many people gathering together for the same thing, to

worship God. For example, some made assertions as follows:

> "I went to the *Hill Song*… there were 20,000 people…together worshipping God, *I got encouraged*." (Y3)
>
> "I came to *Hill Song*… it's a *big* musical ministry over here… you can see 20,000 Christians so you can feel that *God is working* in Australia… It *helped me grow* from a strong base." (Y7)
>
> "*Youth Alive* is… very encouraging… I found that *it's encouraging to me* as there are *so many people* that are *willing to believe in Jesus Christ*. For me, I am so sure *He (God)'s out there*." (Y5)

As a result, some of them were confirmed in their beliefs while others experienced

growth in their faith: "I went to the *Youth Alive concert* and… I was really touched

and *I rededicated my life*" (Y2).

Moreover, it was important to note that these young participants felt

impressed by the large crowd of people who came together united in their faith. For

example, one participant (Y10) claimed, "I went this year and last year (the *Youth*

Alive)… *I got touched* because I saw so many people around and then I stood up."

They felt a sense of belonging within the crowd, and their identity within that big

crowd of people helped to support their faith. This had helped them grow: "I came to

Hill Song and I got the *reconfirmation*… It *helped me grow* from a strong base."

(Y7).

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Hence, in the research reported in this thesis, the young participants'

awareness and experience of God was observed in real life situations and Church

activities. This suggested that the participants' spirituality was not only expressed in

a personal relationship with God, but also expressed in being part of the community.

The Church community functioned in an emotional solidarity in which they felt

united with other people (Fowler, 1991; Hill, Knitter, & Madges, 1997).

Through Religious Practices

For Christians, private devotional practices and worship in the church aim to

assist believers to experience the transcendent God, as well as to foster and sustain a

relationship with God (McGrath, 1999). As research studies suggest, the young

participants in the research reported in this thesis, felt related to God through private

and communal religious practices (Engebretson, 2004; Ratcliff, 2001; Tacey, 2004),

such as prayers, reading the Bible, singing hymns or songs, and listening to

testimonies or sermons. The young participants became more aware of God and

experienced God through private devotional practices and worship in the church,

which was intended to foster and sustain their relationship with God.

Prayer

Prayer was not only a time when the young participants felt close to God, but

was also a way to relate to God. Among the ten young participants in the individual

interviews, nine felt related to God during their prayer time. Through prayer, they

could communicate with God, and they felt close to God. Some of the assertions were

as follows:

> "I want to be *more devoted* (to God), and to *pray* and pray well." (Y1)
> "Usually it's *praying* when I *feel close to God*… The most special spiritual
> experience that I find close to Him is…I *prayed* about it and I asked God to
> help me." (Y7)
> "By *praying*, I *feel closer to God*. The feeling is that someone is always there."
> (Y9)

As well as this, they prayed in order to invite God into their lives. For example, one

young Chinese participant (Y6) suggested,

> "*God is listening* to us. He *can help* us through ways that we might not
> understand or we might not know why He did it. *Praying* would be one
> (method)." (Y6)

Another young participant (Y2) claimed, "Sometimes just *feeling dark* and … some

friends *pray* for you and make you *feel better* (relate to God better)."

Moreover, in the young participants' perspectives, prayer concerned not only

the relationship between God and the participants themselves, but also took in

relationship with their friends. For example, two participants (Y3, Y10) made the

following assertions:

> "I got encouraged to join the prayer meeting in school, prayed more for my
> friends, like those of non-Christians." (Y3)

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"We pray for each other, with friends around." (Y10)

They felt related to God through prayer, which they perceived as a personal devotional practice, as well as a communal religious practice. Hence, it was observed that prayer was, on the one hand, a way to get closer to God. On the other hand, through prayer the young participants related to God, as well as to their friends.

Reading Bible

Reading the Bible was regarded as another important practice to experience God. Among nine of the ten young participants who took part in the individual interviews, reading the Bible had become an essential part of their daily life.

"I want to be *more devoted*, and … *read the bible well*." (Y1)
"I *read the bible* and I *felt God was speaking* to me through the Bible… From then on, I just keep on reading bible *every night*. Sometimes, I don't want to but I tell myself I'll be missing out something if I don't." (Y7)

They read the Bible because they sought God's guidance and wanted to know more about God. They had already experienced growth in their relationship with God through reading the Bible, and believed that it was a way to draw them closer to God:

"I think that I can be *a better Christian*… I think if I change more, maybe I need to read the bible more and… *find out more about God*." (Y8)
"There were a few times that I *felt very emotional and really sad*. When I read the bible and I prayed, I just *felt whole lot better*." (Y9)

It was observed also as important that they related to other people who studied the Bible with them. This also helped them to know more about God: "We do some bible studies. We get to know each other more and find out more about God" (Y8).

Hymn Singing and Testimonies or Messages at Church

Three of the ten young participants claimed that they experienced God through singing songs during worship: "Usually through *songs* in worship, I am really *touched*" (Y6). The songs they sang were most contemporary hymns, which were quite different from those sung in the Chinese congregations. Three young participants acknowledged that they were aware of God's work and felt related to God through the testimonies or messages delivered by the speakers at church or youth conferences: "When people give out *testimonies*… you can see how *God works* on their lives and you can relate to your life" (Y8). In these young participants' perspectives, singing hymns and listening to testimonies and sermons helped in their awareness and experience of God.

Involvement in Ministries

All of the ten young participants who attended the individual interviews were involved in church ministries, such as scripture reading[11], worship teams[12], junior

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[11] Scripture reading was within the programme in Sunday services, and some young members of the English Congregation were assigned to read the Bible scripture at Sunday services.
[12] Worship teams were responsible to lead the hymn singing in worship. Some of the members of the

church[13], Beach Mission[14] and so on. In the viewpoints of the participants, the involvement in ministries helped to nurture their spirituality within the church community. Some of their assertions were as follows.

> "I was in Junior Church… I *led* the discussion and got the *good relationship with some kids*…I *do* the projector sheets and I *will be responsible* for the scripture reading… I become *more involved*…when I was out there helping people, talking to children and talking to other people, I think that's *how I grow most*." (Y6)
> "I *participated* in the beach mission last year and I think it's really good…I think I *get closer to God*." (Y9)

Most of the young participants felt an experience of spiritual growth through taking part in church ministries. For example, one participant (Y10) admitted that she used to be a shy person, and she felt herself growing while participating in ministries: "I am one of the back up singers… I used to be very shy and don't want to do anything. (It helps) a little bit (in personal growth), I think." Some other participants (Y1, Y2, Y4, Y6, Y7) found themselves equipped with skills and knowledge as a result of their involvement in ministries. One of the participants (Y4) commented:

> "Right now we are *helping* some… ministries…like missions… It *equips* us with skills and knowledge how to deal with certain situations and how to *teach other people*." (Y4)

English congregation were divided into groups and took part in worship teams.

[13] Junior school was a ministry that took care of those in primary schools. Some of the members in the English congregation helped in Junior school as leaders of discussion and group activities.

[14] Beach Mission was an outreach ministry, which was organised by a mission agency outside their church. Some of the young participants joined this outreach ministry to reach out to the children at the beach and teach the children about the bible.

Through ministries within the Church community, they felt closer to other people, and experienced external or communal growth. One participant admitted that it was "g*ood to work together*" with other Christians (Y3), while another participant agreed that working together would help to develop a close relationship within the group (Y7). Other participants added:

> "It's even more powerful that you can reach out for more people if you stand in a group." (Y9)
> "That's the way when we work altogether, someone doing administration and someone doing other things. We grow up in the whole body of Christ. And in some sense, there is a very close relationship." (Y8)

Hence, in the research reported in this thesis, through involvement in ministries, the young participants experienced God and became aware of their personal growth, as well as growth in community. As other research studies have also suggested, their spirituality was both personal and communal (Harris & Moran, 1998, p.109; see also Hill, Knitter, & Madges, 1997), and was expressed through action (Engebretson, 2004).

Sharing Common Beliefs and Baptism

In the Church community, as Hill, Knitter, and Madges (1997, p.61) suggest, one can share with others beliefs around common experience, and find support from other people. With common beliefs and values, young people in the Church

community come together to share their common spirituality (Hughes et al., 1995).

The young participants in the research reported in this thesis shared a communal

experience of God within the church community (Hill, Knitter, & Madges, 1997), and

they related to God by identifying themselves as Christians who shared a set of

common beliefs, and further, a ritual of baptism.

A Set of Common Beliefs

Nine of the ten young participants saw themselves as Christians. The reason

for the one participant who did not see herself as Christian was because she had not

totally devoted herself to God yet. She defined a Christian as someone who was

totally devoted to God: "*a Christian probably totally devoted to God, you know,*

including her own life totally" (Y1). In the perspectives of the nine young participants

who identified themselves as Christians, Christianity involved a set of beliefs. Seven

of the participants (Y3, Y4, Y5, Y6, Y7, Y8, Y9) defined a Christian as someone who

believed in Jesus Christ. The following were some examples of their assertions:

> "A Christian is someone who believes *Jesus Christ* is a Saviour." (Y5)
> "It is a declaration of *Jesus* that you believe in Him and you believe that He will
> save you if you accept Him as your Saviour." (Y6)
> "A Christian is someone who has a relationship with *God*. They accept *Jesus* to
> their lives and also that Jesus died on the cross." (Y8)

The one young participant (Y1), who was uncertain of her belief, did not regard

herself as Christian. She stated, "Somebody ask me if I die today, will I go to heaven? I think I'm unsure of that." To her, a Christian should be certain of going to heaven if she died.

A set of common beliefs that defined a Christian in the participants' perspectives included the following:

(a) A belief in the only God: "A Christian…believes the only God" (Y6);
(b) A belief in the Son of God who died for our sins: "One who believes in God that He sent His son to die for our sins" (Y4);
(c) A belief that Jesus died on the cross: "A Christian… accepts Jesus to their lives and also that Jesus died on the cross." (Y8);
(d) A belief in Jesus who is a Saviour: "A Christian…believes Jesus Christ is a Saviour" (Y5); "A Christian…believes…Jesus Christ and His Salvation" (Y6).

With these beliefs, on the one hand, the participants entered a relationship with God. On the other hand, they related to other people within the Church community when they shared a common set of Christian beliefs, as well as a ritual of baptism.

Baptism

None of the ten young participants had been baptised at the time of the individual interviews while three of them were baptised[15] the following year after the interviews. At the time of the interviews, some young participants claimed that they were not ready for baptism. For example, one of the young participants (Y10)

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[15] Three of the participants were baptised in the church the following year after they had taken part in the individual interviews. On 24th July 2004, the Baptism took place at Doncaster Community Church of Christ where they had their youth group meetings.

asserted, "I haven't been baptised yet. I am not ready yet." One of them (Y4) claimed she would be baptised only when she was ready: "It should be but like only you think that you are ready. It doesn't bother me at the moment." Another (Y2) suggested that she was "still going through that process of changing" and thus was not ready for baptism.

In the young Chinese participants' perspectives, there were conditions for being baptised. One condition was the age limit set by the Chinese congregation in the church. As one of them (Y6) claimed,

> "They have *this rule* that you have to be eighteen or sixteen to be baptised. That's the age limit. They want you to be very sure and mature about *baptism* before you do it. I think that I might not be mature enough to be baptised."

The young participants did not consider baptism if the Chinese congregation thought they were too young. In their viewpoints, the Chinese congregation was very serious about baptism. One young participant (Y6) suggested that they were scared to be baptised, as they were not "up to standard" yet. Concerning the expectations of being baptised, the participant's assertion was as the following:

> "But I am *scared* that I am *not reading the bible everyday, not putting God in first priority* and I am *not ready* because of that. I should not do that it I go to set *a bad example*…I *care* about what *others like non-Christians think about me*. And if I am *doing something wrong or something bad*, I don't want them to see me (like that)." (Y6)

It was observed that a baptised person was expected to read the bible everyday, have

God as a priority, and set a good example before others. Some participants were worried that others would see them as bad examples.

Some young participants regarded baptism as a traditional ritual, which was particularly important to the Chinese congregation. As one participant (Y6) observed:

> "They (The Chinese congregation) take it very traditionally and they think it is a ritual and they emphasise how important it is."

Baptism was described as "*something big*" (Y6) or "*something special*" (Y3) to the Chinese congregation. Nevertheless, all the young participants attended the baptism ceremony[16] the following year after the individual interviews, either as attendees or as one being baptised. In their viewpoints, being baptised was declaring what they believed:

> "It is a *declaration* of Jesus that you *believe* in Him and you *believe* that He will save you if you *accept* Him as your Saviour." (Y6)

As well as this, it was witnessed to their faith in God, and indicated that there was a commitment in their relationship with God. The following were examples of the participants' comments:

> "It's a chance to *tell other people* that you are taking the step of *faith* to be baptised and be one of God's people. Everything I do will be in reflection of God." (Y6)

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[16] On 24th July 2004, the baptism ceremony of their English congregation took place at Doncaster Community Church of Christ where they had their youth group meetings.

"Just *signify to everyone* that you are Christian. It's a special *witness* to other people." (Y3)

The three young participants (Y2, Y4, Y7), who were baptised the following year after the individual interviews, testified to their faith and commitment in God during the baptism ceremony. For example one of their assertions was as follows:

"I am *making a public statement of faith*. To stand and bold as *a follower of Christ*… to have you all keep me accountable for all I do." (Y7, 2004)

Hence, they observed that baptism was more than a ritual. For those being baptised, it was a time to declare their beliefs, as well as their faith in and commitment to God before other people. For the other young participants, the baptism ceremony was a time to support their friends in their faith in God and in their acceptance of Christian beliefs. In other words, baptism enhanced the participants' spirituality in relationship with God, with those around them, and with themselves, while their identity was confirmed through baptism: "He loved me *for whom I am* because *I'm His creation and child*" (Y2, 2004).

A Search for Relevance between Belief and Life Experience

Research studies have reported that young people seek a relationship between their beliefs and their life (Hill, Knitter, & Madges, 1997). The young participants in the research reported in this thesis needed to search for their own beliefs relevant to their lives, and as a result, some of them grew in faith.

Five of the ten young participants formerly thought of themselves as Christians because they had grown up in a Christian family (Y2, Y7, Y8, Y10), or they became Christians when they were very young (Y9). Among these five participants, three of them reconfirmed themselves as Christians when they came to their teens (Y2, Y7, Y8). Their assertions were as follows:

> "Because I was *born in Christian family*… I went to the *Youth Alive concert* and there they asked people to dedicate their lives. I *rededicated* myself." (Y2)
> "I used to think that as *my parents are Christians*, I would be the Christian… But then, I learn that just because your parents are Christians doesn't mean that you are a Christian…I came to *Hill Song* and I got the *reconfirmation*." (Y7)
> "I naturally thought of myself a Christian as I have *grown up in a Christian family*…(I *reconfirmed* myself as a Christian when) I went to *a conference* when I was in year six or seven." (Y8)

In the following year after the individual interviews, some of the young participants, together with some other young members of their congregation, testified to their belief in God in the baptism ceremony[17]. They shared with the congregation their search for faith. They claimed to have experienced God and established a genuine relationship with God after a time of seeking, struggling, and searching. During the baptism ceremony, one of the youth leaders gave his testimony and said, "*I search for my own, not because my dad tells me or my mom tells me*." Another youth leader admitted that she had done research to find out more about

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[17] CCCV Baptism Ceremony (English Congregation) was held on 24th July 2004. Some of the participants and youth leaders gave testimonies about their relationship with God.

God, and she confessed her belief in God. One member of the congregation testified that she had been searching for something already inside her, and eventually she found that it was God.

Hence, applying Fowler's stage theory of faith development, the young participants in the research reported in this thesis were chronologically at least, in the developmental stage of synthetic conventional faith, and the data suggests that they were searching for relevance between their beliefs and their lives (Fowler, 1991; Hill, Knitter, & Madges, 1997; Tacey, 2003). This link between beliefs and life, both supported their personal identity, as well as their identity within the Church community to which they felt a sense of belonging (Fowler, 1991; Hill, Knitter, & Madges, 1997). The relationship between belief and their life experiences was important, for them to claim a belief of *their own* and commit more to their relationship with God. They would even identify themselves more closely with their Church community with which they shared common beliefs (Hughes et al., 1995).

Summary: Chinese Young People's Experience of God

The young participants experienced God: (a) in their real life situations; (b) when participating in Church activities, including worships, youth group meetings, Church camps, and Christian events and conferences; (c) through both private and communal religious practices including prayers, bible reading, hymns singing,

sermons and testimonies; (d) in their involvement in ministries and taking up responsibilities; and (e) in sharing common beliefs and being baptised, which involved a set of common beliefs, and in which they declared their beliefs and claimed a relationship with God, as well as a relationship with the Church community.

Concerning the young participants' awareness and experiences of God in these various dimensions, there was a search for coherence between their beliefs and real life experiences. As argued in the previous section, the young participants in the research reported in this thesis were in the stage of conventional faith, in which a synthesis of beliefs and values takes place (Fowler, 1991). Not only did this support their personal identity, but also related them to others in emotional solidarity (Fowler, 1991; see also Hill, Knitter, & Madges, 1997). In other words, the participants could develop their own belief systems that led to a personal relationship with God, and with common beliefs and values, they came together in a church community to share their common spirituality (Hughes et al., 1995) through religious practices and rituals (Harris & Moran, 1998; Hill, Knitter, & Madges, 1997; McGrath, 1999). A summary of these findings is given in Figure 4.2.

The participants' awareness and experience of God

Baptism and Common beliefs

Through religious practices

Participating in church activities

Involvement in ministries/ taking responsibilities

In real life situations

Prayers

Bible reading

Hymns singing

Youth group meeting

Christian events and conferences

Church camps

Sermons/ testimonies

Sunday worship services

Searching for links between beliefs and life experiences

Figure 4.2. Summary of the young Chinese participants' awareness and experience

of God

Section Three: The Young People's Spiritual Needs – Relationships

The research conducted among the young Chinese people led to the following

definition of their spirituality, which has been derived from their contributions.

> Spirituality was described as a relationship with the transcendent God that
> involved faith and beliefs, and that could develop as they came to know and
> experience more about God.

As research studies suggest, spirituality refers to the individuals' relationships

between their interiority and their outside world (Harris & Moran, 1998). It is

concerned with a relationship within the self, with others, and with God (Engebretson,

2002; Engebretson, 2004; Tacey, 2000). In the research reported in this thesis, the

young participants expressed their needs in terms of key relationships, and this is the

focus of discussion, in the following sections of this chapter.

Relationship with God

Six of the young participants (Y1, Y2, Y6, Y7, Y8, Y10) expressed the need to

relate to God more, to be more devoted to God, to have more faith in God, to be more

assured of God's salvation, to come closer to God, and to give themselves more to

God. Some wanted to be a better Christian and grow more in relationship with God.

For example, one young participant (Y2) asserted, "To *grow more* in God… To

become *stronger* in faith." Some wanted to pray well, read the bible well, and tried to

find out what God wanted them to do. One of the young participants (Y1) claimed,

> "I want to be *more* devoted, and to pray and pray well, and read the bible well…
> my need is … just to *grow* … to *find what God wants me to do*." (Y1)

While the young participants expressed their spirituality through a relationship with

God, it was also important for them to grow in commitment to their relationship with

God.

Relationship within Church Community

Most of the young participants felt that they needed to *relate to the other*

members within their church community. For example, one of the young participants

(Y8) noted, "*young people need support from one another*". One young participant

(Y3) suggested that they needed to "*have someone to talk to*" and their "*questions*

asked can be answered". Another young participant (Y6) observed that they "*need to*

help and care for other people" and "*need to know that there are other people around*

and ready to help". As one of the young participants (Y7) claimed, they particularly

needed "*to relate to someone with the same belief and faith*", so that someone would

be always ready to pray for them and support them: "Someone… pray for me that I

can have the strength to go on and not give up." (Y9). One young participant (Y10)

stressed that she needed more "*commitment*" to the Church community, while another

young participant (Y5) needed their youth leaders to be more considerate and

understanding.

Hence, the young participants' spirituality was expressed in relationship with their Church community, within which a faithful and trustworthy relationship was needed, so that they could support one another, and grow together. From the youth leaders, or those who were in the leading position, the participants demanded patience, understanding and consideration.

Relationship within One-self

Five of the young participants experienced a *need within themselves* for peace, encouragement, patience, self-control, persistence, being considerate and management of time. One of them (Y1) made the following assertion:

> "My need is to *feel peace*, just to *grow* as well, be able to *find what God wants* me to do, how I can *make sure the way of I live*, *my life works*." (Y1).

There was a need for peace and assurance in their way of life. Some young participants expressed the need for encouragement (Y3, Y5), patience, being considerate, self control and proper management of time, studying hard, support (Y5), the persistence to keep doing things to the end without giving up too soon (Y7, Y9). Particularly when some of the young participants were under pressure in their academic studies, they felt stressed, discouraged and almost gave up sometimes:

> "I *thought of giving up* a few times *because of the stress* from parents, and

friends. Everything gives me stress to a degree…it just… makes me feel really bad." (Y9).

Hence, there observed internal or personal needs concerning their relationship with themselves; the young participants needed to feel and to build a better self so that they could face their outside world.

Relationship with Others outside the Church Community

Six of the young participants expressed their *concerns for other people* as integral to their spirituality. Some examples of their assertions were as follows.

"My need is… to find… how… my life works, not *affect people* badly but rather *in a good way*." (Y1)
"You have to *reach out to other people*… Doing short term mission trips that can really *help* (*me grow*)." (Y7)

It was observed that within the framework of their spirituality, the young participants needed to relate to others. While they related to God, they experienced a need to share with other people their faith and beliefs, and a need to relate to those outside the Church community. At well as this, outside the Church community, they experienced a desperate need to relate to parents and family. As one young participant (Y9) asserted, "(I need) mom's understanding and acceptance for my changes and accept me as who I am and what I choose."

Hence, in summary, the young participants expressed their spiritual needs in terms of key relationships, which they described as to be closer to God, to feel a better

relationship with one self, and to relate more to the other people within the church community, as well as to people outside the church community, while the need to relate to their parents and family was of particular importance.

Section Four: The Factors that affected the Young People's Spirituality

Parents, Family and Peers

Most of the young participants went to the same church as their parents, who attended the Chinese congregation, while the participants attended the English services. All of the young participants who took part in the individual interviews claimed that their parents or family members who brought them to church had played a key role in their spirituality. The following were some examples of their assertions:

> "I was born in Christian family… *My parents* come here (to the church) and they (My parents) can drive me here…*my sister* helps me a lot. We can discuss the questions together." (Y2)
> "I started to go to the family fellowship with *my parents*." (Y5)
> "*My mom* takes me to come here (the church) every week… I've been encouraged to come (to church) with *my parents*." (Y6).

Eight of the ten young participants regarded their friends as important influences on their spirituality. In their viewpoints, their friendship groups and peers encouraged one another (Y2, Y5, Y6), for example, one young participant (Y2) claimed,

"I think I would like to be able to *praise God* with *my close friends*… to *encourage each other*… some friends *pray for you* and *make you feel better*."

They perceived their friends as important for their support for each other (Y9, Y10).

One young participant (Y9) made assertion as follows,

"Sometimes, when I *feel distant from God*, I ask the *friends* in church to *pray* for me… They are always there to *help me through the problems*… They would *give me suggestions*…I *get emotional* when I am thinking of these friends what they do for me and what I can do back for them." (Y9)

As well as this, they grew up together with their friends (Y1), and their spirituality developed within a friendship group (Y1, Y8).

"*My friends* are there…each second Saturday we have a youth group and also at church we have cell groups… we talk about what's been happening in our lives and… that's been *helping me grow*." (Y1)
"We do some bible studies. We get to know each other more and find out more about God." (Y8)

Hence, among the young participants, it was observed that their friendship groups and peers had a positive influence on their spirituality. Since most of the young participants claimed that their close friends were Chinese, it may be suggested that the same ethnicity of peers had a role in the young participants' spirituality.

The Church Community

All of the ten young participants observed that they experienced growth within the Church community, within which they had a sense of belonging to the same

family. They learned from each other, and shared with one another. They observed a

very close relationship with the Church community:

> "Maybe because I *grew up with them*… it (the church) is *like a whole family community* (a sense of belonging)." (Y7)
> "We *work altogether* (in the church)… We *grow up* in the whole body of Christ. And in some sense, there is *a very close relationship*." (Y8)

This suggested that their Church community was another main factor in shaping their

spirituality:

> "*The people here* (*in the church*)…I got to *share* with them right… probably *develop my spiritual life*." (Y1)

The Church community was observed as *very* important in their spirituality because

within the Church community they could find their own identity and express

themselves freely. As one of the young participants (Y5) claimed, "*The church* in a

way, *helps to reflect how I am and I am going*… everyone *has his or her say* in this

church… They would *care for people*... I find that is very important." Within the

Church community, the young participants could also find support, encouragement,

and a sense of security:

> "The congregation is very *encouraging*. You are *not afraid* (sense of security) to ask and you *always have someone to talk to* (acceptance and support within the community)." (Y3)
> "We have *a small group*, we have *a sense of security*. They will give you *honest opinions and advice*." (Y6)

As well as this, they felt comfortable, connected, and cared of.

"I *feel comfortable* with them." (Y1)

"I *got connected* with the English congregation… and in some sense, there is *a very close relationship*." (Y8)

"They would *care for people* who are not involved in something." (Y5)

It was observed that the Church community had helped to nurture the young participants' spirituality. In the participants' viewpoints, their church community was like a family, to which the participants always felt a sense of belonging, and within which they could live out their beliefs through involvement in ministries. They had a strongly committed relationship with the Church community, in which they identified closely with their *peers of their own kind* (Connell et al., 1975; Rigby, 1990).

Cultural Values

Another main factor that affected the young participants' spirituality was cultural values. Within the Church community, there were the Chinese-speaking congregation and the English-speaking congregation. Some young participants observed that Chinese cultural values had affected their spirituality, while some perceived western values as being more influential. The following quotations given were of those aware of Chinese cultural influences:

"The *Chinese values* have been *affecting* us… Since we are grown up in *Chinese Church*, it's got to affect us." (Y6)

"A lot of us don't want to change… that could be the *Chinese values*

(affecting)… I do *believe in Chinese customs.*" (Y7)

However, most of the young participants could not speak Chinese well, and they preferred to attend the English-speaking congregation. As one young participant (Y1) suggested, "I understand it (Chinese), but it's *a bit strange*… to understand it all. So it's *better* for me to go to the *English service*." Another young participant (Y6) claimed, "The *Chinese values* have been *affecting* us… We are all *English speaking* and a lot of us *not know much about Chinese*, like me."

Moreover, most of the young participants, who were born or had grown up in Australia, became English speaking and under the influences of western cultural values. One young participant (Y10) asserted, "*We are modern* on the other side… because we are *different* (culturally)." Since the young participants in the research reported in this thesis were living within two different cultures, one from their Chinese families and the other within their society, they inherited the characteristics of both cultures in the multicultural society (Khan, 1983; Wallman, 1983). Both cultures were taken into account in their thoughts, attitudes and spirituality (Alma & Zock, 2002; Shwedder & Bourne, 1984). Therefore, the spirituality of these young participants was observed as different from those in the Chinese congregation of the Church mainly because of cultural differences.

Real Life Situations

Lastly, the research reported in this thesis suggested that real life situations played a role in shaping the young participants' spirituality. During the interviews, two of the young participants claimed that their real life experiences affected their spirituality. One (Y2) claimed, "When I am too *busy with my life*, I *block Him* (God) out." This participant, sometimes, was too engaged with her own life to spare time for God. Another participant (Y9) developed a stronger faith in God after he had experienced ups and downs while searching for intimacy in his relationships: "There was a girl... She *wasn't ready to accept me*… I asked God why… I see later that *God prepares someone better*… I *trust God* that there will be things *better*." One of the young participants, who was baptised the following year after the individual interview, asserted as follows: "*Studying is what I'm good at*, but then… I was a loser… I couldn't handle it… no matter how hard we try, it's not up to us… A bible verse encouraged me… It's *God*'s love and His mercy kept *encouraging* me." She lost her confidence in her studies while she was struggling hard for the examinations. However, she felt encouraged by God and made it through. One of the youth leaders, who was baptised at the same time as the participant, admitted that she had difficulties in coping with her life when she was in Year eleven. She stopped going to church, youth meetings and devotions. She just felt alone, depressed, sad, and unable to find

any way out. Then, she prayed to God one day for the situation and she perceived that God had taken away all the miseries. Another youth leader in the baptism ceremony testified that he had become cynical when his father died. He was struggling with why God had let that happen in his family. Later, he related to God again because of his mother and grandmother's faith in God.

Hence, the young participants may not have had the same life experiences, but through their life experiences, it could be argued that they had come to spiritual growth.

Summary: Factors that affected Spirituality

Fowler (1991) claims that the main factors in spirituality are traditions, group membership, and the critical relations and experiences arising from interaction in life situations. McGrath (1999, p.8) suggests three factors of major importance in shaping spirituality: (a) personal issues concerning individual backgrounds; (b) denominational considerations of the church communities; and (c) the attitudes to the world, culture and history. However, as Rossiter (2005) stresses, family and cultural experiences in community are more influential factors, and the role of parents and family is the most important factor affecting the spirituality of young people (Conger, 1979; Engebretson, 2002; Milner, 1975). In the research reported in this thesis, the main factors that affected the young participants' spirituality included parents, peers,

cultural values, the Church community, and life situations. The role of parents and family was a key factor in the young participants' spirituality while the young participants sought and shared communal interests and experiences (Connell et al., 1975; Rigby, 1990) with their peers and within the Church community, which functioned as a reliable and manageable framework for their behaviour (Slee, 2002). At the same time, both the cultural values within their Chinese families and the western culture in the society contributed to their distinctive spirituality (Alma & Zock, 2002; Shwedder & Bourne, 1984), which was further shaped by their real life situations.

Conclusion: Findings on the Chinese Young People's Spirituality

from Their Own Perspectives

Research studies show that today's young people tend to seek depth and richness within the person ("Nation's youth", 2002 January), and they also need to belong to a community where they can share their faith and life (Hughes et al., 1995). Both the individual interiority and experience of God within the community are important in nourishing spirituality (Harris & Moran 1998; Tacey, 2003). In the research reported in this thesis, the young participants were in need of inward growth so as to know more about God and have a grow personally, while at the same time

they needed to relate to other people for support, encouragement, understanding, assurance or advice. Their parents and families, as well as their Church community played a very important role in their spirituality, particularly the cultural inheritance within their families, as well as their Church community, which nourished the young participants' spirituality as their needs were addressed (Hill, Knitter, & Madges, 1997; Warren, 1983). However, the influences of western culture in the society had also a role in their spirituality

Hence, their spirituality was expressed in terms of relationships, such as the relationship with God, with themselves, with people within the church community and with others surrounding them. To conclude this chapter, the perceived characteristics of the spirituality of the young Chinese people in this study were: (a) it was an internal faith (Harris & Moran, 1998; Tacey, 2003) concerned with a relationship with God, which could develop in accordance with their knowledge and experience; (b) it involved awareness and experience of God through real life situations and in church activities in which private and communal religious practices were involved; (c) it was in relationship with other people, as well as the world around them; (d) it was an expression of beliefs through involvement in ministries, which helped them relate to God, as well as to the other people within their church community; (e) the relevance between their beliefs and their life was particularly

important in order to grow in faith and commitment and in their relationship with God.

In this chapter, it has been suggested that the main factors influencing the young participants' spirituality were parents, peers and friendship groups, the Church community, cultural values and real life situations.

As noted in chapter two, there is a close relationship between identity and spirituality, and the formation of identity in different cultural contexts leads to distinctiveness in spirituality. The following chapters will further discuss the young participants' distinctive spirituality, with focus on the significance of their identity formation (chapter five), and their parents' worldview and cultural values (chapter six), which characterises their spirituality.

CHAPTER FIVE

IDENTITY OF CHINESE YOUNG PEOPLE

Introduction: Identity and Spirituality

In Chapter two of this thesis definitions of spirituality were discussed, and the

relationship between identity and spirituality was made explicit. Spirituality is in close

relation with identity (Rossiter, 2001; see also Rossiter, 2005). Young people express

spirituality in terms of relationships and they will develop their own spiritual system

alongside identity achievement (Engebretson, 2002a). While the values and norms

shared by groups, are relevant for identity formation (Barker, 1999; Milner, 1975),

their spirituality develops in a variety of styles depending on culture, denominations,

personalities and gifts (Holt, 1993; see also Collins, 1999). In this research, the

influences of Chinese culture and contemporary western culture accounted for the

young Chinese participants' identity formation, which led to their distinctive Christian

spirituality. This chapter presents the findings related to the second aim of the

research, which was to discover and analyse the cultural characteristics that affected

the young participants' spirituality. These findings are presented within the following

sections: (1) the three main categories of identity, (2) the factors that led to identity, (3)

a process of cultural shifts, and (4) an implication of a model of multicultural identity.

Section One: Three Main Categories of Identity

Introduction

Altogether ten Chinese young people attended the individual interviews that were conducted for the research reported in this thesis. The findings indicated that there were three main "categories" or "modes" of identity among the Chinese young people who took part in the case study: (a) a combination of Australian and Chinese identity, (b) Australian identity, and (c) a new identity. Each of these modes can further be described in terms of their subcategories.

A Combination of Australian and Chinese Identity (A+C)

One group of the young participants identified themselves as both Australian and Chinese: "I would say I am Australian, as well as Chinese because I can fit in both Australian and Chinese" (Y9). Within this category of identity (A+C), there are four different sub-groups which can be described as: (a) more Australian than Chinese (A>C), (b) more Chinese than Australian (C>A), (c) torn between (A←→C), and (d) Australian born Chinese (ABC). Each of these sub categories will now be defined and described.

Australian born Chinese (ABC)

Two Chinese young people identified themselves as Australian born Chinese (ABC), in the following words:

"(I am) Australian born Chinese" (Y10);

"I'll define myself pretty much as an ABC (Australian born Chinese)" (Y9).

To the young participants, "Australian" was significant as the birthplace that made them feel that they belonged to the country. They acknowledged their Chinese background, but they identified more strongly as "Australian". Their birthplace was much more important than their ethnic background in their identity. For example, one of the young participants (Y10) asserted, "(I am) Australian born Chinese… my background is Chinese (ethnic origin) but I was born in Australia (place of birth)." The other young participant (Y9) further explained,

"I'll define myself pretty much as an ABC (the identity of Australian Born Chinese)… I've got the look and the history of Chinese people (the "Chinese" in the identity of ABC)… Since I've grown up in an English speaking society (the place of upbringing), a lot of my actions and my beliefs are more westernised than the Chinese cultures (Australian cultural values affecting beliefs and behaviour)… I've grown up in a western culture and accepted the way of living (western living style)." (Y9)

In this case, the "Chinese" component in the identity of ABC, referred to the appearance and the background of the Chinese young people, including their ethnic origin and its history. They were born in Chinese families and had a Chinese background that they perceived as unchangeable. The "Australian" component in the identity of ABC consisted of Australian values that affected their ways of living and spoken language. For the young participants in the case study, their place of birth and

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upbringing was Australia. They identified himself as ABC because they saw

themselves as Australians, who led a western lifestyle and spoke English, and yet had

a Chinese background, which was regarded as an important ethnic symbol (Gans,

1985). In this way, they were like other ethnic individuals who were born in the

multicultural society of Australia, such as Australian born Polish, Australian born

Greek, or Australian born Vietnamese (Secombe & Zajda, 1999).

More Chinese than Australian (C>A)

For those two young participants who identified themselves as more

Australian than Chinese when younger, their identity shifted to be more Chinese as

they grew older. The main reason for this was their Chinese appearance:

"When older, began to aware of Chinese origin because of the Chinese look."
(Y8)
"(Now, when) I look at myself, I look Chinese." (Y1)

Another reason for perceiving their identity as more Chinese was because they spoke

the language at home: "I speak Chinese at home… that's another reason" (Y8). They

regarded the language as an important identifier. The more they were able to speak

Chinese, the more they identified themselves as Chinese. For example, one of the

young participants (Y1) claimed, "If I can't speak Chinese, it's pretty terrible… it's

definitely important for me to speak Chinese and understand Chinese." When they

could not speak the language well, it adversely affected their identity as Chinese, as another young participant (Y2) asserted, "I see myself as Chinese, but… can't see myself as a completely Chinese because I can't speak the language well."

The research indicated two other important factors, which related to a more predominantly Chinese identity and one of these was their ethnic background. For example, one young participant (Y1) claimed, "I (was) born Chinese (their ethnicity)." They were aware of their ethnic background, which made them identify themselves as more Chinese. The other factor was the cultural values they upheld. Some had adopted more Chinese cultural values, and that made them different from Australians. The assertions were such as the following:

> "I think in Chinese… and sometimes, like other culture, Chinese and Australian see things differently… I know that I am not Australian." (Y8)
> "I think myself a Chinese because I still uphold Chinese values." (Y1)

Finally, age was observed as another important factor for this sub category. Research studies show that young people identify themselves more with their ethnic groups during adolescence (Dusek, 1996). As found in this case, the two young participants identified themselves more as Australian when they were younger. However, they tended to identify more with their ethnic groups in their teenage years when they became aware of their ethnic origin and background, and at the same time had adopted more Chinese values.

More Australian than Chinese (A>C)

Four young participants who identified themselves as more Australian than Chinese made assertions such as the following:

"I tend to be more of Australian culture as born in Australia." (Y2)
 "I am more Australian than Chinese." (Y4)
"When I was younger, I thought I was more Australian." (Y8)

The main factor was the place of birth and upbringing, as well as the Australian cultural values they had adopted. For example, one of the young participants (Y4) suggested that Australian culture was more important than Chinese because:

"We *live here* and I *call Australia my home*… I am *more Australian* than Chinese… I was *born here* and I have been *taught the values*, like I have been learning in Australian public school… I think that's predominant what I am." (Y4)

The young participant (Y4) felt a sense of belonging to Australia, which she called home, because it was the place in which she was born and taught the cultural values.

Another young participant (Y2) agreed,

"Chinese culture are important… but *Aussie values are more important* to me…I tend to be more of Australian culture as *born in Australia*." (Y2)

The other important factors were age and language. Two of the young participants saw themselves as more Australian at a younger age, when they spoke English more often. For example, one participant's (Y1) assertion was, "When younger there is no

point to speak Chinese in Australia." She perceived herself as being more an Australian when she was younger, and therefore, she did not find any importance in learning the Chinese language, which was spoken at home. The language in Australian society, therefore, became these young participants' mother tongue, which made their identity more Australian.

In-between Identity (A←→C)

Two of the young participants saw their cultural identity as "in between":

"I am an in-between." (Y6)
"I'm torn-between." (Y7)

This "in between" identity indicated a fluctuating identity that shifted between Australian and Chinese. In such cases, Chinese identity was limited by an inability to speak the language well. For example, one young participant (Y6) even felt like a foreigner among the Chinese because of her incompetence with the language. Her assertion was,

"I did not speak Chinese well and everybody knows that you are from overseas… I am an in-between." (Y6)

She identified with her ethnic background, but the place of birth and citizenship, as well as the way she spoke the language, caused her confusion about her Chinese identity:

"I cannot do anything about that as I was born in a Chinese family and I am Chinese at heart (ethnic origin)… Because I have been raised in Australian environment (place of upbringing) and I am the citizen (citizenship). It doesn't make me very Chinese… I am an in-between." (Y6)

Another young participant (Y7) claimed,

"I'm torn between… Genetically I'm Chinese but I can't read Chinese and barely speak (the language)" (Y7).

He added that he felt the importance of Chinese customs, and at the same time, he had adopted a lot of Australian values because he had grown up in Australia.

"Chinese customs… is very important…(However) Sometimes, I'll say I am Australian because the way I talk, the accent… And there are a lot of Australian values in me also (Shift from "in between" identity to "Australian" identity because of the Australian values he had adopted)." (Y7)

On the one hand, the young participants upheld Chinese cultures and customs. On the other hand, they had been taught Australian cultural values as they grew up in Australia. Their identity adhered more closely to the culture whose values they had more strongly adopted. Hence, it was observed that there was a shifting identity between the two different cultural value systems among these participants.

Australian Identity

Among the young participants in the case study, a further main category of identity was Australian. One young participant (Y3) claimed that his identity was

Australian because he had grown up in Australia. He was aware of his Chinese

background but it did not affect his Australian identity: "*Because this is where I grow

up. I say my background was Chinese but I am Australian.*" In this case, the ethnic

background was not regarded as an important factor, and there was a strong Australian

identity, in which the "Chinese" element, such as the background, was included. This

Australian identity was, therefore, constructed of some Chinese values, as well as

Australian.

A New Identity of Australian and Chinese: A Multicultural Identity

In the research reported in this thesis, there emerged evidence of a new

identity. This new identity was neither Chinese nor Australian. Two young

participants made assertions as follows:

> "I am a new generation of Chinese… eventually all the Asians will probably become multicultural." (Y5)
> "I don't fit in either side (either Chinese or Australian)." (Y6)

To one of them (Y5), the new identity was constructed by mixing together the two

cultures, Chinese and Australian. In doing this she appeared to have created a "new"

culture:

> "I think I have both the cultures but a bit of my own… a different culture…a bit of mixture… I think I make up my own culture… *I see I have my culture.*" (Y5)

The young participant (Y5) confessed that she had both cultures in her identity, and

that by mixing the two cultures together, she had created a new culture of her own.

This new culture led to a new identity, which would be different in future generations:

> "I feel that a lot of Chinese… they have adapted to the ways of Australian living and so… Chinese culture…(is) deteriorating as new generations come." (Y5)

The other young participant (Y6) claimed that she did not perceive herself as "Australian" because of her Chinese background, and she did not perceive herself as "Chinese" either because she had grown up in Australia or did not speak the Chinese language well. Her assertion was as follows.

> "I was born in a Chinese family and I am Chinese at heart…I have been raised in Australia, I am the citizen. It doesn't make me very Chinese… *I don't fit in either side* (either Chinese or Australian)." (Y6)

It was observed that this new identity was still developing. On the one hand, these Chinese young people adopted cultural traits from both Chinese and Australian cultures. On the other hand, each of the cultures tended to draw them away from identifying with each other. Thus, they did not feel completely identified with either one. Eventually, along with young people from other Asian groups, the identity of Chinese young people may become a multicultural one (Y5).

Summary: Categories Of Identities

The categories of identity formation are, in summary, as shown in the following figure (Figure 5.1). Three main categories of identity were observed. A

combination of Australian and Chinese identity was one of the categories, within which there were observed four sub-categories: (i) Australian born Chinese (ABC), (ii) more Chinese than Australian, (iii) more Australian than Chinese, or (iv) an in-between identity. Another main category was the mode of Australian identity. In the making of the Australian identity, Chinese cultural elements were included. The mode of a new identity was the other main category, within which there was observed a continuously changing identity, and this identity tended to evolve into another new identity generation after generation. As discussed in chapter two, there is a close relationship between identity and spirituality; the formation of identity in different cultural contexts leads to distinctiveness in spirituality. While the young participants' spirituality was expressed in terms of relationships, as discussed in the previous chapter (chapter four), the findings of different categories of identity further reflected the young participants' distinctive spirituality. The following section focuses on the factors that have led to these different modes of identity and that help to account for their spirituality.

Identity of Chinese young people

Australian and Chinese (A+C)

Australian

New identity (N1 for 2nd generation)

Australian Born Chinese (ABC)

More Australian than Chinese (A>C)

More Chinese than Australian (C>A)

In between Australian and Chinese (A←→C)

New identity
(N2, N3… for 3rd and the coming Generation)
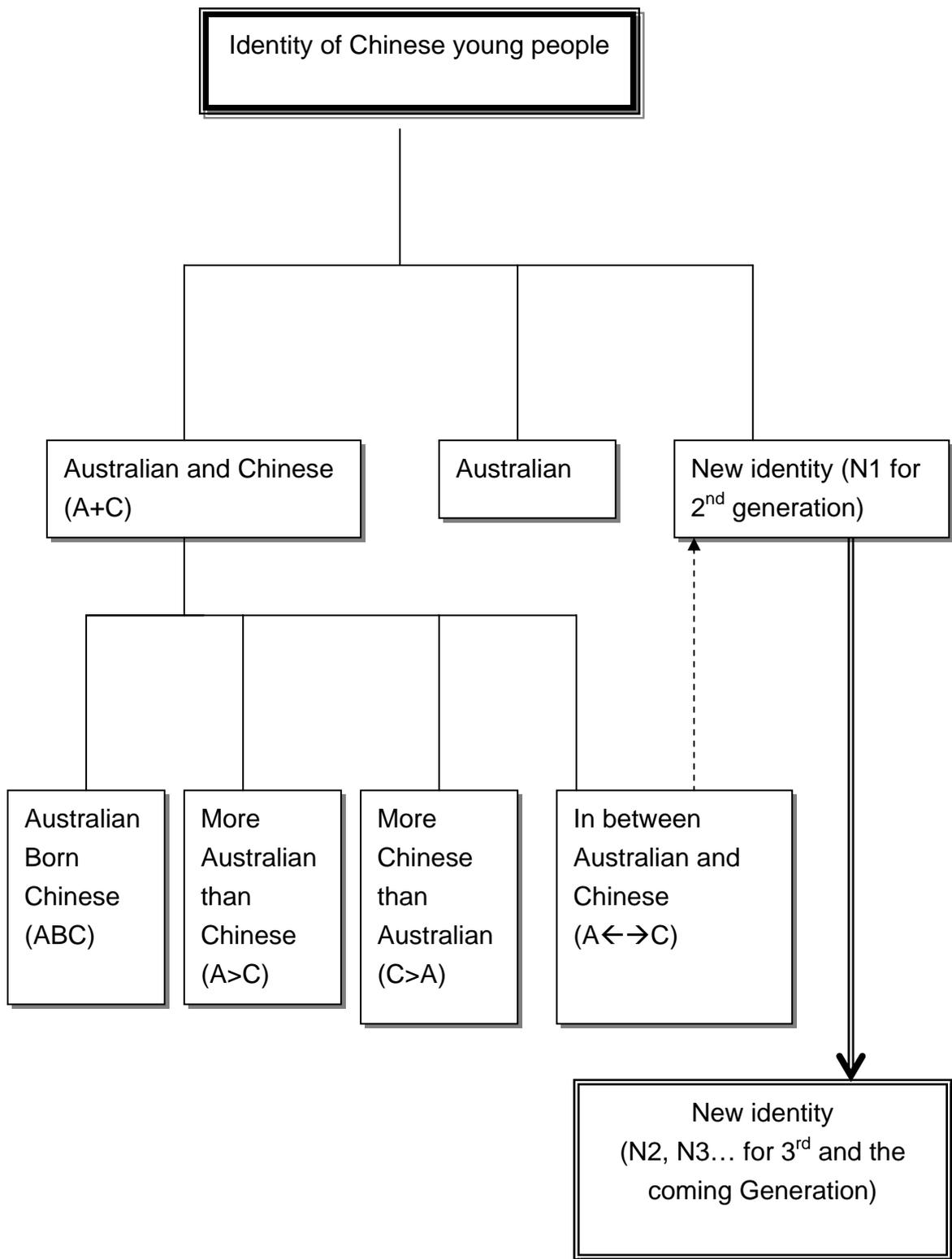
Figure 5.1. Modes of identity among Chinese young people

Section Two: The Factors that led to Different Identities

In the research reported in this thesis, as noted in the previous section, the factors that led to the "combination" identity of Australian and Chinese (A+C) were the place of birth, growing up environment, family background, peer influences and the adoption of cultural values including the spoken language and the values in their families and society. This identity also depended on who the enquirer was. For instance, the response to a Chinese person, who asked about their identity, would be different from that given to an Australian born person who asked the same question (Y7). For the Australian identity, the factors were place of birth, citizenship, and cultural values, while birthplace, the growing up environment and cultural values, including family background and the spoken language, were held accountable for the new identity (N1, N2 and so on). The cultural values, which accounted for the identity making of the participants and led to their distinctive spirituality, are shown in the following table (Table 5.1), and further discussed in this section.

Table 5.1

Factors that affected the Modes of Identity and that Accounted for their Spirituality from the Young Participants' Perspectives

	A Combination of Australian and Chinese identity: (a) Australian born Chinese (ABC), (b) more Chinese than Australian (C>A), (c) more Australian than Chinese (A>C), and (d) an in-between (A←→C)				An Australian Identity	A New Identity (N1, N2…)
Number of participants	2 ABC	2 C>A	4 A>C	2 A←→C	1	2
Birthplace in Australia	1	1	2	0	1	0
Peers	Chinese friends speaking not much Chinese	Chinese or Asian friends	Chinese or Asian friends	Chinese or Asian friends	Chinese and Australians	Chinese friends
Having a Sense of Belonging to the Place of Growing up (i.e. citizenship, educational institutions)	V V V	V	V V V	V V	V V V	V V
Cultural Values in Families (including the spoken language)	V Awareness of Chinese background	V V V Awareness of Chinese look, Chinese spoken at home and other Chinese values	V V	V V Awareness of Chinese background but Incompetence with Chinese language	V Chinese background	V
Cultural Values in the society (including the spoken language)	V V V	V V	V V V Australian values and the language used to speak	V V Awareness of Australian values and language	V V V	V V
At older age		V V V	V V			
At younger age			V V			
Who the enquirer is	V					

Key: 1. V – the factor was mentioned   2. V V – the factor was mentioned and regarded as important

    3. V V V – the factor was mentioned and regarded as very important

Cultural Values

During the individual interviews, eight of the ten young participants spoke of the cultural values that had affected their identity. Examples were as follows.

"I still uphold *Chinese values* and it's *not much of Australian values* (in me)." (Y1)

"I was brought up in Australia. I tend to be more of Australian culture…Chinese culture is pretty important…(but) Aussie values are more important to me" (Y2)

"My *actions* and my *beliefs* are *more westernised*… with *western behaviour*…I've *grown up in a western culture* and accepted the way of living, simple living, *unlike the Chinese culture*." (Y9)

It was observed that some of the young Chinese participants inherited the traditional cultures from their parents who still upheld Chinese values. Some young participants regarded Australian values as more important. Those who had adopted Chinese values tended to identify themselves as Chinese. Those who had adopted Australian culture felt that they were different from "normal" Chinese. On the whole, both Chinese and Australian cultures had played a role in their identity, and led to their distinctive spirituality.

Parents and their Chinese Cultural Values in the Family as Primary Factors

Parents and family background are regarded as the primary factors affecting the formation of young people's value system no matter to which ethnic group they belonged (Carr-Gregg & Shale, 2002; Milner, 1975; Wildermuth, 1990). In Chinese

society, Confucianism is deeply rooted and the family is regarded as the core of all relationships. It is the primary social group, as well as the prototype of all social organizations (Yung, 1997, 2000 reprinted, p.82; see also W. Chung, 2000). In the research reported in this thesis, it became clear that this was particularly true for the young participants. They identified as Chinese because they were born into a Chinese family or their ethnic background was Chinese. The family was thus one of the "auto-telic" experiences that helped the participants relate to their ethnicity (Secombe & Zajda, 1999, p.29). For example, one of the participants (Y6) asserted, "I cannot do anything about that as I was *born in a Chinese family* and I am *Chinese at heart*."

Conservative

It was important to note that in the young participants' perspectives, Chinese culture was seen as "more conservative" than the Australian culture, and that their Chinese parents were somehow "traditional Chinese". As one young participant (Y4) claimed, "To some extent, *they* (parents) are *traditional Chinese*." Some young participants felt that their Chinese parents were too conservative to be encouraging, as they seldom acknowledged their children for what they did. One young participant (Y2) asserted,

> "Chinese parents don't encourage their kids enough because it's *their culture not to praise their own kids*… if the kids are good the parents should praise them." (Y2)

Another young participant (Y4) suggested that Chinese parents were not used to showing their affection because of their conservative attitudes. Instead, they tried to show their love and care of their children by working hard to support the family and providing their children with a good education and living. As one of the young participants (Y6) claimed,

> "My dad, he is very *traditional Chinese orientated*. He *works hard* for his children. He does *not show his affection* or emotion much. He *shows* you *his love or care by doing work* for you." (Y6).

Some other young participants described their parents' being conservative such as stubborn (Y5), strict, rigid (Y1) and not open enough to new ideas (Y4).

Nevertheless, some young participants suggested that their parents were not too traditional, yet they preserved some Chinese customs and festivals, like those "conservative" parents did. For example, one of them (Y8) asserted,

> "My parents are not very traditional but still have some Chinese traditional customs… celebrating Chinese festivals."

Another young participant (Y7) claimed,

> "Dad is *conservative* and… *maintains Chinese customs and values*, such as going back to Hong Kong once a year or two for Chinese New Year." (Y7)

Within the young participants' families, there were observed certain Chinese customs, such as that they were used to eating Chinese food (Y2, Y9, Y10) and watching

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Chinese television (Y2). The young participants also observed certain table manners in the Chinese tradition, such as to "hold the chopsticks properly or get hit" (Y5), and "not to go across other people" to pick the food from the dishes (Y2). It was particularly important for members of the same family to come home for dinner. One young participant (Y9) asserted that the "Chinese norms for the role of a son or daughter such as not to come home late at night… come home for dinner or inform parents beforehand for not coming home." Another young participant (Y10) added that if children, especially the daughters, went out, they had to tell the parents the details. However, some girls were not allowed to go out at night (Y8). These customs and norms, which were taught to the young participants since they were born, made them feel "Chinese".

Honouring parents in different ways

Within their family tradition, honouring parents was perceived as very important (Y6). Children were taught to respect their parents and elderly people. The father figure was regarded as the head of the family, as illustrated in one young participant's (Y5) assertion, "*Father as the head of the family in traditional Chinese culture.*" All family members had to show respect to their parents, particularly to the father. For example, one young participant (Y5) stressed that she had to greet her father "*everyday say, 'Good morning' and 'Good night'*". As well as this, some young

participants observed that their parents always wanted "the best" (Y4), and that they

tried to get everything right (Y1). It was suggested that the parents tended "to work

hard and then play hard" (Y7). This was reflected in the parents' expectations of their

children, as a Chinese saying that the parents "expect the son to be a dragon"[18]. When

the young participants felt that the parents always wanted the best, this became a

pressure on those who did not want to disappoint their parents. One of the young

participants (Y10) reflected, *"Sometimes if I am not like doing well, I feel that I*

should try harder." Some other young participants felt that their parents were too

strict about their schoolwork, which made them become stressed:

> "Most Chinese parents would *push… their children to achieve high academic*
> *performance…* That's quite *stressful* for the children." (Y9)

Hence, in some of the young participants' perspectives, their parents were seen

as conservative, introverted, self-restricted, stubborn, rigid, afraid to lose face, and

tended to work for the best. This often caused pressure for the young participants.

Interpersonal relationships

Moreover, inter-personal relationships were observed as the most important of

all values. This began with respecting the parents: "Honouring parents is important"

(Y6), especially the "*father*" (Y5). Some young participants recalled their parents'

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[18] A Chinese saying, 望子成龍 (expecting the son to be a dragon), which means the parents expect
their children to attain high achievements.

teaching that children had to look after parents when they got older (Y4, Y8). This reflected a common concept within Chinese families, which extended to the relationship with those around them. The young Chinese participants were taught to "show respect to the elder generation" (Y9), and say "Hi" to "*aunties*" and "*uncles*" who are not really relatives (Y9, Y2, Y3). In their perspectives, inter-personal relationships were hierarchical, as shown in the words of one young participant (Y7), "Teachers are up there and students are down here." In this sense, children were always under the protection of their parents, and students, under the supervision of teachers, until they began to work, when they became adults: "When you are in high school, you are still a child. When you are graduated, you may be more mature because you are considering to work" (Y6). Although some of them claimed that their culture was different from their parents', they remained submissive to their parents.

Hence, in the research reported in this thesis, it was observed that from their parents and families, the young participants inherited some of the traditional Chinese cultural values, if not all. They were taught certain cultural values and customs, some of which had come to form their identity and shape their spirituality. As one of the young participants (Y2) acknowledged, Chinese customs were important, "*because it is part of who you are.*"

Australian Values Which Affected The Life Style Of Chinese Young People

Birthplace and the environment in which they grew up

For the young participants in the research reported in this thesis, the birthplace

and the environment in which they were brought up were regarded as key factors that

contributed to an Australian identity. All the ten young participants identified

themselves more or less as Australian. Some examples of their assertions were as

follows:

"I tend to be more of *Australian* as *born in Australia*." (Y2)
"I see myself as *an Australian*…because this is *where I grow up*." (Y3)
"Because we *live here* and I call *Australia* my home… I was *born here* and I
have been *taught the values*... I think that's *predominant what I am*." (Y4)

As Welsh (1999) suggests, people relate their identity with their homeland that can be

far away (see also Crotty, 1992, Clarke & Hunt, 1992). In this case, the meaning of

"homeland" to the young participants was different from their parents. For example,

one young participant (Y9) claimed, "*Probably my parents were grown up in Chinese*

country...(but) *I've grown up in a western culture*." Eight of the young participants

mentioned their place of birth and upbringing when they identified themselves as

Australian (Y2, Y3, Y4, Y5, Y6, Y7, Y9, Y10). This suggested that the birthplace and

environment in which they were brought up and taught cultural values affected their

identity. Other studies concur that birthplace and citizenship is the main criterion of

belonging to the country (Castles, Foster, Iredale, & Withers, 1998; Secombe, & Zajda, 1999; Tran, 2000). In this case, the "homeland" culture of these Chinese young people was definitely Australian, which led to their identify of Australian.

The characteristics of Australian culture, in the perspectives of the young participants, were suggested as carefree (Y1), expressive (Y6), open (Y5), simple style of living (Y9), relaxed (Y2, Y10) and encouraging in education (Y2), and a "fair-go" for everyone (Y4). As other research indicates, informality and individualistic style are Australian cultural characteristics (Bentley, Blombery, & Hughes, 1992; Secombe & Zajda, 1999). For example, people call each other by first names, but the Chinese "*will find it offensive*" (Y3). The teacher-student relationship was not so distant in Australian culture, as it is in Chinese. Students "*can make friends with the teacher and joke with them*" (Y7).

Openness – one of the Characteristics of Australian culture

Openness was one of the characteristics of Australian culture that helped them to identify as Australian. One young participant (Y5) felt herself part of Australian culture, as evidenced in her use of the first person plural "we" in the following assertion,

"We show the kind of *Australian culture* in how we act like we are more open to everything." (Y5).

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The young participant (Y5) felt that she was open just like other Australians. Australian parents were regarded as more open than Chinese, or at least not as conservative as Chinese. One of the examples given was that they let their children stay out late at night: "Like the Australian friends, they can go to parties late at night" (Y8). The emphasis on individual freedom with less rigid parental authority was particularly admired by some of the young participants. One young participant (Y9) added,

> "You can have your say and you can do what you want…It's different in the western culture that you can go out as long as you get your work done it's fine…They just let the children do what they like." (Y9)

In some of the young participants' perspectives, Australian parents were more encouraging in regard to their children's education and would not focus only on their homework:

> "(Australian parents are) *more lay back* in educating children; *more different ways of teaching* and lots of *encouragement*." (Y2)
> "They (Australian parents) *wouldn't be* just like *worried* about their *homework*." (Y8)

Expressive – another characteristic of Australian culture

Moreover, Australian parents were perceived as more expressive. One young participant (Y6) pointed out that "in a lot of Australian families, the parents hug their children every night". The expressiveness was also seen in Australian churches.

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People in Australian churches were more likely to show their affection than in the Chinese churches. As another young participant (Y4) claimed, "Other churches who are non-Asian and they may be more likely to show their affections in a brotherly and sisterly way."

Fairness

Furthermore, in the perspectives of the young participants, there was fairness in Australian values and everyone was given a fair go:

"School teaches *equal opportunity*, like treat each other *fairly*." (Y1)
"Like Australians, *there is always a fair-go*." (Y4).

One young participant (Y1) suggested that Australian society was very accepting and people of different races were treated in the same way: "In general Australians are very *accepting*… I'm *not affected by skin colour* or anything". The young participants admired the above characteristics of Australian cultural values, which accounted for the Australian elements in their identity.

Rejecting some Australian permissive values

However, two young participants claimed that they could not agree with some Australian permissive values and would not be influenced by them:

"Australian values believe abortion, they believe sex before marriage, and something like that, and that sort of believing that every teenager they can go

through a phase of drugs and parties and something like that and I wouldn't believe." (Y1)

"We were always being taught some Australian permissive values are not good, like child abortion, sex before marriage and so on. I always believe as not the right thing to do. Even though we have been surrounded by Australian values, it doesn't mean that I am going to be influenced." (Y4)

Both of them suggested that church teachings had prevented them from accepting some Australian permissive values:

"I think church does a lot to help me." (Y1)

"Because I have been in the church… it's the teaching that have affected how I think… we had small groups… we had more discussions on issues (Australian permissive values)." (Y4)

However, some of the young participants argued that there were some common values in both Australian and Chinese culture. One young participant (Y8) suggested that Australian parents were like Chinese parents. Children were taught to support their parents when they got older. Like the Chinese, Australians were seen to value family life, and they spent even more time with the family than those Chinese parents in Hong Kong. As one young participant (Y1) claimed, "(There is a) strong family bond by having more family time compared with Hong Kong people."

Nevertheless, in the research reported in this study, all the young participants had adopted at least some Australian values, and this helped to account for their distinctive spirituality.

Language as One of the Core Values that affected Identity

Language is one of the core values within the cultural group and is regarded as the main vehicle of cultural transmission (Barker, 1999). Its value is not only a means of communication but also a means of communion (Barker, 1999; Secombe & Zajda, 1999). In the research reported in this thesis, it had played a very important role in the formation of the young participants' identity.

For some young participants in the research, speaking Chinese was a symbol of their identity within their cultural group. When they could not master the Chinese language, their Chinese identity was "not culturally complete" (Secombe & Zajda, 1999, p.65; see also Brown, 1998; Rogers, 1972). For example, one young participant (Y2) claimed, "*I can't see myself as a completely Chinese because I can't speak the language very well.*" They tended to see themselves more as Australians because they spoke in an Australian way: "*I can't read Chinese, I can barely speak or I can speak it but not very well. ... I am Australian because the way I talk, the accent*" (Y7).

For those who identified as Chinese, speaking the language was particularly important: "*I look Chinese, if I can't speak Chinese, it's pretty terrible*" (Y1). Since they could speak the language, they identified with other Chinese friends from overseas: "*I speak the language; I can communicate with other Chinese people*" (Y9). Hence, the degree of identification with the culture depended on what language they

spoke and how well they mastered the language.

Statistics show that most of the Chinese second generation speak English well (ABS, 2003), and about 70% of those Australians who claimed Chinese ancestry were proficient in both English and Chinese (ABS, 2001 December). The second generation of Chinese young people in Australia may be expected to speak both Chinese and English well. However, in the research reported in this thesis, nine of the ten young participants claimed that their main spoken language was English, while the other one, half Chinese and half English. Among those nine young participants, three spoke Chinese to their parents but English to their family members and friends. One claimed that the parents spoke to him in Chinese but he spoke to them and his friends in English. The other five young participants spoke some Chinese to their parents but English to the other family members and friends. These young participants were not able to speak Chinese well. The structure of the spoken language at home was a mixture of Chinese and English. An example is given as follows:

"今朝 (This morning), I went to school to 交功課 (hand in my homework)." (Y6)

Therefore, there was a tendency to lose their mother tongue, Chinese, among the young participants. Instead, they spoke mainly English. For a language-centred culture, such as Chinese, the language serves as a carrier of the culture. Thus, the loss

of native tongue tends to weaken the transmission of the culture to the later generation (Barker, 1999). In the case of this research, among those who spoke both languages, some did not speak Chinese well. In their families, usually the parents spoke Chinese to their children while six of the ten young participants who attended the individual interviews spoke to their parents in English or a combination of English and Chinese (Y2, Y3, Y4, Y6, Y7, Y8). Three of them spoke Chinese to their parents, while they spoke English to their other family members and friends. One claimed that she spoke the language depending on to whom she spoke (Y5). Since speaking the language is regarded as a cultural bond, for some participants, the transmission of Chinese culture was weakened when they lost their mother tongue. However, for those who could master both languages well, there would be an additional culture.

To conclude, all ten young participants had been to Chinese school in order to learn the Chinese language when they were small. When they were growing up, some of them began speaking both languages, Chinese and English, with English becoming the dominant language. They experienced a shift in their spoken language at home, at least, and the shift in the spoken language had led to certain cultural shifts in their identity. Therefore, some perceived themselves "in between" the two cultures. Some tended to be more Australian, and some became the new "Australian".

Physical Appearance

Research studies show that some Chinese young people who assimilate with western society have a feeling of being held back because of their appearance, while some do not (Tran, 2000). In this study, three of the young participants (Y1, Y8, Y9) were held back from identifying as Australian because of their appearance:

"When older, began to aware of Chinese origin because of the Chinese look…
You just see by appearance." (Y8)

However, five of the ten young participants did not mention their appearance in discussion of their identity. One young participant (Y6) was aware of her Chinese background, and even though this background included appearance, it did not make her feel more Chinese:

"I am an Asian, a Chinese... and I am Chinese at heart. Because I have been raised in Australian environment and I am the citizen. It doesn't make me very Chinese." (Y6)

Another young participant (Y3) identified himself as Australian, regardless of his Chinese background that included appearance: "Because this is where I grow up. I say my background was Chinese but I am Australian." As studies claim the appearance of a person is becoming less important in considering their identity. A person "can be accepted as Australian" despite his or her physical appearance (Secombe & Zajda, 1999, p.35; see also Tran, 2000).

Peer Influence: Lose or Retain the Chinese Culture

Peer influence was another important factor affecting the perception of identity among the young participants. Two of them pointed out that friends from the same background shared the same culture:

"A lot of my friends were born here with Asia background or they came here when they were very young… we share the same type of culture." (Y5)

"I feel more comfortable when I am with Asian friends… It's like we have the same background and we look like the same. The background is like Asian background, the way we grew up." (Y10)

Another young participant (Y9) stressed that because of his friends, he wanted to learn more about his ethnic culture and the language. As he had both Australian and Chinese friends, he identified himself as both Australian and Chinese: "I can fit in both Australian and Chinese, having both groups of friends" (Y9). One young participant (Y7) suggested that he would identify himself as either Australian or Chinese depending on who asked the question: "If Chinese people asking me, I'll say I am Chinese, I'll say I am Australian because the way I talk, the accent and anything I am Australian. And there are a lot of Australian values in me also…It depends on the situation."   As Slee (2002) suggests, young people need their peers to rationalize their individual behaviour, and their peer groups are regarded as a framework for their shared identity. In this case, peer group influences were seen as important in the

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identity of the participants.

Age Factor

In the research reported in this thesis, the young Chinese participants were between fifteen and eighteen years old and were in the stage of adolescence. Two of them (Y1, Y8) claimed that they had identified themselves more as Australian when they were at a younger age, but then more as Chinese when they were growing older:

> "When I was *younger*, I thought I was *more Australian* (age factor)…when *older*, began to *aware of the Chinese* origin because of the Chinese look." (Y8)

When asked about their close friends at the time of the interviews, seven of the ten young participants who attended the individual interviews claimed that their close friends were Chinese. Two said that their best friends were Asians, while one had a few Asians and more Australians as close friends. On the whole, the close friends of the ten young participants were either Chinese or Asian, while one had a few Australian close friends. As Dusek (1996) suggests, the ethnic group membership becomes increasingly important during adolescence. This is particularly true when the individuals are more frequently in contact with their ethnic cultural groups, for example, in church settings. They may feel more related to the friends within their ethnic groups (Featherstone, 1995; Wallman, 1983). This was evident in regard to most of the Chinese young people who participated in this research.

Summary: Factors of Identity

The factors, which affected the identity of the young participants, have been shown in the table provided at the beginning of this section (Table 5.1). In summary, the factors that contributed to Australian identity were the place of birth, citizenship, and the cultural values, including Australian and Chinese. For the combination of Australian and Chinese identity, the factors were the birthplace, the environment in which they grew up, peers and cultural values, such as their family background and their spoken language. It should be noted that this identity was not static, and was communicated in different ways according to the enquirer. The factors leading to the new identity were the birthplace, peer influences and cultural values, as well as the language. It is important to note that a new identity emerged regardless of the participants having a Chinese appearance.

Section Three: A Process of Cultural Shifts

A Dual Set of Cultural Value System

As noted before, Australia has become a multicultural country with people coming from more than one hundred and sixty nations. Cultural diversity is regarded as positive and the population is composed of immigrants from many places. Among individual members from a minority ethnic culture, there are two or more

corresponding sets of cultural values (Khan, 1983; Wallman, 1983), which are linked

to their homeland and to the country in which they have settled (Castles et al., 1998;

see also Castles & Miller, 2003).

Among the younger generation, cultural renewal affects the value systems.

They reinterpret and modify their heritage in order to re-construct their value systems

(Secombe & Zajda, 1999, p.24; see also Hughes, 2002). This involves a process of

cultural shifts in which the two sets of cultural values undergo interactions within the

individuals (Welsh, 1999). Either one is dominant, or both are approximately equal in

activating the personal value system (Khan, 1983; Secombe & Zajda, 1999), and thus

leading to a new value system (Castles & Miller, 2003; Castles et al, 1998). A

sequence for the formation of a new value system suggested by Secombe and Zajda

(1999, p.128) is that, first, there is a group value system. Then, individuals make use

of the values in their own way to construct a personal value system. Finally, there is a

transition from conceptual evaluation of a value into a concrete act in form of a

tendency. The young participants in the research reported in this thesis were born in

the Chinese families and brought up in Australian society. There were two groups of

cultural values (A+C) within the young participants who tried to construct their own

value system by making use of those values in specific ways. Thus, a new identity

tended to be created.

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Factors that led to Dual Value System (A+C)

In a multicultural society, people show their affiliation to their ethnic groups even though they are far away from their homeland (Welsh, 1999), or have little knowledge of it (Secombe & Zajda, 1999). For the second generation of Chinese young people in a multicultural society, the cultural value system is different from the generation before them (J. Lewis, 2002). Theoretically, they can construct their own cultural systems by drawing upon a variety of cultural values in a multicultural society (Hughes, 2002). In the research reported in this thesis, there were Chinese cultural values in the identity of the ten Chinese young people who participated in the individual interviews, as well as Australian values. A process of cultural interactions was observed, and there emerged a dual value system that led to the three main categories of identity, as discussed earlier in this chapter. All of the ten participants believed that they had adopted, more or less, the two sets of cultural values. Some were aware of the cultural interactions within them, and some were not.

For instance, one of the young participants (Y7), who at first identified himself as both Australian and Chinese, claimed later in the individual interview that he would identify himself as Australian:

"*I would say both* (Australian and Chinese identity)…The Australian is very attractive because I was raised up here (but) I do believe in Chinese customs and stuff because it's very important… Sometimes, *I'll say I am Australian* (shift

from identity of "both" Australian and Chinese to the identity of Australian because) because the way I talk, the assent and *I am Australian* (Australian identity)." (Y7)

Another at first claimed that she did not fit into either side of her cultural identity. She could not identify herself completely as Chinese, but she could not identify herself completely as Australian either. However, later she concluded that she was an "in-between" (Y6). She was in the process of an identity shift, from the identity of "*neither one*" shifting to the identity of "*in-between*". In her case, she finally chose the "*in-between*" identity but in fact she was not quite sure of her identity:

> "Because I have been raised in Australian environment…it doesn't make me very Chinese. In fact, I *don't fit in either side* (neither one). I had a chance to go back to Hong Kong years ago. I felt like a very European, as I did not speak Chinese well and everybody knows that you are from overseas. I am an *in-between* (in-between)." (Y6)

On the one hand, these young participants upheld some Chinese culture and customs. On the other hand, they were taught Australian cultural values, as they were born or had grown up in Australia. During the process of cultural interaction, the individuals tended to identify more with the cultural values they adopted.

Another young participant (Y5), at first, claimed that she had her own culture. Then, she identified herself as "Australian Chinese" because she was an "Australian citizen" and had "the kind of Australian culture", but "having a Chinese background".

That Australian Chinese identity thus indicated an Australian way of living with her

Chinese background. However, later she identified herself as "a new generation of

Chinese", who would eventually become "multicultural" (Y5).

> "Because I am *a new generation of Chinese*. I feel that a lot of Chinese, they do
> have their Chinese culture but… have adapted to the ways of Australian living…
> as new generations come… *eventually all the Asians will probably become*
> *multicultural*." (Y5)

In her perspective, Chinese young people adopted cultural traits from both Chinese

and Australian cultures. Yet, each of the cultures tended to draw the individual away

from identifying with the other. As a result, they could not identify themselves

completely as either one (Y6).

A multicultural society allows variation in interest, belief and heritage; young

people are free to create their own identity (J. Lewis, 2002). Hence, as found in the

research reported in this thesis, a new culture was created by mixing the two cultures

together, leading to a new identity that would be different for each succeeding

generation.

Struggling with Identity

The research reported in this thesis suggests that the young participants

struggled with their identity due to the certain specific factors. The first of these was

age. At a younger age, some young participants had identified more as Australian. As

they grew older, their identity shifted back to their ethnic origin: "*When I was younger,*

I thought I was more Australian... But now (getting older), *I know I am Chinese by*

origin" (Y8).

A further factor was place of birth and upbringing. Those who were born or

had grown up in Australia identified as an "in between", indicating certain identity

confusion. They could not make a choice between Chinese and Australian, but

struggled with which one to choose.

Language was the third factor. When the language was well spoken, they

identified more as Chinese. Otherwise, they identified themselves less as Chinese:

> "I speak and understand Chinese… If I can't speak Chinese, it's pretty terrible…
> it's definitely important for me to speak Chinese and understand Chinese." (Y1)
> "I can't see myself as a completely Chinese because I can't speak the language
> well." (Y2).

A Significance of Incompleteness

In the research reported in this thesis, the dual value system was observed

among all the ten young participants, including the one who identified himself as

Australian with a Chinese background. They were aware of the two cultural value

systems within themselves, but the proportion of the combination varied from person

to person. For example, *"I am more Australian than Chinese"* (Y4); *"I see myself as*

Chinese, but a bit Australian" (Y2). In the combination of the two cultural

components, there was no equal basis but the combination in all kinds of proportions was the norm in this postmodern world (Secombe & Zajda, 1999; Welsh, 1999), and incompleteness was significant in the process of establishing their identity (Barker, 1999; Grossberg, 1996, 1997 reprinted).

Some young participants did not perceive themselves as "completely Chinese" (Y2, Y6) while some saw themselves as not a "complete" Australian. For example, one of the participants (Y8) claimed, "I am Australian but deep down I am Chinese... Like you just see by the appearance." In the process of cultural shifts, they felt affiliated with their ethnic group, but they experienced a sense of inadequacy (Crotty, 1992). The reason is either that they were unable to live up to the expectations of their group members, or they felt detached from the mainstream of their culture and traditions (Crotty, 1992; Secombe & Zajda, 1999). They might be affiliated with their ethnic groups, but they felt inadequate about their identity as Chinese mainly because of age, language, birthplace, and their growing up environment. Similarly, reasons for the feelings of inadequate Australian identity were age, language, and their ethnic background.

A New Australian Identity

In Australia, people tend to regard culture and values rather than appearance as important in their identity (Secombe & Zajda, 1999; Tran, 2000). This was evident in

one of the ten young participants (Y3) who identified himself as Australian regardless of his Chinese background:

> "Because this is where I grow up. I say my background was Chinese but I am Australian." (Y3)

In considering his Australian identity, key factors were Australian citizenship and the educational institutions, which had fostered his sense of belonging to the country and shaped his ways of living. This "Australian" identity was a complexity of cultural integrations, in which the "Chinese" components had been modified and adapted to the new identity of "Australian". It is suggested that this may be a choice made by Chinese young people, as well as young people from various countries and regions with different skin colour and appearance, who share the same environment and have common experiences within Australian society (Castles et al., 1998; Tran, 2000).

Therefore, even though some young participants identified themselves as having a new identity, or an Australian identity, this did not mean that they were no longer affected by Chinese values. Their ethnic background, including their appearance, was acknowledged as a part of their new Australian identity.

A New Multicultural Identity

When the two cultures, Chinese and Australian, are put together in the process of cultural interaction, a new cultural value system is eventually formed, and this

leads to a new identity (Castles, & Miller, 2003; Castles et al., 1998; Dixson, 1999; J.

Lewis, 2002). For the young participants, a new identity in this multicultural society

was under construction:

"I am a new generation of Chinese, different from Chinese and Australian culture… Here is my culture… I don't see that I have a bit of Chinese and a bit of Australian culture. I see I have my culture…we are a bit of mixture… but we can't say that it's Australian Chinese culture…I think I make up my own culture in mixing the two." (Y5)

As Dixson (1999, p.17) claims, Australia affirms a core culture with a

"complex ethnic dynamic", one that enables people to hold together in this

postmodern world of fragmentation. This is a time of cultural regrouping and identity

reconstruction, particularly for the new generation (Dixson, 1999; Secombe & Zajda,

1999). People can reconstruct a new identity by retrieving the cultural elements and

values from present and past traditions, or whatever is desirable (Castles & Miller,

2003; Dixson, 1999; J. Lewis, 2002). However, the new identity tends to be under

renewal and reconstruction generation after generation, based on a shared

environment and common experiences (Castles et al., 1998; Tran, 2000). One of the

respondents suggested that their "Chinese culture" will "deteriorate" in some way as

each new generation comes and a new identity will emerge (Y5). The new identity

would be an identity derived from multiculturalism:

"I feel that a lot of Chinese, they do have their Chinese culture, but then they

have adapted to the ways of Australian living and so like they have a bit of Chinese culture still but it's deteriorating as new generations come…Eventually all Asians…will become multicultural." (Y5)

Section Four: An Implication – A "Multicultural" identity

Australia is a multicultural society (Jupp, 2001), with one quarter of the population coming from non-English speaking backgrounds (Secombe & Zajda, 1999). With a government policy of multiculturalism irrespective of immigrant intakes (Castles & Miller, 1998; Jupp, 2001), this supports ethnic community cultural organizations and encourages a diversity of language. The various cultures can "co-exist" and be "preserved" (Yetman, 1985, p.221), which is crucial to the development of Australian identity (Tran, 2000). Compared with the "melting pot" policy in USA, the multicultural policy of Australia is different.

In a "melting-pot" policy, such as that of the USA, immigrants are expected to assimilate into society by giving up their distinct linguistic and cultural characteristics, and this results in no ethnic differences in the society (Gans, 1985; Yetman, 1985). Some have argued that this assimilation policy has failed to take account of their cultural traditions and social situations (Secombe & Zajda, 1999; see also Castles & Miller, 1998). In the case of Chinese young people in the USA, they have assimilated into the host society and they are Americans (Gordon, 1985), though their parents are

said to be culturally exclusive (Lyman, 1985). Gans (1985) claims, these Chinese young people do not need to know about their traditional Chinese culture as they assimilate to the American society. Their ethnic cultures have become "an ancestral memory" or "exotic tradition", only to be remembered once in a while (Gans, 1985, p.433). Hence, Chinese young people in USA are described as "banana" (Yung, 1997, 2000 reprinted). They have the appearance of Chinese (yellow skin) but inside them it is the American value system (core values of white people) since they have assimilated to the society.

In the case of Chinese people in Australia, statistics show that the first generation of Chinese people outnumbers the second generation (ABS, 2003a), although there has been Chinese settlement in Australia for more than a century. This is mainly due to the great increase of Chinese immigrants during the past decades. Moreover, among those of Chinese ancestry in Australia, most people (79.6%) speak a language other than English at home (ABS, 2003a). As language is the main vehicle for the transmission of culture (Barkers, 1999), most Chinese young people inherit at least some Chinese culture from their families. On the other hand, they are also under the influence of the Australian culture, while they speak the language of the society, English. Their identity is thus in the "transcultural" position, in which both Chinese and Australian culture are linked together and undergo a process of cultural transition

(Welsh, 1999, p.200; see also Castles & Miller, 1998).

Young people of the minority groups can construct their own cultural systems by drawing cultural values from both majority and minority groups. They may select some of their ethnic cultural traditions that link to their parents' homeland, and modify them by juxtaposing them with the cultural values of the country where they live in (Secombe & Zajda, 1999, p.262; see also Castles & Miller, 1998). In this way, a new identity is formed in a process of cultural shifts, in which both cultural values interact with each other Castles & Miller, 2003). While multiple identities have become common particularly in the "global cities" (Castles & Miller, 1998, p.297; see also Featherstone, 1995), such as Sydney and Melbourne, a new identity is emerging in Australia (Castles et al., 1998). As found in the research reported in this thesis, there emerged a new type of identity among the young participants, a multicultural identity, which may be illustrated, to use a popular metaphor, as a "hamburger" or "sandwich" (M. Chung, 2004 September) (see Figure 5.2)!
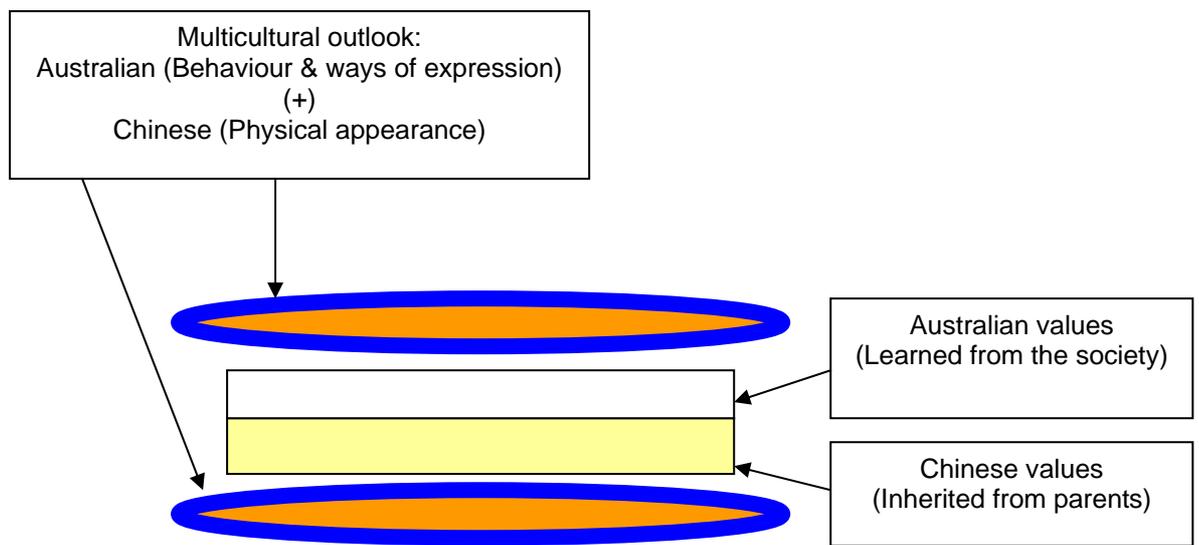
Figure 5.2. A multicultural identity: A sandwich/ hamburger of deli-choice identity

The multicultural identity in Figure 5.2 is different from that "banana" of the melting pot identity described earlier. This "sandwich" model of identity suggests that in an Australian multicultural context, the ethnic outlook of an individual is one among many various ethnic groups. The significance of this multicultural identity is that within a multicultural society, it is the culture and values that are important for identity formation, rather than their appearance. For Chinese young people in Australian society, appearance may prevent them from identifying "completely" as Australian. Yet, in the situation of the multicultural context where various ethnic groups co-exist, the Chinese appearance becomes *non-distinctive* among the

multicultural outlooks. What makes the identity of Chinese young people distinctive is the internal cultural interactions between Chinese and Australian cultural values, which leads to a dual identity (A+C) or a new identity, as has been suggested in the research reported in this thesis.

To conclude, Australia is a young nation with a multi-ethnic society. Most Chinese people in Australia are only in the second generation, while those in United States have already come to the third and further generations. The identity of Chinese young people in Australia is distinctive from that in USA, because they are in the situation of a multicultural context that "allows" their identity to be "distinct".

Conclusion: Identity Formation Contributes to A Distinctive Spirituality

In the research design for this thesis, it was decided not to use a contrast group of non-Chinese young people, because it was believed that the variety of methods used and the qualitative nature of the study made this unnecessary. However, the conclusion of this chapter needs to be understood within the framework and limitations of the research design. Entering the twenty-first century, Australian society is under the impact of a post-traditional social order (Hughes, 2002). With a special emphasis on individualism, young people are free to create their own cultures in terms of ways of life (Hughes, 2002) and construct their own identity (J. Lewis, 2002).

Welsh (1999) claims, that the old concept of culture misrepresents the actual form of cultures, and even the structure of individuals' identities and lifestyles. In the case of the Chinese young people interviewed for this research, their culture was not the same as their parents', and their identity was in a process of cultural shift, in which both Chinese and Australian cultural values underwent interactions. In summary, three main categories of identity were found, a combination of Australian and Chinese identity, the new Australian identity and a new multicultural identity. The factors affecting the identity of the young participants were both Chinese and Australian cultural values, appearance, language, peer influences, and age. Whether they identified more as Chinese or more with Australian cultural values depended on which cultural values they had preferred to adopt. In the multicultural society of Australia, ethnic groups maintain their own cultures and language as distinct communities (Castles & Miller, 1998). As J. Lewis (2002) suggests, identity is in relation to the culture within which the individual functions. Hence, the identity of Chinese young people in a multicultural context, such as Australia, embraces their own ethnic cultural values, more or less, as well as the cultural values of the society. One of the findings of the research reported in this thesis is that there appears to be a new Australian identity, a multicultural identity, among the Chinese young people who took part in the interviews. This identity contributes to the spiritual formation of Chinese young

people and leads to a distinctive spirituality.

The following chapters will further discuss the parents' worldview and cultural values (chapter six), as well as the role of their church community, as a cultural institution (chapter seven), which has shaped their spirituality. How far had their parents' worldview and cultural values, as well as their Church community, influenced their identity formation? The next two chapters address the aim of the research reported in this thesis, to discover and analyse the cultural characteristics that affected the spirituality of Chinese young people in the designated church, and then the final chapter (chapter eight) will propose ways which churches and families may encourage the development of spirituality for Chinese young people in a multicultural society.

CHAPTER SIX

THE ROLE OF PARENTS - WORLDVIEW AND CULTURAL VALUES

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings in relation to the first aim of the research

reported in this thesis, which was to discover and analyse the cultural aspects of

Chinese background that affected the spirituality of the Chinese young people. As

noted in the review of literature contained in chapter two, parents and family played a

particularly important role in the identity formation of the young people, thus helping

to shape their spirituality. The purpose of this chapter is (a) to describe the parents'

spirituality, and (b) to discuss the parents' worldviews and cultural values, which in

part led to the distinctive spirituality of the Chinese young people.

Altogether eleven parents participated in the interviews. Among these parents,

two couples took part in the interviews together, while the other seven parents

participated in the interviews individually. All of the parents were the first generation

of their family who had come to Australia, and they all identified themselves as

Christians. At the time of the interviews, they had been attending the church for more

than ten years. Most of their children were born in Australia or had been in Australia

since early childhood. The first section of this chapter discusses the parents'

worldviews and cultural values. The second section focuses on the parents'

spirituality and their perspectives on the spirituality of the next generation. The third

discusses the distinctive spirituality of Chinese young people as influenced by their

parents' worldviews and cultural values.

Section One: Parents' Worldview and Cultural Values

As illustrated in chapter two of this thesis, parents and family are one of the

most important factors affecting young people's identity, which shapes their

spirituality. According to Kraft (1996), worldview is the heart of a culture, and it

consists of paradigmatic assumptions, valuations and allegiances that underlie the

culture. Thus, in the research reported in this thesis, studying the parents' worldview

and cultural values was important in order to understand how they think and reason,

as well as the patterns of their motivations and predispositions (Kraft, 1996). This

section aims to describe and discuss the parents' worldview and cultural values that

affected their own spirituality in order to assess their influence on the spirituality of

the young people.

Past Oriented and Conservative

As noted in chapter two, one of the characteristics of the traditional Chinese

worldview is that it is past oriented (Li, 1994; Wei, 1971). There is a strong desire to

preserve traditional values and modes of living and a tendency to resist change. This is reflected in their ancestor worship, parenting models, family ties, interpersonal relationships and religious beliefs (W. Chung, 2000). Ancestor worship is particularly important because its function is to have the family line continued (M. G. Wong, 1988). The parents who participated in the interviews did not worship ancestors as gods. However, they encouraged the young generation to remember their ancestors during special occasions. They also tried to retain some Chinese traditions and customs, although they might not celebrate many festivals after they settled in Australia. For example, one parent (P8) asserted, "In Chinese Lunar New Year, we have red pockets[19]. Like in Mid Autumn Festival, we have moon cakes… Yet we don't celebrate the festivals much, but in a very simple way." Another parent (P9) claimed, "We don't have many customs at home. Sometimes, when there are Chinese festivals… I'll call all the brothers and sisters back home together and have dinner…In the Chinese New Year, we give out red pockets…and for Winter Festival, we gather around and have dinner." The parents tended to preserve some traditional customs and values by celebrating some festivals, although not as much as before. This suggested a past-oriented and conservative worldview (M. G. Wong, 1988).

Furthermore, the retention of Chinese language characterised conservatism, as

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[19] Red pocket is a small red envelop. In Chinese traditional culture, people put some money into a small red envelop and give it to their children, and the children of their relatives and friends in Chinese New Year. They believe that the red pockets bring good luck and blessings to the children.

it became a lineage solidarity that functioned as a link between the past and present

(M. G. Wong, 1988). In the research reported in this thesis, the parents observed that

retaining the Chinese language was important. All the parents who participated in the

interviews sent their children to learn Chinese language, or encouraged them, at least,

to speak some Chinese at home. The following were examples of their assertions:

> "In this church, most of the young people went to Chinese language school when they were small." (P1)
> "I don't really expect them to speak very good Chinese but they should be able to communicate with the elderly… I took my son to the Chinese school in the first eight years." (P4)
> "When they were very small, I brought them to the Chinese school…at home I urge them to speak Chinese." (P5)

In addition, among the parents, it was believed that the young generation

would want to relate to the past. They observed that learning the Chinese language

would be an advantage for the young people, and would allow them to seek the roots

of Chinese culture when they grew older. For example, one parent (P6) suggested,

"The history and the literature of Chinese should be taught to them… when they grow

older, they may have the opportunities to make contact with other Chinese people and

they may go to find their 'roots'." Another parent (P5) agreed, "We are Chinese and

have the root of Chinese. When we grow older, we may want to find our root and

learn Chinese." Therefore, the parents tried to provide opportunities for the young

generation in learning Chinese language. This underlined the parents' expectation of

their next generation in relation to the past.

Hence, in the research reported in this thesis, the preservation of some traditional customs and language reflected one of the characteristics of the parents' worldview as past-oriented and conservative.

Anthropocentric

Another characteristic of traditional Chinese worldview is anthropocentrism. This is evident in submissiveness to institutional authority, and the expectation of protection and care in return. The theocratic conception of the emperor, as well as ancestor worship, is the most influential concept of anthropocentric value (Kraemer, 1938). Among Chinese people, the first and primary relationship expressed in submission to authority is through family socialisation (W. Chung, 2000). Children are taught to submit to authority and parents, and loyalty to family is expressed in filial piety, which was a highly cherished value in the traditional Chinese family. M. G. Wong (1988) describes filial piety as a set of moral principles, which is taught at a very young age and reinforced throughout one's life, including duty, obligation, service, self-sacrifice, and the importance of the family name. Between those of equal status, there is mutual respect, as well as reverence toward the dominant leader and the elders.

In the research reported in this thesis, characteristics of an anthropocentric worldview were reflected among the parents who participated in the interviews. The parents taught their children filial piety, including being submissive to parents and showing respect to elderly people. As one parent (P4) claimed, "First of all, they have to respect parents and teachers. In Australia, people see their parents at the same level that everyone is equal… However, it is important for them to respect their parents and teachers." Another parent (P8) stressed, "To respect the parents is a must. I tell my children that they have to respect us, parents… They have to tell me if anything happens. I'll try my best to help them…we keep them and we do things for them, which is our responsibility." Thus, in the parents' perspectives, they took the responsibility to take care of their children, so their children had to be submissive to parents. When grown up, their children should be responsible to look after their parents in return. For example, one parent (P1) asserted, "We have to respect our parents and take care of the parents, which cannot be found in the western culture… in our Chinese culture, we have to respect our parents and take care of them. We expect the young generation, to do the same as we used to do." This reflected the obligations of parents and children within the family, which is one of anthropocentric values.

Moreover, some parents observed that their children were submissive because they followed their parents to church even though they did not really want to. One parent (P1) claimed, "He (the son) was submissive and followed us to go to church. Sometimes, I thought he was bored in the Sunday school." For some parents, there would be pressure if their children did not go to the church together. As one of the parents (P6) claimed:

> "There would be pressure for the parents… my daughter… did not come to church for a while and we felt some kind of pressure… if you are Christian parents, then your children should go to church with you… some one may think that you do something wrong so your children do not come to church."

In the parents' perspectives, it was the responsibility of parents to teach and take care of their own children, and parents were accountable for their children's behaviour. When their children did not go to church, the parents felt pressured that others would blame them for their children's actions. In other words, the parents would feel better if their young people were going to the same church. Therefore, young people attending the same church with their parents was regarded not only as a sign of submissiveness to parents, but also indicated the loyalty of the family to the institution, which reflected another characteristic of anthropocentric value in the parents' worldview.

Furthermore, while the family with both parents and children attended the church together, they, in return, expected care and protection from the authority of the organization. In the parents' perspectives, the pastor of the church was regarded as the institutional authority, and had the responsibility to nurture their children's spirituality. As one of the parents (P1) suggested, "Since there was their pastor, he could go to the pastor, then." Another parent (P8) claimed, "Now, I think our church is on the right track. We have the pastor to take care of our young people and help them grow spiritually. He provides our young people the responsibility to commit themselves and make them feel at home." The care of the young generation from the pastor of the church was observed to be a return for the parents' loyalty to the church, and this reflected a mutual relationship of filial piety.

In summary, the parents' worldview of anthropocentrism reflected an hierarchical order in interpersonal relationships, as shown in Figure 6.1.
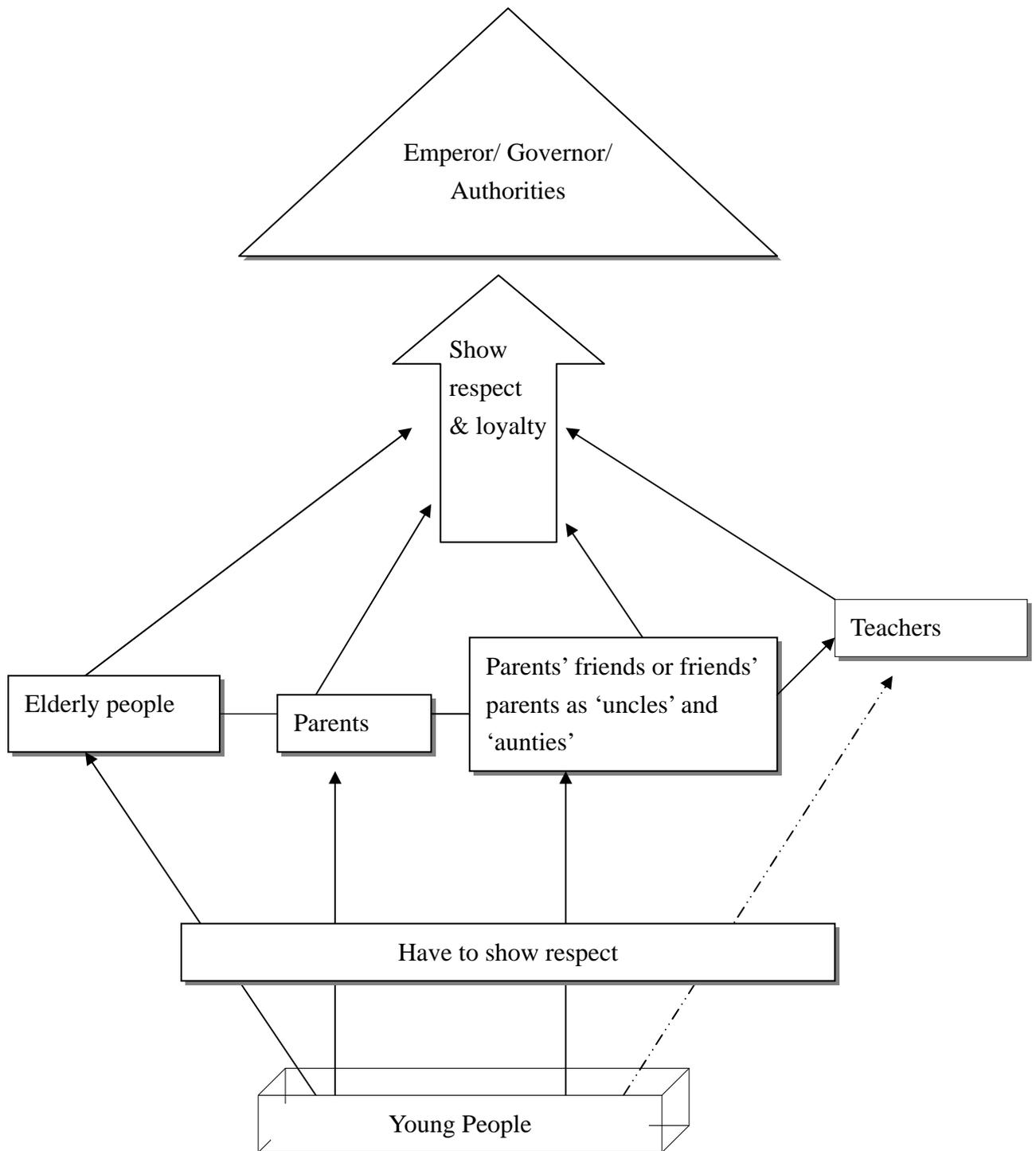
Figure 6.1. Hierarchical order of interpersonal relationships in Chinese culture[20]

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[20] Modified diagramme presented at the Fourth National Symposium at ACU Signadou Campus, Canberra, 1st April 2005.

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Patriarchal

Patriarchy was observed as another characteristic of the parents' worldview. Patriarchy indicates a hierarchical order of inter-personal relationships as shown in Figure 6.1. The roles are clearly defined with males, particularly the father and eldest son, having the most dominant roles, while females were relegated to a subordinate position. Authority in the family is passed from the father to the eldest son (M. G. Wong, 1988). There is a Chinese saying, "One was the father even just for one day, he be the father for the whole life; one was the teacher for one day, he is the teacher for the whole life"[21]. One's father is to be respected for the whole life, and it is the same with one's teacher. Therefore, children have to look after parents when they get older. As well as this, they have to respect their teachers just as their fathers did, even after leaving school.

In the perspectives of the Chinese young people who participated in the individual interviews, it was important to honour their parents, particularly the father who had the most dominant role in the family. Among most of the parents who took part in the interviews, it was also suggested that the man in the family played the leading role. For example, one of the parents (P7) asserted, "It seems that I am the one in control but he (her husband) is the one to make final decision." Another parent (P11)

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[21] In Chinese it says, 一日為父，終身為父；一日為師，終身為師. This reflects a hierarchical order of relationships that characterises patriarchy.

claimed that man and woman had different roles in the family: "In our family, it is a

bit more precise picture of that the man is in-charge of what is outside the family,

while woman, inside the house." Yet, his wife (P10) suggested that man played the

leading role: "However, I would rather have my husband taking the leading role." A

patriarchal worldview was, thus, observed in the family.

This characteristic of a patriarchal worldview was also extensively reflected

within their church. For example, one of the parents (P10) asserted, "As a married

woman, I don't want to be a deacon but I would want my husband to be. Nevertheless,

I would keep on supporting the church by being involved with the ministries." Hence,

patriarchy characterized the parents' worldview that men had the dominant role, and

this was found in their family, as well as within their church.

Familial Relationship as the Core Value of Relationships

W. Chung (2000) suggests that the familial relationship in Chinese society is

the foundation for other relationships (see also Yung, 1997, 2000 reprinted). That is,

the primary social relationship takes place in the family, from which the familial

relationship extends to the friends of their family members, and then, to the friends of

their friends. Chinese families used to extend their kinship through cousin-marriages,

thus creating a whole interlocking network of wider family relationships with a

village or a larger geographical area (Yung, 1997, 2000 reprinted). Hence, an

individual status links together the members in the family, village, community, county,

province, country, and then, nation (Chu, 1971).

In the research reported in this thesis, family was observed as the core

relationship. In the parents' perspectives, family members should take care of one

another. Anyone who was known by anyone of the family members fell into the

category of 'friends' and became related to the family. Those people related to the

friends of their family members' were then included into their family circle. This

reflected the characteristic of familial relationship, which suggested an extension of

relationships to other people by drawing them together as one big family. Thus, the

friends of their children became friends of the family, and the children addressed their

friends' parents, who were not their relatives, as 'aunties' and 'uncles'. As one parent

(P9) asserted,

> "I would remind my kids to greet other people… once we met the parents of our
> elder daughter's schoolmate. They greeted one another, but not my younger
> daughter... My husband told her that she knew them as well and she had to greet
> them as uncle and auntie. However, she thought that they were only the parents
> of her sister's schoolmate, not parents of her own schoolmate."

According to the parent, those people relating to any of their family members were

friends of the whole family. When one of the family members met with her friends'

parents, the other members in the same family had to greet them. This was because

the parents of their children's friends had been drawn into the big family circle. This

relationship further extended to the friends of their friends. An illustration is shown in

the following figure (Figure 6.2).
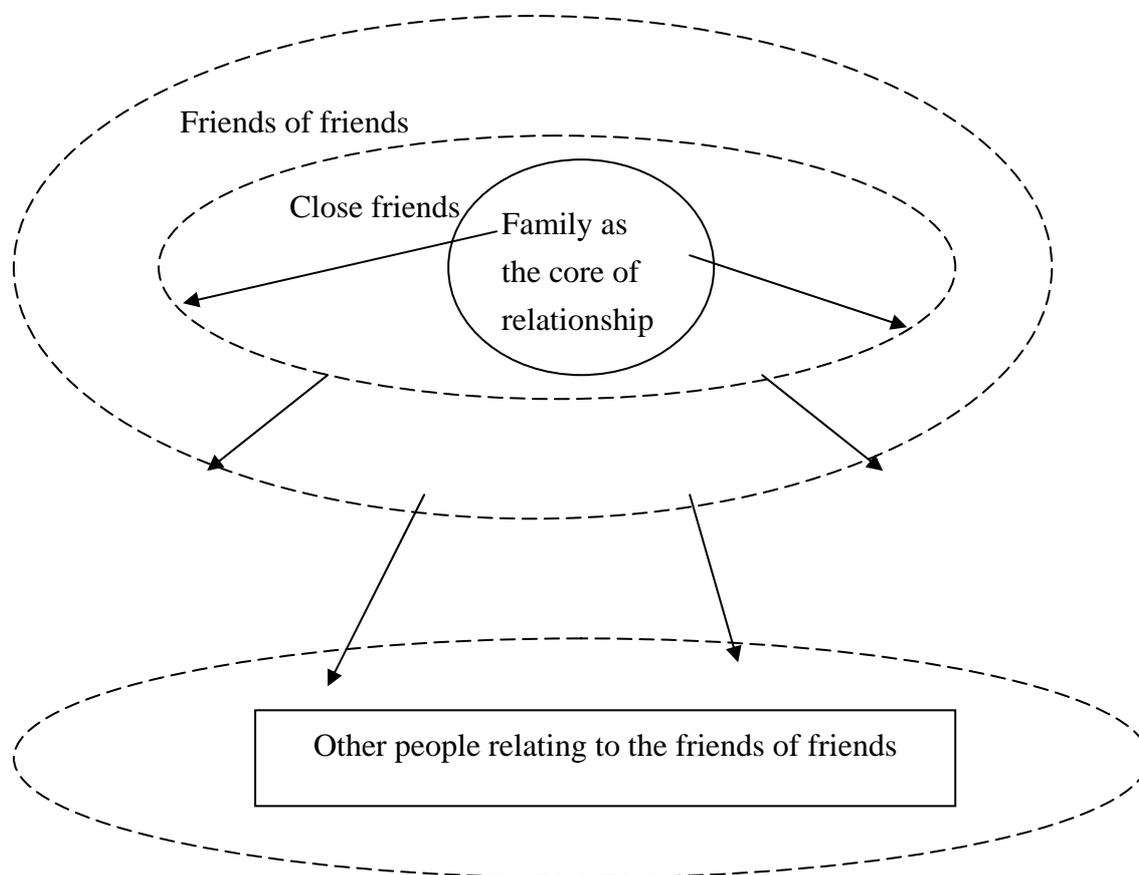
Figure 6.2. An illustration of familial relationship in Chinese culture[22]

Moreover, this familial relationship was reflected in their inter-personal

relationships in the church. Among the parents, the church was like a big *family*: "We

are like a family… at church" (P6). In this case, the parents included the other

members of the church into their family circle, and they perceived the church as one

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[22] A modified diagramme presented by M. Chung at the Fourth National Symposium at ACU Signadou Campus, Canberra, 1[st] April, 2005.

big family. Most of the church members came from Hong Kong and had a professional background, such as nurses, teachers, lecturers, and bank managers. They spoke a common language, Cantonese, and shared the same style of communication (P1, P3, P6, P7). They felt related to one another because they claimed to have a common background. For example, one parent (P1) asserted, "We *feel belong* to this church. *Our background* is quite *similar*…we are most from Hong Kong. When we talk, we talk in the same way."

As M. G. Wong (1988) stressed, Chinese family entailed much more than a family in the western sense. It was a link to a much larger chain of extended kinship and clan members, bringing large numbers of people together with a common bond, and promoting a sense of solidarity, security and belonging. In the research reported in this thesis, the parents' worldview of familial relationships was characterised in the form of *diffusion* from family members to their friends, and then to other friends of friends (W. Chung, 2000).

Patrilocal Cultural Value

Research studies have shown that patrilocal residence is significant in traditional Chinese families, and there has been observed a pattern of extended families, in which many generations and their offspring lived under the same roof (Baker, 1979; M. G. Wong, 1988). Contrarily, in the research reported in this thesis,

extended families of patrilocal residence were not as highly valued and significant, even though some parents would prefer their children to marry Chinese. In the research reported in this thesis, the parents did not insist that their children lived together with them when they married: "When the children grow up, they may leave their parents, which is very common in Australia" (P7). The parents observed that the pattern of extended family was less important since they settled in Australia.

Concerning their children's marriage, they claimed to be open, and would not decide for them. This was different from the older generations where parents decided when and to whom their children would be married and then lived under the same roof with them (Baker, 1979). However, some of the parents felt that it would be better for their children to marry Chinese because it would be easier for them to communicate. For example one of the parents (P1) asserted:

> "Caucasians sometimes are not that bad. But for me, it may not be easy to accept. However... that is their choice… If their another halves are *Chinese, even though they speak English*, it seems that it is *easier to communicate* with them. At least they have grown up in the Chinese family. But for those grown up in the western families, it is more difficult to communicate." (P1)

The parents suggested that there were cultural differences between their next generation and the people from cultural groups other than Chinese. Thus, Chinese would be a better choice for marriage, and for most of the parents, Christian would be the best:

"I do not expect them to marry Chinese or not, but *Christians*… my younger daughter… told me that *she would marry a Caucasian*." (P9)

"For marriage, they should be serious… the best is to marry to *a Christian*, of course it should be *better* if he's *a Chinese Christian*." (P7)

In the research reported in this thesis, patrilocal residence of extended families was not observed as important among the parents. Yet, the value of patrilocal culture was reflected in their interpersonal relationships within the church. One of the Chinese young people (Y3) who took part in the individual interview claimed, "My cousins go to this church and our family go to this church… My family goes there; my father's brother's family goes there. And our cousins go there as well." Although the extended family members did not live together under one roof, they came to the same church and worshipped under the same roof. One of the parents (P8) stressed the importance of family members staying together, "We just want to serve in a family… Family serving together to serve is a very important concept… Family staying together is good." Among the parents, family should stay together and serve together within the same church. Even though the young generation might speak different languages and would want to have different worship styles, the parents perceived it as best to keep the two generations together:

"Parents and children… are in the same church though there are different languages and styles of worship. Like a family... It would be best to have the two congregations together as a whole family." (P6)

Hence, in the research reported in this thesis, the significance of patrilocal culture was found within the church where the two generations were staying under the one roof of the same church and they related to one another as different generations of the same family, as shown in Figure 6.3. There were two congregations within the church, the Chinese congregation and English congregation. Most of the members in the Chinese congregation were the parents of the young people in the English congregation. Those young people in the English congregation felt related to the members of Chinese congregation, and used to call them 'uncles' and 'aunties' even if they were not their relatives. They related to one another as members of the church family in which they were from two different generations and stayed together under the same roof. This reflected the patrilocal cultural value in the sense of extended family within the church, in which the young stayed together with their parents and other elder people, and were subordinated to them as well.

Under one roof of the
same church community

Relatives of the
parents

Relatives of
Chinese young
people

Parents
of
young
people

The second
generation of
Chinese young
people

Parents' friends

Friends of the second
generation
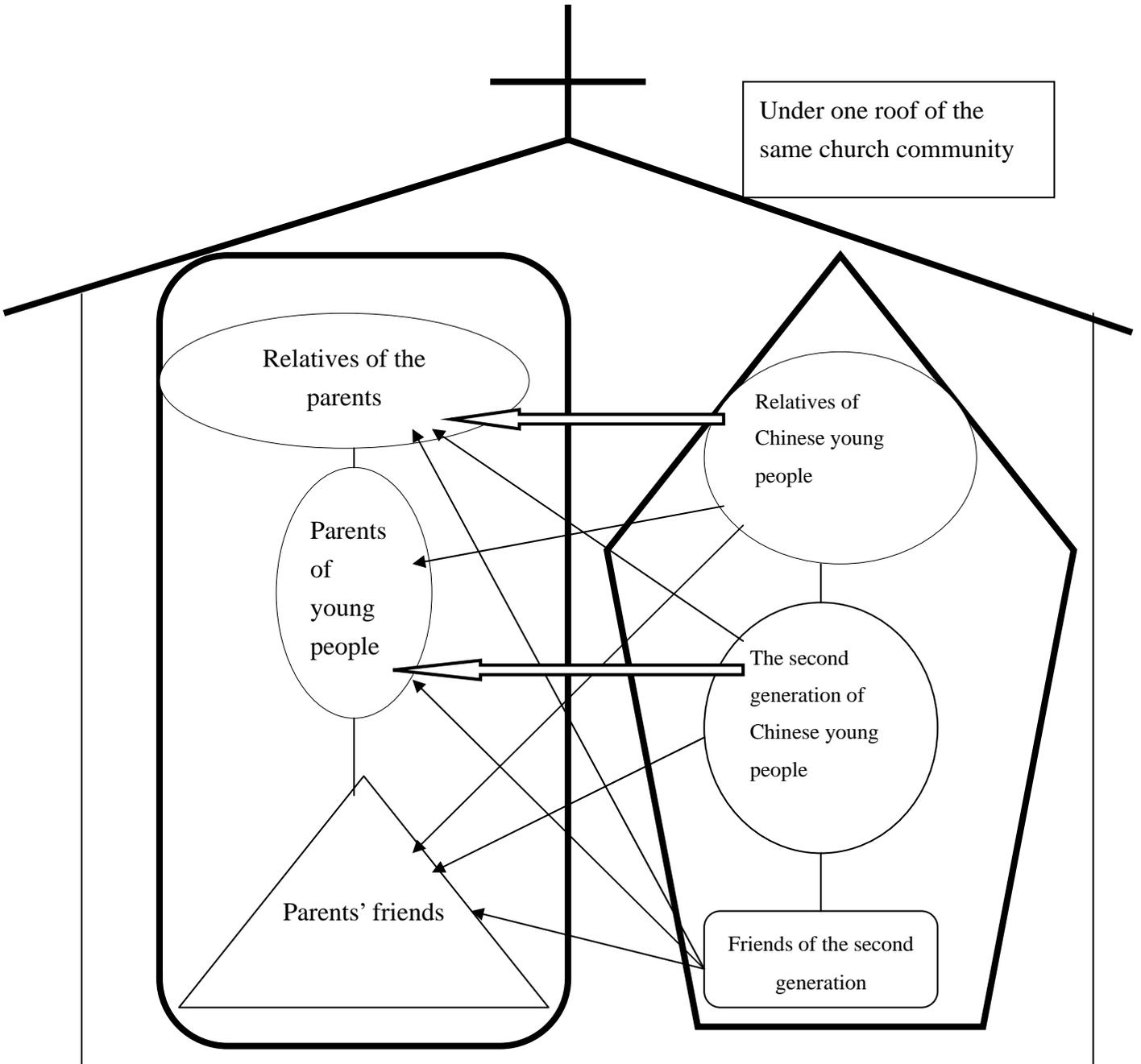
Figure 6.3. An illustration of patrilocal cultural value within the church community

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Both-and: Relative and Inclusive

Furthermore, a both-and type of thinking is derived from the Yin-Yang concept of Taoism, which is both inclusive and relative (Lee, 1989; Wan, 1998). This worldview embraces the way of either-or thinking. Nothing is absolute, but everything can be blended together even though they are not of the same kind. Therefore, it is possible for Chinese people to mix their own culture with the dominant culture in the society and adapt to the social environment.

In a country of cultural pluralism, such as Australia, the traditional culture of any ethnic group is regarded as a part of their history and is expected to be blended and built in to contribute to the country (Secombe & Zajda, 1999; Strathern, 1996). The process of inter-cultural exchange takes place within the ethnic groups and thus leads to the phenomenon of cultural renewal within the value systems of each ethnic group (Secombe & Zajda, 1999). For the identity formation of Chinese young people, they may inherit the traditional Chinese culture from their parents on one hand, and they are meanwhile confronted with the contemporary culture of their society on the other hand. Nevertheless, when their parents find themselves settling into the dominant culture, their young generation may adopt the cultures from both their parents' and the society without difficulties (Castles et al., 1998; Strathern, 1996). This leads to a new identity formation (Castles, & Miller, 2003) thus shaping a

distinctive spirituality of their own (M. Chung, 2003a).

In the research reported in this thesis, the parents who participated in the interviews found them open to the culture of the society though they held on to some traditional Chinese cultural values. For example, one of the parents (P10) claimed, "My sons sometimes… ask about our family culture. I try to guide them that there are many other family models... Especially today's women, they become more educated than before and they would want to go out for work rather than staying home... I tell them... They should be open and adjust themselves to their situations." The parent was aware that the role of woman in their family was different from that in the society. She was open to see changes in the next generation, but then, she might hold on to with the model of the traditional Chinese family. On the one hand, she was aware of the differences between the western culture and Chinese culture; however, on the other hand, she embraced both the cultural values because of her children who had grown up in the western society.

Another parent (P5) asserted that she thought in a Chinese way and had to readjust herself because her children had become westernised.

> "Though there are some traditional customs and festivals… However... The children were very young when they came... Though we want them to keep some Chinese traditions, we are open. When they get older, it may be easier for them as they have been westernised and their next generation is similar to them. *I have to re-adjust myself.*" (P5)

The parent acknowledged the differences between Chinese culture and the culture of the society in which her children had grown up. She claimed that she had adjusted to the western culture, and yet she had kept some Chinese traditions. Thus, the parent's worldview reflected the characteristic of both-and, inclusive and relative.

Furthermore, this characteristic of worldview was reflected in parent-child relationships, as well. The parents taught their children to respect their authority, which was part of their culture. Yet, they might allow their children to express objections, and their parent-child relationship may be more like friends due to western influences.

> "As they grow up, we are more like friends. We let them know that we, as parents, should have the dignity and be respected… we, as parents, have the authority to teach them the right way... When we teach them something, they should be obedient and listen to us." (P10)

The parents became more open in bringing up children after settling in the western society for some years, and treated the children more like friends. However, as the parent (P10) suggested that parents had the most authority in the family and children should always be obedient to parents, the hierarchical order of relationship was by no means given away. Hence, these were observed in the parents' worldview a both-and cultural value system that characterized the significant Chinese traditional values and embraced some western cultural vales.

Summary: Characteristics of Parents' Worldview

In summary, in the research reported in this thesis, the characteristics of the parents' worldview were observed as: (a) past oriented and conservative, (b) anthropocentric, (c) patriarchal order of inter-personal relationship, (d) patrilocal value, (e) familial relationship as the foundation of inter-personal relationships, and (f) both relative and inclusive (both-and). As research studies claim, individualism is highly praised and free choices are encouraged in western society, but within the Chinese community, the concerns of the collective group play the major role in the social control on the children (M. G. Wong, 1988). In the research reported in this thesis, those Chinese young people who took part in the interviews were brought up against a Chinese cultural background. Thus, their parents' Chinese worldview affected their identity formation and shaped the distinctiveness of their spirituality within the multicultural society.

Section Two: Parents' Spirituality - Shadow of Young People's Spirituality

It can be argued that the spirituality of the parents in relationship to God and the church community has an important effect on that of their children. While the parents attended the same church with the young generations, their affiliations with the church community are relevant attributes in the identity formation of the young

people, and thus affected their spirituality. Therefore, this section aims to describe the

parents' spirituality in relationship with God and with the church community, and

their perceptions of the young Chinese people's spirituality, which *shadowed* the

spirituality of the Chinese young people.

Parents' Spirituality in Relationship with God

From the perspectives of the parents who took part in the individual interviews,

spirituality was concerned with a personal relationship with God. Their assertions

were such as the following:

"It is about the relationship with God… it is how you live out your faith." (P1)
"Spirituality is to experience God in the relationship with Him." (P8)

The parents referred to spirituality as a personal relationship with God that involved

faith. Moreover, to experience God was regarded as essential in spirituality. Some

parents suggested that reading the Bible and prayers were the ways to get close to

God (P1, P2, P9, P10, P11). Other parents stressed that it was important to live out the

teachings of the Bible and experience God. For example, one parent (P2) asserted, "It

is important to live a life as what the bible teaches us." Another parent (P1) added,

"Something happens may help us grow (spiritually)." Among the parents, to

experience God, which was to make the Bible teachings relevant to real life situations,

helped to sustain the relationship with God. The experience of God in real life

situations also led to a growth in faith that resulted in a closer relationship with God. In short, spirituality, in the parents' perspectives, was a relationship with God that involved faith and personal experiences.

Most of the parents who attended the individual interviews claimed that they had experienced God in their daily life. For example, one of the parents (P1) shared her fear of driving. Every time she drove a car, she prayed. Once she had a car accident, but she did not get hurt. She believed it was God who had protected her: "Sometimes, you feel that God is leading you and makes you know Him better through those things that happen in our daily life." Another parent (P4) asserted that she experienced God's comfort concerning a church crisis: "There was a split in our church. Some young people were leaving and we had a farewell party. After the party… While packing up, I told God, 'I feel tired.' I saw those young people grown up and they were leaving then. God answered me, 'I know.' I was encouraged at that moment." At that time, she felt encouraged as she experienced a spiritual encounter with God. The other parent (P7) felt nourished by God's work and looked at things from a new perspective: "When I was walking along the street, I found that the flowers and trees were so beautiful that I thanked God for the beautiful world. Even though we met some people who were racism, we would forgive them." Some other parents experienced God's provision and blessings in their lives:

"He (God) is gracious to me…He protects me and I thank Him for that… I have not expected children, possessions, cars, but God provides far more than I have expected." (P8)

"I think everything is in God's hand, and in His plan. Like last year… I thank God that He brought our family close together… my husband… took the responsibility to take care of me… I thought God had provided abundantly." (P9)

The parents related their life experiences to God when they felt blessed and when they were in trouble or had problems. One parent (P5) asserted, "I found that when I got into trouble, He (God) came to me" (P5). This was particularly the case when the parents believed that they could not do anything to change the situation. As another parent (P11) claimed, "My mom found that she got cancer. I felt very helpless… when our family members had some major problems in life, or our children had some problems with their academic achievements… I felt that I could do nothing for them." Then, at that time, they felt closer to God. Hence, a strong faith in God was observed concerning the spirituality of the parents. When they felt that God had intervened in their life experiences, their relationship with God became closer.

Parents' Spirituality in Relationship with the Church Community

All of the parents who participated in the interviews had settled in Australia for twelve years, at least, and their children were born or had grown up in Australia. All of them had stayed with the church from twelve to twenty-two years. The

following table (Table 6.1) shows their years attending the church and the age of their

children when they came to Australia.

Table 6.1

Parents' Relationship with the Church in Terms of Years Attending the Church

Parents	Years of attending the church (>)	Years of their children when coming to Australia
P1	20	3 & 6 (years old)
P2	14	3 & 5 (years old)
P3	14	3 & 5 (years old)
P4	15	6 months old & born in Australia
P5	12	5 & 6 (years old)
P6	19	Born in Australia
P7	12	1 (years old) & born in Australia
P8	22	Born in Australia
P9	18	Born in Australia
P10	22	6 or 7 (years old)
P11	22	6 or 7 (years old)

Concerning their relationship with the church community, the parents felt a sense of

belonging and welcome. Their relationships with the church community were

regarded as close. Their assertions were, for example, as follows:

"We feel belong to this church." (P1)
"When this church was established, I was here. I see this church as my second
home." (P6)
"I have a sense of belonging here… I think the relationship among the church
member is very close." (P9)

They had stayed with the church for a long time and knew each other well. This led to the strong sense of belonging to the church. Some parents even described the church as their 'second home' (P6, P10). Thus, among the parents, the church community was regarded as their spiritual home, where they felt close to each other. The relationship with the church community was best described by one of the parents (P9): "We are like a family."

Parents' Reflections on Young People's Spirituality

In the research reported in this thesis, the parents perceived the experiences of God in real life situations as of most concern in the spirituality of the young generation, and the influences of the young people's peers as the most important factor in shaping their spirituality.

Experience of God in Real Life Situations as the Most Concern

Most of the young people had attended church since they were very small. In the parents' perspectives, they were very familiar with Bible stories. Among the young people in the church, some might find youth activities in the church boring (P1) and they would rather study at home than attend those church activities (P7). One of the parents (P1) suggested that they could memorise most of the stories but they might not know how to relate to God. Some parents claimed that the spirituality of the

young generation was materialistic (P6) and it was easy for them to fall away from God (P1). Another parent (P6) observed that the spirituality of the young generation was shallow because they lived in a comfortable environment, which was a disadvantage for them in thinking about their spiritual life more deeply. The parent (P6) claimed that even though the young people knew a lot of truths from the Bible, they could not understand the situation since they had no experiences. Therefore, helping the young generation to relate to God through real life experiences was most important at the time of the interviews:

> "The most important is that the messages and the beliefs become meaningful to her. It would be great if she is motivated to seek for spiritual growth." (P6)

In addition, knowledge of the Bible, sharing beliefs with other people, and being involved in church ministries, were the main concerns in the spirituality of the young people among the parents. On the one hand, the parents felt that it was important for young people to learn about the Bible teachings in order to know about God. On the other hand, they felt that the young generation needed to experience God themselves and live out their beliefs. They perceived relating to God through experiences, putting their beliefs in action, and committing themselves in church ministries as important (P4, P11). Sharing their faith with other people was regarded

as a sign of growth in young people's spirituality (P2, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9). The

following are some of the parents' assertions:

"I am happy to see them improving and growing… they not only build up themselves upon the bible but they try to share their beliefs with some other people." (P2)

"I think they are growing steadily…they… start to help in the children ministries and commit in some of the ministries in their congregation." (P4)

Hence, in the research reported in this thesis, the parents assumed that the

young people had already learned a lot about the Bible teachings in the church since

they were very young. Thus, concerning young people's spirituality, the parents

observed that they needed to experience God through involvement in ministries to

other people in real life situations. In this way, their knowledge could be deepened

and their faith could grow in relationship with God.

Peer Influences as the Most Important Factor

In the parents' viewpoints, the most important factor affecting the spirituality

of the youth was peer influences. The following were some of the parents' assertions:

"Their friends were important to them, too… The most important factor (of their spirituality) is their peers." (P1)

"They have been to that church since they were very young and they have their friends. Maybe they did not like attending Sunday school, however, they enjoyed being with their friends… They valued their friends very much." (P2)

"They grow up with their peer groups who have the same beliefs and faith… they may not feel lonely and they know that there are lots of Chinese Christians here." (P7)

Peer influence was observed as the most important factor in the young people's spirituality. Particularly when they grew up together and had their close friends in the church, their peers played a role in supporting their growth in spirituality. In addition, as one of the parents (P1) suggested, "It is interesting that when children grow up, they want to be with people of the same ethnic group. Though they speak English, they may want to seek for their cultural root." In the research reported in this thesis, the young people mainly spoke English, though they might understand Chinese. They tended to stay with friends of their same ethnic group, as they needed to search for their *roots* of origin. Hence, it was observed that the young people in the church shared quite a common background, and thus found themselves well connected with one another.

Summary: Young People's Spirituality in the Shadow of Parents' Spirituality

In summary, in the parents' perspectives, spirituality was concerned with a personal relationship with God that involved faith. While the parents experienced God in their real life situations, their faith in their relationship with God became strong. Thus, regarding the spirituality of young people, the parents believed that experiences of God in real life situations were essential, and that the young generation needed experiences for their spirituality to grow in depth and content. As well as this, the

parents regarded the church community as their spiritual home, and that they felt

closely related to the church community. This also applied to those Chinese young

participants who had grown up in the church community. In the parents' perceptions,

the church community was important to the young people's spirituality, particularly

the influence of their peers in the church who grew together as companions through

the journey of spirituality, and supported one another in relation to the world

surrounding.

Section Three: Distinctiveness in the spirituality of Chinese young people

The spirituality of Chinese young people reported in this thesis reflected

significant cultural characteristics inherited from their parents, which were also found

in their affiliated institution. As noted in a previous chapter, spirituality is expressed

in relationship with oneself, with God, with others and with the world around them.

The research reported in this thesis suggests that the distinctiveness of the Chinese

young people's spirituality was expressed in their relationship with parents and the

cultural institution with which they were affiliated. This section discusses the

distinctive spirituality of Chinese young people due to their parents' worldview, and

the following chapter (chapter seven) will further discuss the role of their affiliated

institution, the church community.

The Transmission of Cultural Values from Parents

Among the parents, it was observed as important to transmit Chinese culture to the next generations. One parent (P1) stressed, "It is good for them to know their Chinese traditional culture, such as why there are different Chinese festivals." Another parent (P4) asserted that her husband was keen to retain Chinese culture in their family. It was the parents' responsibility to teach their children filial piety, the traditional cultural values, which were the principles and moral rules to regulate inter-personal relationships. Failure to behave according to filial piety would mean a disgrace to their parents and families. As the other parent (P10) added, "We would like them (young people) to be polite, to greet people in the morning, especially to greet the uncles and aunties when meeting them... If they do not behave properly, others would say they are not well-taught by their parents."

Most of the parents agreed that young people were under the influences of western cultures. As one parent (P4) suggested, "I think when we live here, I can't stop them being involved in the cultures here." Therefore, culturally speaking, the second generation was not the same as their parents due to western influences. However, another parent (P11) remarked that Chinese young people of the third or fourth generation might completely melt into the western cultures. Yet for the second generation, they were supposed to inherit Chinese cultural values from their parents.

"The world is changing… *You may not feel that you are Chinese*, but the friends we used to hang around are mainly Chinese in our first generation. It is the fact and I do not think there will be changes for the second generation. To be completely melt into this society, I think we have to wait until the fourth or fifth generation." (P11)

One parent (P8) agreed that this generation of Chinese young people were different from those of the old days: "They do not think as we do." The second generation of Chinese young people who were raised in Chinese families learned Chinese culture from their parents. Some parents strictly clung to their traditional cultures while some were more permissive. How much would the second generation be affected by traditional Chinese cultures? This depended on how open their parents were to the western culture. Nevertheless, in the parents' perspectives, the second generation of Chinese young people in the multicultural society could not completely identify themselves as Chinese. On the one hand they identified with other Chinese people because of their skin colour or place of parents' origin. On the other hand, they felt different from other Chinese people because they had already adopted some western cultural values. As one of the parents (P10) claimed,

"When we talked about the identities in the first few years here, our sons said they were Australians… However, when they went to university, there was a great change. Even though they are westernised, those with the same skin colour and faces just come together… It seems that they have the root in China... when they meet those from Hong Kong… and those from Hong Kong or China. They find themselves a bit different from them." (P10)

Hence, in the research reported in this thesis, a transmission of cultural values from the Chinese parents to their young people was observed, which led to a distinctive spirituality because of their parents' influences. The following were the significant Chinese cultural values that were found in the spirituality of Chinese young people.

Being Subordinate to Parents

It was observed that Chinese young people had to be subordinate to their parents, which resulted from an anthropocentric worldview. They had to be obedient to their parents all the time:

> "We let them know that we, as parents, should have the dignity and be respected… we, as parents, have the authority to teach them the right way… When we teach them something, they should be obedient and listen to us." (P10)

Young people had to follow their parents to the same institution with which their parents were affiliated. Otherwise, they would be seen as disobedient to their parents, and this would make the parents feel disgrace.

> "Some one may think that you do something wrong, so your children do not come to church." (P6)

In this case, the parents were held responsible for what their children did. The parents might not force their children to do anything, but they tried to guide their ways of doing things. One parent (P4) admitted, "I would not force them to but I would ask

them if it's the right thing to do." While parents had to take care of their children, their children had to be obedient in return. Significantly it was observed that young people were subordinate to parents. Even though some of the parents learned about the western culture and readjusted their way of nurturing the next generation to some extent, an hierarchical order of relationship between father and son remained unchanged. As one parent (P9) remarked, "In our days, mom told us to greet people when waking up… and many other rules to show courtesy. However, when you see those have been here for several ten years, the parents are not like 'parents'. The kids call their parents by their first names!" To the parents, they could be *like friends* but could never *be* friends of their children. The father was always the *father* who should always be respected by his children. Therefore, subordination and submission to parents characterised the value of parent-child relationship.

Loyalty to Family

As noted earlier, the parents who took part in the interviews were observed as family-oriented. One parent (P6) asserted, "As Chinese, we are family oriented. The relationship with the family… is important and should be preserved." Another parent (P4) suggested that in western countries some parents used to pay their children for what they have done for their family. This was to teach their children that they had to work in order to get paid. However, among the Chinese, parents would rather teach

their children to share the responsibilities within the household because they were one family. Another parent (P6) added that the young generation under the western influences was freer. However, the young generation had to respect the older generations even though they found it boring to speak to those of the older generations. The parents observed that Chinese young people had to show respect to their parents, as well as the older generations within their families, when they were of the same family. Staying with family members and fulfilling the duties of a family member were regarded as important, which reflected a sense of loyalty to their family. As one of the parents (P9) illustrated the importance of loyalty to family in the aspect of marriage:

> "In the aspect of marriage… I am traditional in the way that if married to someone, he or she should try to keep on the relationship with that one, even though there may be something wrong with him or her."

Achievements in Academic Performance

Most of the parents who participated in the interviews had a high expectation of their children's academic performance. For example, one parent (P4) suggested, "Many parents do expect their sons and daughters have high academic achievement." Another parent (P9) claimed, "I am quite focused on their academic achievement… Everyday, when they came back from school, they might watch some kids programme for a while. Then, they had to do their homework or played the piano." To the parents,

they perceived studies as most important for young people. They preferred their children to focus on their studies rather than to enter a relationship or to work part-time. As the other parent (P5) asserted, "My son is in year twelve and should focus on his studies…. I have expectations… I do not let my children take part time job…I would expect them to finish their studies in the University at least." As noted before in Figure 6.1, in the hierarchical order of the interpersonal relationships, teachers have high reputations, and one reason is because of their academic achievements. It is believed that to achieve academically will lead to a higher social status, which means an opportunity to find a better job. This explained the parents' high expectations regarding their children's academic achievement. The parents tried to help their young people achieve the best in their academic studies. This resulted in the self-expectation of academic achievement among the young people. On the one hand, some of the young people would focus on their studies. On the other hand, some of young people were under pressure because of their parents' expectations.

Chinese Language as Symbolic Ethnicity

Most of the parents spoke Chinese at home, and they tried to encourage their second generation to speak Chinese at home, too. However, most of the young people spoke English as their first language since they had grown up in Australia: "Their first language is English" (P4). Therefore, a shift in the spoken language at home was

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observed. The second generation of Chinese young people including those who participated in the interviews began to speak English with their brothers and sisters, and their friends while their parents spoke Chinese to them:

> "They speak to us in Chinese but they speak with each other in English." (P5)
> "My daughter was only three years old at that time… Once when she could speak English, she began *not* to speak in Cantonese (Chinese Language)... When we talk to them in Chinese, they answer in English." (P1)

In the parents' perspectives, the next generation had to learn the Chinese language because they needed to communicate with the older generations and other relatives who spoke Chinese. For example, one parent (P10) suggested, "I think maybe after moving to Australia, our relatives mostly speak Chinese, which is the main reason for them to speak Chinese at home." As mentioned before, the preservation of Chinese language in the family reflected the characteristic of an anthrocentric worldview that the parents wished to link their next generation to the older generations. The use of Chinese language was then seen as a tool in the transmission of their traditional cultures.

Nevertheless, most of the parents observed that the first language of their children had switched to English. While the language spoken at home was both English and Chinese, Chinese language was a very small proportion of the daily language used among the Chinese young people. Chinese language then became a

symbol of ethnicity to the Chinese young people in a multicultural society (Gans, 1985). As language is a tool for transmitting cultural values, in the research reported in this thesis, the Chinese second generation were thus in the shift of cultural transmission, from Chinese to western.

A Culture Different from their Parents

Although the cultural values of parents played the prior role in shaping the spirituality of the young people, yet, concerning interpersonal relationships, some Chinese young people held a different point of view, which reflected a linear concept of interpersonal relationships in the western society as shown in Figure 6.4.

| Parents' Friends/ Teachers | ⟷ | Parents | ⟷ | Sons and Daughters | ⟷ | Friends of Sons & Daughters |
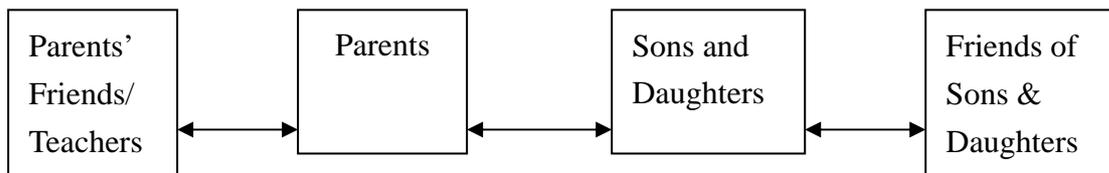
Figure 6.4.   A linear concept of interpersonal relationships in the western society[23]

One of the Chinese young people (Y7) who participated in the individual interviews claimed that in Chinese culture, teachers were "up there" and students were "down here", and that in their school they could make friends with the teacher

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[23] A perspective of linear concept of interpersonal relationship in the society presented by M. Chung at the Fourth National Symposium at ACU Signadou Campus, Canberra, 1st April, 2005.

and joke with them. Some Chinese young people commented about their relationship with teachers in Australia that they enjoyed the relationship with their teachers who were fair, encouraging and treated them like friends (Y1, Y2, Y7). They observed that people in western societies were more open minded (Y4, Y5, Y6, Y9). Children called parents' friends by their first name, but they were taught differently in their own families (Y2, Y3, Y9). In other words, the interpersonal relationship in the western society was linear in which everyone treated one another as equal no matter who they were (Y1, Y4, Y9). This linear relationship reflected the characteristics of individualism in the society, which was different from their parents' traditional worldview of anthropocentrism. Everyone was observed as equal in status and rights.

Thus, the main difference between the cultural values of the Chinese parents and the society was that the former was more relationship-oriented, and the latter, more task-oriented. As one parent (P6) suggested, "In the Western culture, they perceive things more important than person... But for the Chinese, we speak and work in a way more indirectly… the young generation…do not bother too much about inter-personal relationship... They handle things differently."

While the older generation wanted their children to show respect to them by being obedient without discussion, the young generation asked for freedom to make their own decisions. They demanded respect from their parents and other people. This

characterised the linear concept of inter-personal relationship that everyone, no matter

who he or she was, should be treated as equal and be respected. Another parent (P9)

asserted,

> "My daughters… thought that if she (the daughters aunt) did not like the way
> they're doing, she should tell them straightforward... She's not respecting them."
> (P9)

Despite the linear worldview in interpersonal relationship, the cultural values

in the society that affected the Chinese young people's spirituality were different from

those of their parents. In the parents' perspectives, this generation of young people

was surrounded by modern technologies. They then preferred fast and strong sense

stimulants. One parent (P7) commented, "I can foresee that their next generation, the

only thing like Chinese may be they eat rice. I think they grow up in western culture."

This reflected the parents' perception of the young Chinese generation, which was

totally melting into the Western culture. They retained only some parts of Chinese

cultural traditions that made them look Chinese.

A Cultural System of Both Cultures

The Chinese young people on one hand were taught the Chinese traditional

values. Some of them regarded it as important to retain some Chinese traditional

customs and values. For example, one of the Chinese young people (Y2) claimed,

"Chinese New Year is important because it is part of who you are." These Chinese young people felt related to Chinese culture through celebrating the festivals and they thanked their parents who related them to Chinese culture by preserving traditional festivals and customs in their families. However, on the other hand, they adopted some of the cultural values in the society in which they had grown up. They began to feel that their parents did not quite understand their ways of living. One of the young people (Y9) who participated in the individual interviews asserted, "They don't understand the way I am living now… My parents restrict me with very unreasonable rules and unthoughtful… while I don't believe things be so strict." As noted in the previous chapter (chapter five), they were in a process of cultural shifts, and thus were creating a new culture of their own, which became different from that of their parents. The Chinese young participants might appreciate some traditional festivals and celebrations. Yet, some claimed their ways of living were different from those days of their parents, and they expected their parents to understand that and not to be so strict with them. They were adolescents, and as Erickson (1968) suggests, they faced a substantial change in their self-concept. When they learned more about the culture in the society, they tended to reconstruct their value system, which was different from their parents'. In the research reported in this thesis, most of the parents were aware of the differences between them and the younger generation. As they valued the

relationship with their children very much, they tried to re-adjust their worldview and accept their children's ways of doing things. In this case, the parents' cultural value of familial relationship and their worldview of "both-and" brought about a new way to look at the cultural conflicts between the two generations. They re-adjusted themselves to the culture of the society because they valued their relationship with their children.

> "Sometimes, I could not bear the way she (the daughter) does things and then... I could not expect her to do things in the way like me… we should learn to accept them because today's society is different from that of our days… Then, I changed my attitude… It is no point to argue with them... I think relationship is more important." (P9)

Hence, the parents' attitudes towards the relationship with the young generation and the culture of the society affected the formation of their identity, which led to the distinctive spirituality. In the research reported in this thesis, it was observed that a new cultural value system was under construction, involving both traditional Chinese culture and the culture in the society.

Summary: A Distinctive Spirituality due to Cultural Values

In summary, in the research reported in this thesis a transmission of cultural values from the parents to the second generation of Chinese young people was observed, particularly submission to parents, loyalty to family, a high expectation of academic achievements, and a symbolic ethnicity of Chinese language. As discussed

in chapter two, parents and family remained as the core of their cultural values, and a

hierarchical order of relationships, in which the child of the family always looks upon

their parents and honours them by such things as academic achievements, was

observed. However, concerning interpersonal relationships, some Chinese young

people adopted a different point of view, which reflected a linear concept of

interpersonal relationship in the society. This indicated that they, who retained only

some parts of Chinese cultural traditions, were melting into the western culture.

Hence, a cultural system of both Chinese traditional culture and Western culture was

under construction, which affected the young people's identity formation, and thus

contributed to the distinctiveness in their spirituality.

Conclusion

Research studies (Collins, 1999; Engebretson, 2002, 2004; Harris & Moran,

1998) claim that young people express their spirituality in relationship with

themselves, God, people surrounding them, and the world around them. For the

Chinese young participants in the research reported in this thesis, the findings

suggested that their spirituality was expressed in relationships, and their relationships

with parents and families were particularly important above all. Therefore, their

parents' worldview and cultural values were the prior factor in their spirituality.

Nevertheless, these Chinese young people adopted some cultural values of the society, or found themselves melting into the culture of the society. Therefore, they needed to readjust their worldview learned from their parents because they encountered a different worldview within their society.

To conclude this chapter, the Chinese young people within the church community were under the umbrella of families, and family-oriented relationships were most important among the Chinese families. While they adopted some parts of the western culture, the collective cultural system inherited from their parents within their families shaped the distinctiveness in their spirituality with its values of subordination and submission to parents, loyalty to families, achievements in academic performance, and Chinese language as a symbol of ethnicity. Significantly, some of the traditional Chinese cultural values observed among their parents were also reflected within the church community, to which the Chinese young people felt related. As Hughes (1995) suggests, young people in the Church community with common beliefs and values come together to share their common spirituality. This suggested that the church community as a cultural institution also had a significant role in the development of their distinctive spirituality. The following chapter further discusses the role of their church community as the cultural institution, with which they were affiliated.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE CHURCH COMMUNITY – A DISTINCT CULTURAL CONTEXT

Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the significant cultural characteristics inherited

by the Chinese young participants from their parents, which were also found in their

affiliated institution, a context of relationships within the church community (Hudson,

2000). This chapter focuses on the role of the church community in contributing to the

young participants' spirituality. As research studies (Clark & Hunt, 1992; Crotty, 1992)

claim, many ethnic congregations preserve their traditional cultural elements. While

the second generation of Chinese young people grew up in the church community that

reflected their parents' Chinese cultural values, the church became a distinct cultural

context that contributed to their distinctive spirituality. Hence, this chapter addresses

the second aim of the research reported in this thesis, to discover and analyse the

cultural characteristics that affected the spirituality of Chinese young people in the

designated church, and the fourth aim, to propose ways in which churches and

families may encourage the development of spirituality for Chinese young people in a

multicultural society.

The first section discusses the distinct role of the church community that has

helped in the development of their spirituality, and the second section, the emergence

of significant cultural elements within the church community that has shaped their distinctive spirituality. The third section concludes with some implications and recommendations for the spiritual development of Chinese young people within the church community.

Section One: The Role of Church in the Young People's Spirituality

Introduction

In the research reported in this thesis, all of the parents who took part in the interviews attended the same church with their children, and most of the young people had been attending the church since they were small:

"Since the birth of my younger daughter, we became settled in this church." (P7)
"Since their (the children) birth, we have brought them here." (P8)
"We have been going to church together since they were born." (P10)

One of the parents (P1) suggested that when they grew up, going to church became one of their habits. Another parent (P7) added, "They (young people) need to be nurtured by the church and supported by the family." Thus, in the parents' perspectives, the church community became important in shaping the young people's spirituality.

A Community For The Development Of Identity

The development of religious identity within their church community helped

to shape their spirituality. As noted in chapter two, spirituality develops alongside

identity achievement and is expressed in terms of relationships. In the research

reported in this thesis, the church community contributed to the spirituality of the

Chinese young people, as well as their parents. First, the parents introduced their

young people to the church community. Then, these young people sought to relate to

God and other people through the Church. An identity within the church community

was to develop among the young people, and most of the parents who participated in

the interviews claimed that their children were Christian. The following were some of

the parents' assertions:

> "They've grown up in the Christian family. They were baptised when they were
> babies." (P7)
> "They are Christians… my elder daughter… is more mature and quite involved
> with the ministries, like evangelistic activities, in the church." (P9)
> "I'm sure that they do believe in Christ… because they have the sense of
> belonging to the church, and as they become a member of this church family,
> they would participate in the ministries of this family." (P4)

The parents identified their children, who were the young people attending the church,

as Christians. In their perspectives, these young people had grown up in Christian

families since they were small, believed in Jesus, took part in church ministries, and

some of them were baptised. Thus, the young people felt they belonged to the church,

in which their Christian identity had developed.

Baptism was observed as a sign of Christian identity that indicated a relationship with the Church community. However, the young people were encouraged to wait until they were clear about the beliefs of the Church.

> "Once who has accepted Jesus should be baptised. Time is not a matter… I would like them to be clear about being baptised beforehand." (P8)
> "My elder daughter will be baptised by the end of the year… They have to wait until they really understand the meaning of being baptised." (P9)

Also, there was an age criterion for being baptised in the church. As one parent (P9) reflected, "My younger daughter has not reached the age that required for being baptised in this church. It is… worried that the children are too small to understand the meaning of baptism." Though the parents admitted that age was not a problem, age was seen an indicator of maturity. Young people had to wait until they reached the age of being baptised. In addition, another parent (P6) asserted that they had to experience what they believed before they came to be baptised. This reflected the parents' seriousness about receiving baptism.

In the research reported in this thesis, though most of the young people had not been baptised at the time of interviews, they felt related to the Church community. Some of the young people who had participated in the interviews were baptised in the following year. This was evident that a development of Christian identity had taken

place within the church community, which had contributed to the Chinese young

people's spirituality.

A Community of Families Staying Together

As noted in chapter six, the characteristic of patrilocal value was reflected

within the church community. It was strongly suggested that both parents and young

people should stay together under the same roof of the church as one big family. The

church, therefore, served as a community where family members could stay together.

For example, one parent (P2) reflected, "Their parents are still attending the church.

They are under the same roof." Another parent (P9) added,

> "As there are many young people in our families, and they (the young people)
> cannot drive, it's quite difficult for them to go to the other place for worship. We
> had the experience that parents went to one place for services and the young
> people, to the other church. We found it very inconvenient… It's better for the
> whole family to attend the same church and have the sense of belonging."

One reason for the young people to go to the same church with their parents

was that the young people could not drive. However, the main reason was that it was

seen as important for them to belong to the same church with their parents. Therefore,

the church community had a role in keeping different generations together as one big

family.

For those parents who were involved in teaching ministries with the young people, there emerged a special connection between the parents and the young people – they were both in relationship with God, and they experienced growth together in the same church. For example one of the parents (P3) claimed, "I taught Sunday school. I felt good when I could see them grow." Another parent (P7) stressed, "Especially my younger daughter as she goes to the junior church, and I am there to help… I see that I and my daughters grow together."

Hence, when the parents and their children stayed in the same church, they experienced a relationship with God together, as a family. As well as this, within the same church community, parents and young people had an opportunity to share their spirituality together. While the western worldview is characterised by individualism, the church had played a role in keeping families together under one roof. It was significant that the church community shaped the spirituality of young people by being a community in which families could stay together in religious practice within the multicultural society.

A Community of Friends Staying Together

While most of the young people were brought to church by their parents, there were some who came to the church because of their friends (P4, P6). It was observed

that most of the young people had some close friends with whom they had grown up

within the church community:

> "They grew up here, studied here… the relationship was very close… many
> don't have their parents here. They have friends here" (P4)
>
> "The relationship of the members in the English congregation is very close...
> They enjoy hanging around with one another. Maybe we think the content of
> their conversation is meaningless but that is the way they grow together." (P1)

In relationship with the church, friends were, therefore, regarded as important. While

most of the young people in the church had grown up together with the same beliefs

and faith, this supported their relationship with the church, and thus, helped them in

relationship to the world around them. They felt related to the church community and

shared the same identity. One parent (P7) made the following assertion.

> "They grow up with their peer groups who have the same beliefs and faith…
> when they are in school, they may not feel lonely and they know that there are
> lots of Chinese Christians... They… have the support from other Christians."

Hence, the church community provided opportunities for young people to

relate to other members of their congregation, which sustained their beliefs and

shaped their spirituality. In other words, the church community served as a place

where they found identity and support from one another.

A Community of Individuals Growing in Relationship with God

Among the parents, it was regarded as most important for their children to

build up their faith in relationship with God within the church community. They believed that Junior School, Bible study classes, seminars and Sunday services, helped to nurture young people's spirituality. One of the parents (P1) stressed, "For nurturing the spirituality of the people... it is better now as there are several bible study classes… seminars. For these few years, the church has been more focus on nurturing and building up people's spiritual life."

At the time of the interviews, the church began to link the children from Junior Church to English services so that when they grew up, they would find it easier to get used to the English services. As one parent (P4) admitted,

> "The children… attend Junior Church and once a month they attend the English service so that they may become familiar with the Sunday services… this gives them a chance to know the big brothers and sisters. When they get older and attend the Sunday services, they would find it easier to fit into it."

The church was perceived as a community in which the young people grew up in relationship with God and other people.

Moreover, the parents believed that involvement in church ministries helped to develop the young people's identity within the church community, and thus nurtured their spirituality. On the one hand, it was through involvement in ministries that the young people felt that they belonged to the church community. On the other hand, opportunities for involvement in ministries helped young people to express their

support of the church community. Thus, the research reported in this thesis has

suggested that the church community nurtured the young people's spirituality by

providing opportunities for ministry. Some parents made assertions as follows:

"The church has been more focus on nurturing and building up people's spiritual life. More people have been involved in various ministries." (P1)
"To let them involved in planning, establishing, and so on. Then they may feel belong to this church." (P4)
"I feel related to the church, as I have been involved with ministries in this church… I would keep on supporting the church by involving with the ministries." (P10)

Nevertheless, within the church community, it was suggested the role of the

pastor and youth leaders was most important in shaping the spirituality of the young

people. The following were some of their assertions:

"For the children, I always think that they need to be care. The leaders should always ring them up and… care for them… they need some 'bigger' brothers and sisters to lead them." (P5)
"It would be better to have a spiritual leader to lead our youth to know more about the society and the problems they are facing." (P6)
"We did need to provide for the young people a mentor who could communicate with them…then, we found a good English pastor. Gradually, they adapted well and stayed in this church." (P10)

Young people had different needs when they grew up. As one of the parents (P9)

pointed out, "The children came to high school. Since they became older, they had

different needs." In order to nurture their needs in spirituality, the parents believed

that it was more appropriate to establish youth group meetings for the young people.

In this case, the role of youth leaders and pastors became important in taking care of the young people's spirituality because they were more like their friends and knew how to communicate with them.

Hence, it suggested that the church was a community in which the individual young people grew in relationship with God and other people, particularly through involvement of ministries and being mentored by the pastors and youth leaders.

Summary: The Role of Church in Chinese Young People's Spirituality

In summary, the role of the church, which contributed to the young participants' spirituality, was as a community, in which a) they developed their identity, b) they related to their families, c) they grew with their friends, and d) they developed a relationship with God through involvement in ministries and the mentoring of their pastors and youth leaders.

Section Two: The Church Community of Significant Chinese Cultural Traits

Most of the Chinese young participants had grown up, together with their parents and friends within the church community. There were within the church community significant Chinese cultural traits, and these cultural traits affected the

Chinese young participants' spirituality and made it distinctive of those from other

cultural backgrounds.

Familial Relationship

First of all, the most significant cultural characteristic within the church

community was the cultural value of familial relationship. A sense of belonging to the

church family was observed.

> "We are like a family… when our children were small, we had family
> gatherings… Each family brought a dish for dinner and then we had a time being
> together." (P6)
> "We feel belong to this church. Our background is quite similar… When we talk,
> we talk in the same way." (P1)
> "Family (as a unit) together to serve, is a very important concept… family
> together serving the Lord is… a blessing… in the church there are Chinese and
> English congregation… I do not agree that when they (young people) grow up to
> a larger congregation, they move to another place." (P8)

Most of the parents shared a common background that they came from Hong Kong,

and had professional backgrounds such as nurses, teachers, lecturers, and bank

managers. They spoke a common language, Cantonese, and shared the same style of

communication (P1, P3, P6, P7). The families came to church together and they

related to each other during family gatherings within the church community. They felt

like one big family based on their common background. As noted earlier, they were

family oriented. Their inter-personal relationships within the church community

began with a family unit. While different units of the families came together and related to each other within the church community, those units of families formed one big family. This characterized the patrilocal value of *extended families* under the same roof, which explained why some of the parents were strongly against the separation of the Chinese and English congregations. The church community was seen as one big family, and so they should stay together under the same roof of the church building.

Within the church community, *eating* was a significant activity of routine. As one parent (P4) claimed, "The most significant is we can *eat*. We have prepared for our own meals for a long time and we have done lots of cooking (dishes of food)." After services on Sundays, there was a mealtime together in the church building. Lunch was served to both the Chinese and English congregations. New comers were invited to stay and have lunch together. Members of different groups took turns to serve. After taking their food, people gathered around into small groups to eat. "Many people come to eat… which is the characteristic of our church" (P5). Thus, the mealtime was observed as a significant event of the church community. It was regarded as a time for gathering and fellowship, to keep up with one another, to welcome new people into the big family, and to build up relationships.

In traditional Chinese culture, to invite people to dine together indicates an invitation into relationships. The joining to eat the meal together expressed an

acceptance in relationships with each another. In other words, the activity of having

meals together within the church community reflected the inter-personal relationships

among the people. This characterised the diffusion of familial relationship within the

church community through the dining table. Spirituality was, then, expressed in the

events of dining together, which reflected a relationship with other people within the

church community, as one big family.

Anthropocentric Worldview And Values

The significance of the parents' anthrocentric worldview was also reflected

within the church community. First of all, the parents looked up to the leader as the

authority of the church who had the responsibility to take care of the young generation,

and the parents themselves. One parent (P6) asserted, "It would be better to have *a*

spiritual leader to lead our youth to know more about the society and the problems

they are facing… The pastors need to understand the parents and communicate with

them. The pastors should not just take care of the young people… the pastors should

understand the parents, too." Thus, the pastor of the church was perceived as the head

of the big family. The parents respected him as the authority that ruled over the

church community, like an emperor, and was held responsible for caring for the

families, including the older and younger generations.

Secondly, the English congregation was subordinated to the Chinese congregation within the church community because the members were from the younger generation and they could not be financially independent at the time of interviews. As one parent (P5) suggested,

"In the English congregation, there are mostly young people... The offerings and contributions are mainly from the Chinese congregation… The Chinese congregation now still is dominant."

Another reason for the English congregation being subordinated to the Chinese congregation within the church community was because the decision-making power was in the hands of the deacons from the Chinese congregation. Thus, in order to help the young people grow in spirituality, one of the parents (P6) suggested giving more opportunities to the young people in sharing the power of decision-making:

"I think that the deacons should start to share the power of decision-making with the English congregation…. we should give more opportunities to the young generation, to nurture them to be the leader in the future."

Thirdly, the young people in the English congregation were given responsibilities to look after the younger ones in spirituality. As one parent (P8) claimed, "Like Power House[24]… the leaders are those from their own congregation. They help the young to grow. In fact, many of them have a heart to serve God." This characterised the anthropocentric worldview, and as well as familial relationship, that

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[24] Power House was one of the fellowship activities for teenage young people of the English congregation.

the older ones have the responsibility to take care of the younger ones within a family.

When the young people within the church community were observed as members

within a big family, therefore, the older ones were responsible to look after them.

Past Oriented and Conservative

Furthermore, a preservation of traditional festivals and customs that was

observed within the church community indicated a past- oriented characteristic in

spirituality. As one parent (P5) suggested, "We have the Chinese traditions and

customs in our church… the Chinese New Year, Moon Festivals and so on." Another

parent (P7) commented, "It's a very Chinese church… in the Chinese New Year,

there are the blessing strips."

Yet, some parents felt that they were 'not too traditional' (P6), as they had

been in Australia for some years and were well adapted to the culture in the society.

However, some of the parents described the church community as traditional and

conservative because the Chinese congregation resisted changes: "Our Chinese

congregation is... very traditional. The leaders of the Chinese congregation are elderly

people... They resist changes" (P5). Hence, even though there were some parents who

claimed themselves open to the western culture, within the church community, some

Chinese traditional cultural traits were still found. While the elder generation resisted

some changes, the younger generation found it difficult to introduce new ways of

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thinking. Nevertheless, the younger generations had to respect the elder generation because of the basic discipline of familial relationship.

Both-And Value

Lastly, the both-and cultural value reflected in the establishment of two congregations within the church community, characterised a flexible way of handling matters. Although the parents were aware of the different viewpoints between the two generations, they felt strongly that young people needed to stay together with the elder generations: "It should be better to stay together… the two (congregations) may run their own show independently as they are of different age groups and have different needs" (P7). As one parent (P4) stressed, "We need to come together… we may not agree with other people. It is important for us to… pray together and build up a good relationship with God." Yet, they did not try to conform the young people completely to Chinese culture and make them members of the Chinese congregation. In order to nurture the spirituality of the young generation, an English congregation under the same roof of the Chinese congregation was established. These two congregations stayed together under the same roof as one family despite their cultural differences: "We are under the same roof… The relationship is like a family" (P10). This both-and value among the parents enabled the young people to form their own congregation and develop their own spirituality.

Summary: The Church Community and Significant Chinese Cultural Traits

In summary, the significant Chinese traditional cultural values emerged within the church community were the core value of familial relationship, the hierarchical order of interpersonal relationships that characterised the worldview as anthropocentric, the values of past-oriented and conservative that was reflected in the preservation of some traditional customs and practices, and the both-and value that enabled the acceptance of an English-speaking congregation for the young generation. These significant values affected the formation of the Chinese young people's spirituality in a distinctive way, which was different from those of other cultures in the multicultural society. Hence, the research reported in this thesis suggests that the church community was a distinct cultural context, which shaped the distinctive spirituality of the Chinese young people.

Section Three: Implications And Recommendations

A Significant Role of a Spiritual Home

In the perspectives of the young participants in the research reported in this thesis, spirituality was, on the one hand, concerned with an inward or internal faith (Harris & Moran, 1998; Tacey, 2003) in relationship with God and themselves, while

on the other hand, it was expressed in relationship to the people within the church community as well as the world surrounding them. Therefore, both the individual interiority and experience of God within the community were important in their spirituality (Harris & Moran, 1998; Tacey, 2003). They sought a better self, as well as a closer relationship with God. They also needed to relate with other people surrounding them, and particularly they needed their support, encouragement, understanding, assurance or advice. As research studies suggest, today's young people tend to seek more in-depth and richness within the person ("Nation's youth", 2002 January), while at the same time they were also in need of a community particularly where they felt a sense of belonging and could share their faith and life (Engebretson, 2003 Winter; Hudson, 2000; Hughes et al., 1995). The church in the research reported in this thesis was significant by its role of being a spiritual home, in which they shared their faith and life, and felt that they belonged.

Among the young participants, their church community was like a family. Even though there had been changes and crises in the past, they observed a strongly committed relationship between the participants and the church community. The most important factor for the participants remaining with the church was their parents, or their friends. Yet some of the young participants had been questioning the church and religious beliefs so as to search for a belief of their own. Some of them were

eventually baptised and identified with the church and its beliefs. Concerning the

young participants' spirituality, the church community was attentive to their needs

(Warren, 1983; Hill, Knitter, & Madges, 1997) by providing them with a youth pastor,

a leader, who could address their questions respectfully, and opportunities for

involvement in ministries, which has helped them to express their faith in action (Hill,

Knitter, & Madges, 1997). The church has also tried to create an environment, within

which they could relate to other people, such as youth groups and small groups, after

services and on Saturdays, at church and outside church. In return, the church was

regarded as their spiritual home, to which they could always feel that they belonged.

This church was significant by its role of being a spiritual home, which was important

in the spirituality of the Chinese young people, because their parents and friends, as

well as their mentors and supporters, were there. They identified with the church

community as they shared their faith and life within a common cultural background

(Engebretson, 2003, Winter).

A Significant Role of the Chinese Church in The Spirituality of Two Generations

Moreover, the findings in the research reported in this thesis indicated that the

church community, which reflected significant Chinese cultural traits, had a

significant role in the spirituality of both the young participants and their parents who

attended the same church. On the one hand, the parents who attended the church with

their children perceived the church as their family. They observed that not only they themselves, but also their children, needed to relate to God, to the Church and people outside the Church, and most of them preferred their children to stay with the same church. As discussed in chapter six, their value of family entailed much more than a family (M. G. Wong, 1988), and the worldview characterised patrilocal value. This was significantly reflected in their church community, within which families with different generations stayed under the same roof. Hence, in the parents' perspectives, the church needed to perform the role of nurturing the spirituality of two or more generations.

On the other hand, the Chinese young participants observed that the church community supported their identity and encouraged the development of their spirituality when the Church established the English congregation alongside with the Chinese congregation. They felt a sense of belonging to the church community, and found the church community a spiritual home, as noted in an earlier section of this chapter. Both generations remained with the church community, which they called a big family. Nevertheless, the young Chinese participants adopted some cultural values of the society, which were different from their parents'. This cultural difference led to the different styles of spirituality between the two generations who stayed under the same roof of the church.

Hence, the church community was perceived as one big family of different generations, and had a significant role in nurturing the spirituality of two different congregations, which reflected two different cultures in their ways of doing things, but both of which observed some common Chinese cultural values, although different in degree.

An Integrated Model of the Church

In this postmodern age under the influence of consumer culture that shapes the worldview of society, there is no longer one single over-arching worldview or one single organizational commitment (Hughes et al., 1995; Power, 1999). The church has become one of the many institutions, which offer a worldview and a purpose for living (Hughes et al., 1995; see also Hughes, 2006). People can come and go to the church, trying to find what they want (Bankson III, 2002; see also McGrath, 2002). If they feel no need to "consume" or adopt anything from the church, they may turn somewhere else. Spirituality thus, can be pursued through a variety of practices (Hughes et al., 1995; Hughes, 2006).

In addition, research shows that in European countries, 90% of Europeans think there is a God but they may not join a church (Power, 1999). The new generation tends to "*believe without belonging*" and "*belong without believing*" (Stahl,

2003). Similarly, in America, the number of young people within the Christian tradition has been declining over the past twenty-five years, and the number of those young people affiliating with a Protestant tradition has declined by ten percent (Marty, 2003). Religion has become a personal affair (Power, 1999), and attending church is considered as a *private* matter (Hughes, 1997). While spirituality is individualised or privatised (Engebretson, 2002a; Hughes, 2002), there is a need for the church all over the world to rethink its model in relation to the needs of young people.

A Multicultural Church

Research studies suggest that spirituality is understood as the experience of developing identity in and with others (Engebretson, 2004). It was evident in the findings of the research reported in this thesis that the Chinese young participants felt closely related to their church community, within which they shared a common faith and experienced a relationship with God, within themselves, and with other people. While the young people asserted a relationship with the church community (as a family), they shared a common identity with the church community, along with their parents in the Chinese congregation, and as well as the Chinese culture inherited from their parents. However, these second generation of young people tended to view their church community less in terms of the details of ethnicity, which, to the parents, had been particularly important. The Chinese young people perceived themselves as

having a culture that was different from their parents in some ways. Therefore, the church community performed a role as a community nurturing the spirituality of the Chinese young people and their parents, who spoke two different languages and had two different cultures. Although some Caucasian youth attended the English congregation, and, as one of the youth leaders (L2) suggested, there was potential to develop into a *multicultural* church, for the time being, the church could be described as *mainly bi-cultural*.

As Hughes (1997a, p.45) suggests, a multicultural church is one in which the membership is comprised of people of different races, cultures and languages. In Australia, there have been immigrants from various countries and they have formed different ethnic congregations in order to worship in their mother language and maintain their culture and values (Hughes & Bond, 2005). Many immigrants have attended church as a way to link with other people, to share the same ethnic origins, the same language and customs, and to keep in touch with their homeland. Other immigrants seek to link with other people in the community, or adapt to the new environment (Hughes, 1997a). The presence of immigrants from different countries has brought about a greater diversity among the religious groups and within many congregations of most denominations (Hughes, 1997a). Within the Uniting Church, for example, there have been at least twenty different language groups and ninety

different language congregations since 1995 (Hughes, 1997a). In recent times in the Lutheran Church, congregations of diverse cultures have been formed, including Chinese from Hong Kong. The Pentecostal churches have attracted a very large proportion of the second generation of immigrants (Hughes, 1997a, p.47). The Presbyterians also have experienced some increase in the diversity of their congregations (Hughes, 1997a, p.47). However, a recent research study (Hughes & Bond, 2005) suggests that many immigrants do not feel fully accepted when they attend Australian churches or congregations. In addition, it is argued that a multicultural model of church is not desirable because it depends very much on who defines the culture of the church and thus, implies a cultural invasion (Espin, 1996). Hence, today's churches in multicultural Australia have entered into a new era of development and face the challenge to meet the needs of people from diverse cultures without losing their faith.

As discussed in chapter five, a distinctive spirituality among the second generation of Chinese young people was significant by its *multicultural ness* in identity. To nourish these young people's distinctive spirituality, a traditional church, whether Chinese or Australian, needs to rethink its model. While noted in chapter two, this generation of young people, including Chinese young people, is under the impact of globalisation, postmodernism, consumerism and popular culture, and their identity

is in crisis (Cheung, 2000; Leung, 1999; Su & Hung, 2000). In particular, the rise of

individualism can result in the isolation of the self from others, which leads to a

fragmented view of self (Hudson, 2000). Paradoxically, a collective system, which

means the loss of particulars, cannot meet the needs of today's young people either

(Hudson, 2000). To resonate with their spirituality, as suggested by the findings in the

previous section of this chapter, the Church has a role as a community, a context of

relationships, in which young people feel related to God and to each other

(Engebretson, 2004; Hudson, 2000; see also Santrock, 2003). For the spirituality of

Chinese young people and young people from other ethnic backgrounds in a

multicultural society, whose identity tends to be multicultural, it is necessary for the

Church to reshape its culture and identity (Dixson, 1999; see also Castles, & Miller,

2003). On the one hand, within the Church community people share the same

fundamental beliefs, while on the other hand, cultural diversity needs to be recognised

and respected (Espin, 1996). Therefore, a multicultural church model, which

addresses cultural diversity and has its core value biblically founded (F. Chung, 2006),

is recommended.

An Integrated Approach of a Multicultural Church Nurturing Model

In the research reported in this thesis, the spirituality of the Chinese second

generation of young people tended to develop into a different style from their older

generations, who stayed with the young people under the same roof of the church. This reflected an urgent need for the church in a multicultural society to develop a multicultural church model with different approaches and principles, in order to help develop the spirituality of young people from different cultures (Dixson, 1999).

As noted in chapter two, Wilkerson's (1997) suggests four approaches, the liberationist approach, the community of faith approach, the public-church approach and the social science approach, which bring new insights into an integrated approach for a multicultural church model in resonate with young people's spirituality in a multicultural context. The liberationist approach identifies with the oppressed, the minority. The community of faith approach fosters Christian and cultural identities. The public-church approach helps people aware of their own ethnicity and history within a multicultural context. The social science approach cares for the individual as a person and the relations within the group (Wilkerson, 1997). Compared with Wilkerson's four approaches, Fowler's (1991) Public Church Model is an integration model, which aims to foster Christian identity and commitment, and manifests a diversity of cultural background within confessional bounds and theological differences. Theoretically, Fowler's Public Church Model provides guidelines and principles for nurturing the spirituality of young people from different cultural backgrounds in a multicultural society.

In the research reported in this thesis, the Chinese young people's spirituality was a "journey-spirituality" (Warren, 1983) of engaged, pragmatic and experiential (Tacey, 2003), and significant of a consumerist style (Bridger, 2001; Hughes, 2006). The findings suggested that the distinctiveness in their spirituality was due to a process of cultural shifts in their identity formation, which involved both the cultural values of their parents and the society, and that this distinctive spirituality was renewable generation after generation. The church, in which the research was set, reflected significant Chinese cultural values, the most significant being that the Chinese young people stayed with the older generations within the church. The church had tried different ways to meet their needs. As they were under the impact of consumer culture, it was important for the church community to encourage an ongoing commitment to God, an experience of God through real life situations, and a commitment to relationships with Christian peers (Hudson, 2000). While their spirituality was like a journey, they needed time and space to develop their faith and relationships in real life situations. Most importantly they needed someone trustworthy to be their mentor, someone to talk to, and someone to understand their interpersonal relationships, particularly their relationship with their parents. As recent research studies suggest, young people have a deep need for intimacy and belonging, which builds a platform for genuine spirituality (Engebretson, 2002a), and they need

someone, who is available and with whom they feel comfortable, to respond to their

quest for spirituality (Hughes et al., 1995; A. Smith, 2003). As discussed earlier in this

chapter, the findings of the research reported in this thesis suggest that the church

contributed to the Chinese young people' spirituality by being a community, in which

a) they developed their identity, b) they related to their families, c) they grew with

their friends, and d) they developed a relationship with God through involvement in

ministries and the mentoring of their pastors and youth leaders.

Hence, to continue nurturing the spirituality of the Chinese young people

within a multicultural society, it is appropriate to develop a multicultural church

model with an integrated approach with reference to Fowler's Public Church Model

and Wilkerson's approaches, which (a) addresses the traditional culture of their

ethnicity, (b) fosters their Christian and cultural identity which is a complexity of

Chinese and Western cultures, (c) relates them to the society, and d) sustains their

faith and beliefs. Similarly, the findings of the research reported in this thesis suggests

that for young people of other ethnic backgrounds in a multicultural context, there

should be a particular concern with the distinctiveness of their spirituality, which

arises from the transmission of their parents' cultural values, as well as the adoption

of the cultures in the society. Therefore, as Tacey (2003) has suggested, the church

community needs to be *diverse* and *plural*, so that people of diverse cultural

backgrounds can come to the church, within which there may be various

congregations. Although the different generations have different cultural backgrounds,

they, both the young people and the older generations, may stay in the same church of

plural congregations and their spirituality may be nurtured within it.

Conclusion: The Role of the Church Community

To conclude this chapter, the research reported in this thesis has suggested that

the Chinese young people within the church community were under the umbrella of

their families. From their parents they inherited some of the traditional Chinese

cultural values, which were also reflected within the church community. This

suggested that the cultural institution to which they were affiliated had a significant

role in the development of their identity, and thus led to the distinctiveness of their

spirituality. The church community was distinctive as a spiritual home, which

contributed to the spirituality of two generations of different cultures, and to which

they felt a sense of belonging and stayed together under the same roof although they

attended different congregations. Thus, a multicultural church model of diverse

cultures and plural congregations is suggested for nurturing the spirituality of

different generations from different cultural backgrounds, which is particularly

appropriate for the spiritual well being of Chinese young people as well as those from

other ethnic cultural backgrounds. The following chapter, which is the final chapter of

this research study, concludes with the findings and recommendations for further

research.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Conclusion of the Research Findings

The research reported in this thesis was concerned with the spirituality of Chinese young people who attend a Chinese Protestant church in the city of Melbourne, in the state of Victoria, Australia. The research adopted a qualitative orientation and used approaches drawn from ethnography in order to (a) describe the perceptions of the young people about their spirituality, (b) discover and analyse the cultural characteristics that affected their spirituality, (c) develop theories about spirituality related to Chinese young people in a multicultural society, and (d) propose ways in which families and Churches may encourage the development of spirituality for Chinese young people in a multicultural society. Melbourne was chosen for this study because of its multicultural distinctiveness and its significant growth in the population of Chinese people. A summary of the research findings reported in this thesis and recommendations for further research follow.

In Relation to the First Research Aim

A Developmental Spirituality of Relationships

The first significant finding addressed the first aim of the research, which was

to describe the Chinese young people's spirituality from their own perspectives. The research reported in this thesis found that **the spirituality of Chinese young people was developmental and focused on relationships.**

As research studies suggest, spirituality and identity are closely related (Engebretson, 2002a; Rossiter, 2005, 2001; Santrock, 2003). The spirituality of the young participants in the research reported in this thesis was expressed in terms of relationships: a relationship with God, with oneself, with the Church community, and with others, and they felt a need to relate to God, to their own selves, to their parents, and to other people. The young participants referred to spirituality as a relationship with God, which involved faith (a personal commitment) and beliefs (the content of the religious tradition). This spirituality developed as the young participants came to know and experience more about God through various situations, and there was a search for congruence between beliefs and experiences. The important factors that led to the distinctiveness in the young participants' spirituality were, in short, parents and family, including cultural values, their friendship groups and peers, and their Church community. However, the relationships with parents and families were particularly important.

In Relation to the Second Research Aim

A Distinctive Spirituality due to a Process of Cultural Shifts in Identity Formation

Spirituality develops in a variety of styles depending on culture, denominations, personalities and gifts, while values and norms shared by groups are relevant for identity formation (Barker, 1999; Milner, 1975). In relation to the second research aim, to discover and analyse the cultural characteristics that affected the spirituality of the Chinese young people, one of the significant findings presented in chapter five was that **a distinctive identity develops due to a process of cultural shifts, which leads to a distinctive spirituality in a multicultural context.**

The findings showed that the young Chinese participants experienced three main categories of identity, a combination of Australian and Chinese identity (including Australian born Chinese, as more Australian, as more Chinese, and an in-between identity), an Australian identity, and a new identity, and that their identity formation was in a process of cultural shifts (Secombe & Zajda, 1999; Welsh, 1999; see also Hughes, 2002). No matter what identity the young Chinese participants chose for themselves, it involved both traditional Chinese cultural values and western cultural values. Nevertheless, **the process of cultural shifts**, which characterised their identity formation, **always included a sense of incompleteness that led to a new identity**.

A Transmission of Significant Chinese Cultural Elements from Parents

Another significant aspect of the findings in relation to the second research aim was presented in chapter six of this thesis, which discussed the cultural characteristics that affected the spirituality of Chinese young people in the designated church. The findings of the research reported in this thesis suggested that **identity formation among Chinese young people in a multicultural society is distinctive due to a process of cultural shifts, during which a transmission of significant Chinese cultural elements from their parents takes place**.

On the one hand, the young Chinese participants inherited some Chinese culture from their parents. On the other hand, they adopted some cultural values of the society, and found themselves melting into the culture of the society. Therefore, they needed to readjust the worldview learned from their parents in order to operate effectively within the society (Kraft, 1996). Nevertheless, the parents' worldview and cultural values were prior to their spirituality. While significant Chinese cultural elements from their parents characterised the distinctiveness in the young people's spirituality, **the Chinese young people's spirituality was in the shadow of their parents, and a process of cultural shifts, during which a transmission of cultural elements from their parents took place**.

A Distinct Cultural Context of the Church Community

A further significant finding discussed in chapter seven, which addressed the second aim of the research reported in this thesis, was that **the Church community, which reflected significant Chinese cultural values of the parents, had a significant role in the Christian spirituality of the Chinese young people**. The significant cultural values that were reflected within the church community were a) familial relationship was the core of relationships, b) an anthropocentric worldview and cultural values characterised by an hierarchical order of interpersonal relationships, the younger generation subordinate to the older generation, which looked after the younger in return, c) a past-oriented and conservative worldview to some extent that preserved some traditional customs and practices, and d) a "both-and" cultural value characterised by flexibility and inclusiveness in adapting to the culture in the society, which enhanced the establishment of the English congregation together with the Chinese congregation under the same roof of the church. This suggests that **the church as a distinct cultural context became particularly important in shaping the young people's distinctive spirituality**.

While the Western worldview is characterised by individualism, the church community reflected a collective cultural system of the parents' Chinese cultural values. The Chinese young participants claimed their church as *a big family*, where

they felt a sense of belonging and their spirituality was nurtured. In the church community they developed a relationship with God, found a common identity in relation to their friends, and stayed together with families under the same roof of the church as one big family within the multicultural society. Individualism had not pulled away these Chinese young people, and the church community had successfully kept the Chinese young people together with the older generations, sustained their beliefs and shaped the spirituality of different generations. This suggests that **the distinctiveness of the Chinese young people's spirituality, which was in close relation to their parents' worldview and cultural values, was further conformed to the church community, within which they shared a common belief and a distinct culture**.

In Relation to the Third Research Aim

A Multicultural Identity leads to a Distinctive Spirituality

As discussed in the review of literature contained in chapter two, spirituality develops alongside identity formation (Engebretson, 2002), in which cultural characteristics are relevant. A significant finding discussed in chapter five further suggested that in a multicultural society, the identity of the Chinese young people could not be defined by one common experience, either Chinese or Australian, and thus there developed **a multicultural identity for Chinese young people in a**

multicultural society, which influenced their spirituality. This addressed the third

research aim, which was to develop theories concerning the spirituality of Chinese

young people in a multicultural society

The significance of this multicultural identity is that within a multicultural

society, they could construct their own cultural systems by drawing upon a variety of

cultural values (Hughes, 2002), and it was the culture and values that were of most

importance for identity formation, rather than their physical appearance. For Chinese

young people in Australian society, appearance may prevent them from identifying

"completely" as Australian. Yet, in the situation of the multicultural context where

various ethnic groups co-exist, the Chinese appearance becomes *non-distinctive*

among the *multicultural outlooks* (M. Chung, 2004 September). What made the

identity of Chinese young people distinctive were the internal cultural interactions

between Chinese and Australian cultural values, which led to a dual identity or a new

identity. This mode of identity formation, when applied to the Chinese young people,

developed into a distinctive spirituality, which was under the influences of the

Chinese culture in their family and the Australian culture in the society, and both

cultural backgrounds together accounted for the distinctiveness in their Christian

spirituality.

Theories of Spirituality

As studies suggest, while spirituality encompasses the whole of human life, it will develop in a variety of styles depending on culture, denominations, personalities and gifts (Holt, 1993). The literature review contained in chapter two of this thesis has discussed different styles of spirituality as follows: a) programmatic, pneumatic and autogenic spirituality (Collins, 1999), b) a journey-spirituality (Warren, 1983), c) engaged and pragmatic spirituality (Tacey, 2000, 2003), and d) a consumerist style of spirituality (Bridger, 2001; Hughes, 2006). For the Chinese young participants in the research reported in this thesis, spirituality was not limited to a personal relationship with God, but was also in connection with the self and with others (Engebretson, 2004). It was internal and external (Tacey, 2003), personal and communal (Harris & Moran, 1998, p.109; Hill, Knitter & Madges, 1997). With reference to Collins' (1999) three styles of spirituality in western Christianity, there was a combination of pneumatic and autogenic, which focused on both meaning and experience. As Tacey (2003, p.66) suggested, it was a spirituality of both "engaged" and "pragmatic". On the one hand, there was a desire to have personal experience of God that would build up their inward faith (Tacey, 2000). On the other hand, they sought congruence between their beliefs and real life experiences. They needed to be engaged in the world, and at the same time to find out how to live in the world and relate to others.

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Thus, their spirituality was in the experience of relationships through which they found intimacy and sense of belonging (Engebretson, 2002). While they were in need of guidance, vision and values in relation to the world surrounding them (Tacey, 2003, p.65), their spirituality was best described as pragmatic (Collins, 1999; Tacey, 2000), and experiential (Collins, 1999). As they were in a transitional period, their spirituality was *developing* alongside their identity achievement (Rossiter, 2001). According to the insights of Warren (1983), it was a "journey-spirituality".

Chapter five discussed the findings in the light of identity formation that affected the young people's spirituality, and suggested that a multicultural identity contributed to the distinctiveness of the spirituality of Chinese young people. As noted in chapter five and earlier in this section, the significance of this multicultural identity was that within a multicultural society it is the culture and values that are of importance for identity formation, rather than physical appearance. The distinctive cultural context of a multicultural society affects the identity formation of young people, and thus contributes to the distinctiveness in the spirituality of young people from different cultural background (McGrath, 1999). For Chinese young people in Australian society, **the internal cultural interactions of Chinese and Australian cultural values develops into a dual identity (Australian and Chinese) or a new identity, which leads to a distinctive spirituality of their own in a multicultural**

society – a multicultural spirituality. This multicultural spirituality is under the

impact of globalisation and the influence of consumer culture, and is characterised by

a consumerist style (Bridger, 2001; Hughes, 2006). Hence, the Chinese young people

in the research reported in this thesis constructed a new identity by consuming

elements from different cultures, the Chinese traditional culture inherited from their

parents and the western culture in the society (Castles & Miller, 2003). Their

spirituality was therefore characterised by a synthesis of cultural elements of their

parents' Chinese traditional culture and the western culture in their society.

Hence, spirituality for Chinese young people in a multicultural society is

basically a journey-spirituality (Warren, 1983), while it is also best described as a

combination of engaged, pragmatic and experiential spirituality (Tacey, 2003),

incorporating a consumerist style (Hughes, 2006). It is a real challenge for the Church

in Australia to nurture the spirituality of these Chinese young people, and of those

who have a culture different from their older generations.

In Relation to the Fourth Research Aim

A Significant Role for the Church: A Spiritual Home

Addressing the fourth aim of the research reported in this thesis, to propose

ways in which churches and families may encourage the development of spirituality

for Chinese young people in a multicultural society, one of the significant findings

discussed in chapter seven is, **the church has a significant role as a spiritual home**.

In the perspectives of the young participants in the research reported in this thesis, spirituality was concerned with an inward or internal faith (Harris & Moran, 1998; Tacey, 2003), and both the individual interiority and experience of God within the community were important in nourishing spirituality (Tacey, 2003). The young participants observed a strongly committed relationship between the participants and the church community, and that the church community was like a family. The most important factor was their parents who attended the same church, or their friends with whom they had grown up together. It was suggested that the main role of the church community in the participants' spirituality was as a spiritual home, being attentive to their needs (Hill, Knitter, & Madges, 1997; Warren, 1983) to relate to God and other people, to live their beliefs through involvement in ministries, and most significantly to find a sense of belonging.

A Significant Role of Chinese Church in the Spirituality of Two Generations

In relation to the fourth research aim, another significant finding discussed in chapter seven was that the Church community had a role not only in the young participants' spirituality, but also in the spirituality of their parents who attended the same church. **The Church, which reflected significant Chinese cultural traits, nurtured the spirituality of two generations while shaping their spirituality**. On

the one hand, the parents who attended the church with their children perceived the church as their family. They observed that not only they themselves, but also their children, needed to relate to God, to the Church and people outside the Church, and most of them preferred their children to stay with the same church. As discussed in chapter six, their value of "family" entailed much more than a family (M. G. Wong, 1988), and that their worldview incorporated patrilocal values. This was reflected in their church community within which families with different generations stayed under the same roof, and in the parents' perspectives, the church needed to perform the role of nurturing the spirituality of two or more generations.

On the other hand, the young Chinese participants observed that they needed to relate to God, to parents, to oneself, and to other people (including the Church community). Their spirituality, therefore, concerned an individual interiority and experience of God within their community (Harris & Moran, 1998). The Church community supported their identity and encouraged the development of their spirituality when the Church established the English congregation alongside the Chinese congregation. They felt appreciated and had a sense of belonging to the church community, which had a) created an environment that family members and/or friends could stay together, b) established group activities and fellowships in which they could share their common beliefs and support one another, c) provided

opportunities for involvement in ministries, and d) helped them relate their beliefs to real life situations. Due to the inheritance of their parents' worldview, they were obedient and loyal to the Church community from which they expected care concerning their spirituality.

Hence, the Church community was perceived as one big family of different generations, and had a significant role in nurturing the spirituality of two different congregations, which reflected two different cultures in their ways of doing things, but both of which observed some common Chinese cultural values, although different in degree.

Final Summary Of Findings

To conclude, the characteristics of the spirituality of the young Chinese people revealed in this study were: (a) it was an internal faith concerned with a relationship to God, which could develop in accordance with their knowledge and experience; (b) it was the awareness and experience of God through real life situations and in church activities in which private and communal religious practices were involved; (c) it was in relationship with the other people, as well as the world surrounding them; (d) the coherence between their beliefs and their lives was particularly important in order to grow in faith and commitment concerning their relationship with God; (e) it was an

expression of beliefs through involvement in ministries, which helped them relate to God, as well as to the other people within their church community; (f) its distinctiveness was in a process of cultural shifts in their identity formation. The role of the church in relation to their spirituality was as a spiritual home where they shared a common identity, and related to God and other people. Most significantly, under the same roof of the church, there stayed together the two generations of different cultures. The following table (Table 8.1) summarises the findings of this thesis.

Table 8.1.

Summary of the Research Findings on the Chinese Young People's Spirituality

Aims of the research	Findings
1. To describe the Chinese young people's perceptions of spirituality	Chapter 4: Spirituality of Chinese young people 1. Definition: Spirituality refers to a relationship with God, which involves faith (a personal commitment) and beliefs (the content of the religious tradition). This spirituality develops as the young participants come to know and experience more about God. 2. Through various situations, they felt aware of and experienced God, and there was a search for relevance between beliefs and experiences. 3. Spirituality was expressed in terms of relationships: with God, with the Church community, with oneself, and with others 4. Factors in the young participants' spirituality: Parents and family, friendship groups and peers, the Church community, cultural values, and real life situations

2. To discover and analyse the cultural characteristics that affected the spirituality of Chinese young people in the designated church	Chapter 5: Identity of Chinese young people -
	      Spirituality is a core expression of identity (Rossiter, 2001, 2005) and develops alongside identity achievement (Engebretson, 2002). Their spirituality develops in a variety of styles depending on culture, denominations, personalities and gifts, while values and norms shared by groups are relevant for identity formation (Barker, 1999; Milner, 1975).
	1. Three main categories of identity:
	  (a) a combination of A + C
	     ABC, A>C, C>A
	  (b) an Australian identity
	  (c) a new identity
	2. The factors: see table 5.1
	3. A process of cultural shifts
	4. Incompleteness that led to a new identity
	5. A distinctive multicultural model of identity that contributed to the spiritual formation and leads to a distinctive type of spirituality
	
	Chapter 6 and 7 – Factors of worldview and cultural values that affected the identity of Chinese young people and thus shaped their spirituality
	1. The parents' worldview and cultural values (see figure 6.1, 6.2, 6.3)
	2. The parents' spirituality – the shadow of young people's spirituality leads to the distinctiveness in young people's spirituality
	3. The church community reflected significant Chinese cultural values

3. To develop theories about the spirituality of Chinese young people	Chapter 2: Theories of spirituality 1. Programmatic, pneumatic and autogenic spirituality (Collins, 1999) 2. A journey-spirituality (Warren, 1983) 3. An engaged and pragmatic spirituality (Tacey, 2000, 2003) 4. A consumerist style of spirituality (Bridger, 2001; Hughes, 2006) 5. A theory to address

in a multicultural society	a) their core values of their beliefs b) different cultural practices in different contexts, c) the development of religious identity Chapter 5: identity theories 1. A process of cultural shifts – a dual value system (Secombe & Zajda, 1999): a phenomenon of cultural renewal within the value systems among the young generation. 2. A multicultural model of identity: young people can construct their own cultural systems by drawing upon a variety of cultural values in a multicultural society (Hughes, 2002) 3. Incompleteness in the process of their identity formation (Barker, 1999; Grossberg, 1996, 1997 reprinted) A model of multicultural identity – this contributes to the spiritual formation of Chinese young people and leads to a distinctive type of spirituality

4. To propose ways in which churches and families may encourage the development of spirituality for Chinese young people in a multicultural society	Chapter 7: The role of the Church community
	      The church had a role in their identity development and nurtured their spirituality by being:
	a) a community in which their families and friends related to each other and grew together
	b) a community in which they developed relationships with God through involvement in ministries and the care of their pastors and youth leaders
	c) a community in which significant Chinese cultural values were found to shape their distinctive spirituality
	
	Final chapter (Chapter 8) – conclusion and implications
	    Therefore, the Church and families may encourage the development of Chinese young people's spirituality by:
	1. creating an environment that family members and friends can stay together
	2. having group activities and fellowships in which they can share their beliefs and support one another
	3. providing opportunities for involvement in ministries, and relating their beliefs to real life situations
	4. always listening to their voices and addressing to their needs to
	    a) relate to God,
	    b) relate to parents,
	    c) relate to oneself, and
	    d) relate to other people (including the Church community)

Limitations of the Research

The research reported in this thesis took place in a medium-sized congregation in a Melbourne Protestant Church and the study was limited, like all such studies, by the geographical and religious context. This research was limited to the study of the Chinese young people who themselves or whose parents went to the Chinese Protestant church. The research findings need to be understood in this particular cultural and religious context. In addition, this research was centred on a case study with a limited number of participants. Arguably, however, this allowed for depth and richness of data.

Nevertheless, the applicability of this research is beyond this group of people, such as Vietnamese, Greeks, Turkish, Malaysians and other people groups in a multicultural context. This will lead to further and broader research studies.

Recommendations for Further Research

The spirituality discussed in the research reported in this thesis is confined within a Christian perspective, and the young people were the second generation of Chinese people. Longitudinal research is recommended on the identity of the third, fourth or further generations of Chinese young people in the Chinese churches in

Australia. This may lead to another model of identity and discover a new type of spirituality due to changes of cultural significance in the process of cultural transmission.

As well as this, latitudinal research on Chinese young people who attend Australian Churches with a Chinese congregation is necessary in order to compare the different models of spirituality and the church models in nurturing young people's spirituality. Further research may focus on the spirituality of non-church goers in order to find out the similarities and differences in the styles of spirituality between the two groups.

Lastly, young people from other ethnic cultures, such as Vietnamese, Greeks, Turkish, and Malaysians in a multicultural context may share the same experience in their identity formation that leads to their distinctive spirituality. Therefore, further and broader research studies on other Christian groups are recommended.

Final Conclusion

Therefore, this research study contributes significantly to the development of the Chinese churches with two congregations, and other churches with multicultural congregations, particularly in a multicultural society such as Australia, which recognises the co-existence of different cultural values, and is seeking a new

multi-ethnic national identity (F. Chung, 2006). This study leads to a deeper understanding of ethnic youth in a multicultural society, especially their spiritual needs and the ways in which they construct identity.

Research studies have already suggested that parents and peers are always most significant among the factors that affect the identity formation of young people. For those born overseas and of the second generation, their parents' cultural influences and peers are particularly important (Bond, 2005 March). For the Chinese young people in the research reported in this thesis, in spite of the peer influences, parental religious identity and church involvement have enhanced their spiritual well being (A. Smith, 2003). This research further suggests that significant cultural influences of the Chinese parents, as well as the church with which the young Chinese participants were affiliated, have played a significant role in the identity formation of the Chinese young people, and have thus shaped their distinctive spirituality. While the western world has entered an era of postmodernism and applauds individualism, the private sector of an individual's spirituality tends to demand attention. Nevertheless, this research has suggested a distinctive spirituality of young people, which is yet under the influences of a collective cultural value system and shares communal experiences. Parents, families, the Church, and other compulsory institutions, still have a significant role in shaping young people's spirituality within

today's society of "whateverism"[25] (Hughes, 2006).

Hence, it is a challenge, indeed, for today's Church to maintain its role, particularly as a community of believers, which must address the cultural values of young people from different backgrounds. To this challenge, the research reported in this thesis makes a significant contribution.

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[25] P. Hughes (2006) suggests an attitude of whateverism, which means that people pick and choose whatever they like or whatever they find helpful to themselves.

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