

NAZARENE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

DYING THIRST TO LIVING FOUNTAIN:
EMBODYING ADULTHOOD IN A CANADIAN PENITENTIARY
AND IN AN ADOLESCENT WORLD

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DYING THIRST TO LIVING FOUNTAIN:
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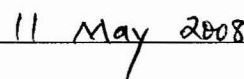
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Canadian Penitentiary and in an Adolescent World
Deborah Tanasieuk 2008

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CONTENTS

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	iv
<i>Chapter One: Dying Thirst</i>	1
<i>Chapter Two: Literature Review - The Shape and Form of Being Adult</i>	12
1. Sociological and Cultural Issues of Being Adult	
2. Developmental and Self-Help Literature About Adult Life and Living	
3. Worldview and Being Adult	
4. Theological and Biblical Concerns of Being Adult	
a. Image of God	
b. Wesleyan Holiness Understanding of <i>imago Dei</i> and Being Adult	
<i>Chapter Three: Stuck In Jail – An Overview of Incarcerated Men at Saskatchewan Penitentiary</i>	59
<i>Chapter Four: What Do You Want To Be When You Grow Up?</i>	70
1. Pre-Course Inmate Interviews	
a. Being Adult and What is Needed to Help a Person Become Adult	
b. The Effect of Incarceration on One’s Ability to Be Adult	
c. Understanding Maturity	
d. Media Messages About Being Adult	
e. What the Bibles Says About Being Adult and Maturity	
f. Self-Assessment on Being Adult	
2. Post Course Interview Data	
a. Participant Responses on Being Adult and Maturity	
b. What Was Learned From the Bible About Being Adult and Maturity	
c. Course Impact on Life	
d. What Was Left Out of the Course	
e. Group Responses to Being Adult Course	
3. Comparison of Responses Between the Inmate Group and the Adult Sunday School Class	
<i>Chapter Five: Living Fountain</i>	96
1. Interpretation and Application of Research Results	
2. Anticipated Outcomes	
3. Embodied Adulthood: A Living Fountain	
<i>Appendix A: Pre and Post Course Interview Questions</i>	113
<i>Appendix B: Being Adult Course Outline</i>	115
<i>Selected Bibliography</i>	143

CHAPTER ONE

DYING THIRST

I am beginning my seventh year as chaplain at Saskatchewan Penitentiary. As I have interacted with the inmates during this time I've come to realize there is an immaturity to them. This comes through in their demeanor, in their dress, in their interaction with one another, with staff, with chapel volunteers, in their understanding of themselves, and in their hopes and dreams for the future. In terms of their demeanor there is usually a sense that one is with teenage boys rather than with adult men. Every inmate is issued institutional clothing which includes a white t-shirt, jeans and a dull green jacket. There is something diminishing about a t-shirt, especially one that most others would wear as an undershirt. The dull green jacket is just that – dull. Even a new jacket looks somehow sad. Perhaps it is because the green jackets are only worn by inmates that it makes them somehow to be an image of powerlessness. On occasion, an inmate about to be released dressed in “street clothes” will stop by the chapel to say good-bye. There is such a difference in demeanor and aspect. There is brightness and optimism and there is power that is almost palpable.

How inmates interact with one another, staff and chapel volunteers has a sense of immaturity to it. Describing how inmates interact with one another is difficult. The need to be able to somehow be better or know more or be able to do more is often involved in many of the conversations I observe. It has been interesting to observe the inmates who

attend chapel services and how little respect there is for another inmate who testifies or who participates beyond sitting in the congregation. There is distrust and they are hard on one another. In regard to their interactions with staff, especially correctional officers, it is interesting that the inmates call the officers "boss." Inmates challenge staff like a typical teenager challenges a parent and often the inmate slinks away in anger and/or frustration. They have indicated they often feel defeated. It is rare for an inmate to approach a staff person on an adult level and I would suggest few staff regard inmates as adults. This comes through in tone of voice and body language. When chapel volunteers visit, the inmates are often more like children than they are like adults. They have difficulty having conversations and they often monopolize the volunteers if they do engage in conversation. It should also be noted in my observation some volunteers have difficulty treating the inmates as adults. They listen as if they were listening to children and often the responses are what an adult would say to a child or a teenager. Personally, I often found myself parenting rather than relating as an adult to another adult when I would interact with the inmates. It was easier to mother than it was to relate to these men as adults because of their demeanor, their behavior and their responses to my interaction with them. I found myself often wanting to say, "Grow up!"

Thus this journey began. I wanted to contribute to an inmate's ability to be adult. One way I began to do this was to affirm the fact that inmates are men. In my own thinking I had to purposefully call inmates men – not "fellas," not guys, not offenders, but men. I also discovered in this journey those who are incarcerated would rather be called inmates than offenders. I do so in this work out of respect. I began to find ways in my own interactions to be an adult with other adults. I began to reflect on my own journey as

an adult and how perhaps I could offer an opportunity to address issues of being adult to those who are incarcerated. On an average day at Saskatchewan Penitentiary I will have conversation with 15 - 20 men who will pass through the chapel area doors looking for a moment of peace, a word of encouragement, or simply a cup of coffee. It is interesting to sit and listen to the hopes and dreams of these men. It is not uncommon to hear they would like to have meaningful work, that they would like to have a decent family life, and, they would certainly like to be out of jail. What is often the case is most do not have the personal resources developmentally, emotionally, or relationally to live in the community. Also many have difficulty finding employment because of their incomplete education and lack of training and experience. Added to this many have little or no understanding of how to be a regular citizen.

My decision to offer a course on being adult came about because I observed these men to be without the personal resources to become adult. As I listened to men who had participated in courses I was facilitating on *Boundaries* and *Changes That Heal* by Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend¹ I realized what many of these men were looking for was a guide to being adult. Somehow they were bankrupt in understanding and ability to be adult and in being able to maintain themselves financially and relationally in the community. My personal interest in the venture was both theological and practical. I found myself at odds with some of the theology of Cloud and Townsend, in particular

¹ Henry Cloud & John Townsend, *Boundaries: When to Say YES, When to Say NO, to Take Control of Your Life*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992) and Henry Cloud, *Changes That Heal: How To Understand Your Past to Ensure A Healthier Future*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1990).

their understanding of the image of God. I also wondered what the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition had to say about being adult and maturity.

Along with these thoughts and feelings about ministry, further stimulation for this project came during the Wesleyan Theology seminar in June 2006 as part of the required studies for the Doctor of Ministry degree at Nazarene Theological Seminary. Dr. Craig Keen was the guest lecturer who led us through a discussion of William T. Cavanaugh's *Torture and Eucharist*.² At one point in the conversation Dr. Keen made a comment about the Hebrew word, *nephesh* which is often translated "living being" in English in Genesis 2:7. The image he described was that of a living desire – that Adam became this living throat, a living hungering thirst. He illustrated this living hungering thirst through newborn birds in a nest with their beaks wide open waiting to be fed by the parent birds. With beaks open wide and bare of feathers they look to be fed, their hunger insatiable. Dr. Keen went on to talk about Jesus with the woman at the well in John 4 where Jesus offers to give the woman living water so that she would become a living fountain, a fountain that would be constantly emptied yet constantly being filled with the water of the Spirit of God. The image of the living throat being turned into a living fountain stayed with me. Shortly after the seminar I began teaching *Changes That Heal* to a group of inmates at the penitentiary. As the course unfolded I began to recognize that these men did not know how to be adult. The image of the living throat came to mind very regularly as I listened to the men struggle with how to grow up, with how to be an adult. They had spent their lives up to this point being this insatiable living thirst. In my mind they were somehow dying of thirst because of their unsatisfying life experience,

² William T. Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist: Theology, Politics and the Body of Christ*, (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 1998).

addictions, marginalization as inmates, and their yearning to “make it on the outside.” I saw them as dying thirsts. They needed a different resource, a different well, than the one they had been drinking out of up to this point in their lives. These men were like the woman at the well who was in need of living water! As *Changes That Heal* unfolded I was struck by the idea to create a course on embodying adulthood, on being adult, as I eventually came to call the course. How does one grow up? How does one go from being a dying thirst to a living fountain? The image of dying thirst to living fountain provides a way to view embodying adulthood. It is not so much that we are adult or become adult, but that we embody adulthood, that is, we live out in our flesh and blood body what the Judeo-Christian Scriptures envision for humanity in Genesis 1 and 2 and in the gospels through the life of Jesus who embodies a Holy Spirit enlivened human life.

“Embodying” adulthood suggests more than simply being adult or becoming adult. Embodying suggests a physical location for adulthood. Embodying suggests not just a thought or a mindset but a living, breathing, active, interactive, interfacing entity that has shape and form. To embody is to be defined, to be a separate yet interactive entity with others. Our bodies encase our essence, our being, our substance. Inevitably, in our bodies we act out our beliefs and values. To be embodied is to not only have a particular shape and form but also a particular identity, and a particular ability to participate in this God-created reality. A question I hear regularly from inmates is “How do I live as an adult?” They are not looking for theory. They want a step-by-step, practical, livable guide to being an adult! They have also recognized it is hard to live as an adult! Often, in the recognition that being an adult is difficult they are also asking, “How can I be an adult like you?” Many want to know how I do it – how I live out being

an adult. In some ways they are asking, “What’s your secret? Can you teach me to be adult?” In light of this, my quest to understand embodying adulthood began. This hunger, this thirst to grow up, to make it in society so that prison is nothing more than a dim memory but nonetheless a place of “waking up,” a place proving to be a launch pad into an incredibly different future that could not even be imagined or dreamed. Thus, the image of dying thirst to living fountain became the embryo for the project that will be presented in the following pages.

The theme of the project concerned the spiritual, emotional, developmental and theological issues of adulthood as they pertain specifically to those who are incarcerated and more broadly to the Christian faith community. As a chaplain in a Canadian, federal, male, medium security correctional institution for the past six years, I have observed men who are physically and chronologically adult but who do not act as adults. There are sociological, developmental, and physical issues that contribute to this “un-adult” behavior which will be identified as part of this project. The specific contexts for the project were Saskatchewan Penitentiary and my local congregation. The specific content of the project included exploring being adult from several points of view including: sociological and current cultural perspectives; issues specific to the environment of incarceration; developmental and emotional characteristics of adulthood; theological underpinnings and issues surrounding what it means to be adult and/or mature; Wesleyan-Holiness specific theological constructs; and, a presentation of a guide/course to assist persons to embody adulthood. This content shaped and formed the scope of the project even though it focused on concerns arising from the context of incarceration. It was my contention that the project could have a broader application to, perhaps, not so

much society-at-large, but to the Christian faith community and, I also hoped more specifically to the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition with a particularity to the Church of the Nazarene.

My plan of action included: researching sociological and cultural concerns of being adult; a review of psychological, developmental and self-help literature on being adult; a discussion of worldview and being adult; and, a look at theological and biblical concerns of being adult focusing on *imago Dei*, how Jesus embodied being adult and Wesleyan-Holiness perspectives on being adult. Along with this research I designed an eleven session course called *Being Adult* to present to a group of men incarcerated at Saskatchewan Penitentiary. Each session was approximately two hours in length. Content of the session provided a review of our personal understanding of being adult, cultural messages about being adult, understanding worldview, a biblical understanding of being adult focusing on *imago Dei* and the life of Jesus and, some practical application of what had been presented. My goal was to offer an understanding of being adult in their particular context (the institution, their personal lives, in the world-at-large); discuss how certain thoughts, attitudes, values, beliefs, emotions and actions may be hindering them from embodying adulthood; and, offer practical help in engaging in the world as adults.

The problem this addressed in my ministry context as a chaplain in a Canadian federal penitentiary was offering an approachable and practical guide for incarcerated men to assist them in becoming viable members of society. The mission statement of the Correctional Service of Canada says,

The Correctional Service of Canada (CSC), as part of the criminal justice system and respecting the rule of law, contributes to public safety by actively encouraging and assisting offenders to become law-abiding citizens, while exercising reasonable, safe, secure and humane control.³

One of the roles of chaplaincy is to encourage and assist offenders to become law-abiding citizens. This conversation around being adult would become one way in which I as a chaplain could be active in encouraging and assisting those who end up being incarcerated to become law-abiding citizens able to maintain themselves in regular Canadian society. Because of addiction, abuse, the very nature of institutional life, and the philosophical message of society-at-large, to name just four apparent causes, incarcerated men appear to be reluctant and even incapable of being adult which may contribute to their inability to be law-abiding citizens. My philosophy of ministry as a chaplain is lived out in being present to the men at Saskatchewan Penitentiary for this part of their journey. I see myself as a companion-along-the-way for this stretch of the road. My hope is that together we will learn something about ourselves, about one another and about God. I realize I will most likely only journey with these men while they are incarcerated. What I wanted to offer is something that would bring new life and transformation. I wanted to not just provide opportunities for growth but also opportunities for “growing up,” for embodying adulthood in an adult diminishing environment. I wanted to provide a potential springboard for personal growth and development that could encourage and assist them to become, and remain, full and active participants in the community, thus diminishing the potential for incarceration in the future. Also, in reviewing other potential courses or programs of similar nature I had not

³ *Mission of the Correctional Service of Canada* (7th ed.), published by the Correctional Service of Canada under the authority of the Solicitor General of Canada, 2001, 4.

come across anything that addressed issues of being adult from a Wesleyan-Holiness perspective. I wanted to make a theological contribution in this regard. As our culture continues to change, it is important that we not only understand but also embody adulthood in ways that will leave a legacy for those who will come after us. My primary theological commitments were to understand *imago Dei*, and how the first chapters of Genesis provide a basis for being adult from the Judeo-Christian worldview, Jesus as a model of embodying being adult, and Wesleyan-Holiness writing on issues of being adult and/or maturity.

Participants in the research for the project included men who, at the time I presented the *Being Adult* course, were incarcerated at Saskatchewan Penitentiary and parishioners from my local faith community. Data I collected from participants incorporated: understandings and notions of being adult; their awareness of “how adult” they are; questions and concerns participants had regarding becoming adult; their opinions about cultural and media messages of being adult; what they understand the Bible to say about being adult; and, a self-report by participants on what they learned about being adult from the course and how it has changed their own self-understanding and behavior. The method for collecting data was through a pre-course and a post-course interview with inmates who participated in the *Being Adult* course, and asking questions to the participants as a group in the first two and final sessions of the course. Expected outcomes for the research were that the incarcerated will perhaps have limited understanding of being adult developmentally, theologically and sociologically. I hoped participants in the local church would have greater awareness. I thought it might be

difficult for participants to be honest in answering the questions mostly because of a desire to please and their ability to trust me and others participants.

The assumptions I made in the project were:

1. Most incarcerated men have difficulty embodying being adult in recognizable ways.
2. That the incarcerated are in many ways prevented from “growing up” because of sociological, environmental, developmental and emotional factors.
3. Local church participants are not aware of the effects of how they embody being adult the life of the faith community and their participation in it.
4. The Bible offers a particular shape and form to embodied adult human being first, in its presentation of *imago Dei* in Genesis and secondly, in the life and teachings of Jesus in the gospels.
5. The Wesleyan-Holiness theological tradition supports embodied maturity in adult persons in spite of the prevalent culture and, with instructive support and community there is the possibility of vigorously embodying adult being that will manifest in holiness and will offer itself in life giving ways now and to the generations who will follow us.

My anticipated outcomes revolved around assisting incarcerated persons on their journey to becoming citizens. Developing an awareness of the characteristics of being adult sociologically, developmentally and emotionally, spiritually and theologically would hopefully provide an opportunity for those who participated in the course to embody being adult in ways that will bring about personal transformation. As a result they would be enabled to live as law-abiding and contributing citizens. As they embody being adult their personal lives will become more manageable, their relationships will be better understood and their ability to make choices and be responsible for their actions will be enhanced. I also hoped incarcerated course participants would be able to contribute to the institutional environment in a healthier manner and that local church course participants would do the same in the faith community. Toward this end my hope was that all course participants would develop a fuller understanding of their potential for spiritual and emotional maturity and recognize how their ability to embody being adult

affects their personal lives, their families, their ability to be good citizens and their potential for life giving ministry in and through their faith community.

In terms of outcomes I anticipated in regard to the Church of the Nazarene I wanted to be able to offer some theological reflection on embodying being adult that could assist Nazarenes in becoming healthier persons and faith communities. It is my belief that the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition is rich with wisdom in regard to growing up and embodying Christ; that our distinctive in regard to scriptural holiness has perhaps of late not upheld the transformational and teleological foundations upon which the life of holiness is built from the scriptures, the tradition of the Church, reasonableness and personal experience. For the broader Christian Church one of my anticipated outcomes was that the material I develop will be of use in the correctional chaplaincy community. As chaplains, we are continually looking for ways to engage those we minister to in healing and wholeness. I would hope this work would be a contribution in this direction.

Outcomes in my personal and professional development as a minister through the literature I read, the conversations I participated in, and the work I engaged in as I designed this project were to be challenged in my own embodied adulthood. What I presented to the men in Saskatchewan Penitentiary and my fellow worshippers in my local church of necessity had to resonate in my own personal life. I saw this project as a personal call to accountability, responsibility, maturity, agency and stewardship. I anticipated having a better understanding of being adult myself. I anticipated engaging the scriptures and my own theological tradition with questions regarding being adult and maturity. I look forward to sharing what I have learned with colleagues in chaplaincy, in my local church, and in the denomination.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW: THE SHAPE AND FORM OF BEING ADULT

“I never thought about adulthood...I just assumed I would be one.”
 – Inmate participant in Being Adult course.

Many sources in literature speak to issues of being adult from several perspectives including: sociological and cultural issues of being adult; developmental and self-help literature about adult life and living; worldview and being adult; and, theological and biblical concerns especially focusing on *imago Dei*, how Jesus embodied being adult and Wesleyan Holiness perspectives on *imago Dei* and being adult.

1. Sociological and Cultural Issues of Being Adult

On the Frontier of Adulthood: Theory, Research and Public Policy, provides current sociological research on adulthood with a particular emphasis on emerging adulthood.⁴ Its main contribution to this project was describing the traditional markers of adulthood: leaving home, finishing school, starting work, getting married and having children.⁵ These traditional markers of adulthood were the springboard to much of the

⁴ Richard A. Setterstein Jr., Frank F. Furstenberg Jr., Reuben G. Rumbaut, eds. *On the Frontier of Adulthood: Theory, Research and Public Policy*. (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

⁵ Richard A. Setterstein Jr., Frank F. Furstenberg Jr., Reuben G. Rumbaut, eds., 5.

research presented in the book especially in regard to the changing timing and sequencing of adulthood in North American society today. The authors note

The changing timetable for adulthood has given rise to a host of questions about whether current generations of young people are less interested in growing up, choosing to stay dependent on their parents, and more wary of making commitments...The problem is not that young people are refusing to grow up or that parents are discouraging them from doing so. Nor do we believe that young people are unwilling to commit to future obligations. If anything, we might argue that the opposite is occurring. Young people are now much more aware of what it takes to be autonomous and they tend to be disinclined to take on commitments that they cannot honor.⁶

This seems to indicate that somehow young people today are more intelligent and sophisticated than previous generations. On the one hand this does have a particular truth. It seems young people today have been raised to be winners, to understand what are their personal rights and freedoms, to make choices that are for them without seeming consideration for others and they have access to information and opportunities that were not available in the past. Someone has suggested this is the “entitled generation.”⁷ This generation sees themselves as being entitled to whatever it is they want. Perhaps this comes from parents who have provided every need and who find it difficult to see their children fail or be in difficult circumstances. I recently had a conversation with a friend who has a nineteen-year-old son. Over the past year he has completed high school, dealt

⁶ Ibid. , 5-6.

⁷ An example of “entitled generation” conversation is Jeff Zazlow in “*Moving On*,” The Wall Street Journal Online, Thursday, July 5, 2007 available from http://online.wsj.com/article_email/SB11835840657463-IMYQjAxMDE3ODEZMTUxODEOWj.html; Internet; accessed January 6, 2008. Another example of a concern raised in regard to the entitled generation is an article by Freda Lewkowicz (a Canadian who lives in Montreal, QUE) “*Boomers, Elders, Gorgon Students*” in The Globe and Mail Newspaper, March 28, 2006 available from <http://www.theglobeandmail.com>; Internet; accessed January 6, 2008.

with a physical health issue that required bed rest for an extended period of time, gone on a mission trip of sorts with several friends where he had opportunity to experience what it is like to not have sufficient funds, food or shelter. He recently returned home and his mother and I had a conversation about his future at a time when he was in the process of looking for employment. She does want her son to go and live on his own. However, she is reluctant to make that transition painful or difficult for him.

To continue in regard to the above quote, young people may be more aware of what it takes to be autonomous as the authors suggest but I wonder if it is not so much the awareness of what it takes to be autonomous but that it has become so expensive to be autonomous both personally and financially. *On the Frontier of Adulthood* suggests the dramatic changes of the latter half of the 20th century contribute to the changing landscape of the transition to adulthood.

Significant economic and social changes include the expansion of secondary and higher education; a decline in the availability of full-time jobs; an increase in the proportion of individuals concurrently pursuing higher education and work; an increase in the labor force participation of women; an increase in cohabitation; delays in marriage and childbirth; a decline in fertility; and the expansion and retraction of welfare state policies and programs. Major cultural shifts include weaker normative controls on behavior and greater individualization, both of which allow young people more freedom to plan and live life in accordance with their interests and wishes, and the emergence of feminism, which has reoriented the priorities of women. Changes such as these have not only reshaped early adult life but have altered the nature of the entire life course.⁸

There is a sense in which children are raised to be autonomous in regard to how their choices and their behavior affect others. By this I mean that it seems we teach our children to make choices and behave in ways that are good for them but the choices and

⁸ Setterstein, Furstenberg, Rumbaut, 534-535.

behaviors have not been made with any consideration for others. What is difficult in this is perhaps children are only mimicking what is being modeled to them.

The fact that the contributors to *On the Frontiers of Adulthood* and others like Jeffrey Arnett⁹ have focused attention and research on emerging adulthood speaks to the struggle of becoming adult in North American society today. It seems it is not so easy or so neat to grow up, to be adult. Christian Smith in *Getting A Life: The Challenge of Emerging Adulthood* says

Studies agree that the transition to adulthood today is more complex, disjointed and confusing than it was in past decades. The steps through and to schooling, first real job, marriage and parenthood are simply less well organized and coherent today than they were in generations past. At the same time these years are marked by an unparalleled freedom to roam, experiment, learn (or not), move on and try again.¹⁰

Although this project is not particularly focused on emerging adulthood I would suggest that the models of embodied adulthood that those in their teens and twenties have been observing may well perhaps be leaving them wondering just how they are to be adults themselves. I would wonder if one of the questions may very well be “Why should I grow up?” Added to this is perhaps a sense that they are already behaving as adults which is almost paradoxical to the question just posed. Recently CBS produced *Kid Nation*, a show depicting forty, nine to fifteen-year-olds from across the United States living together in a ghost town in New Mexico. The participants were to stay for forty days in what we would call minimal circumstances that included no beds (sleeping

⁹ Jeffrey Jensen Arnett, *Emerging Adulthood: The Winding Road from the Late Teens Through the Twenties*, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2004).

¹⁰ Christian Smith, *Getting A Life: The Challenge of Emerging Adulthood*. Christianity Today International/Books & Culture Magazine, November/December 2007, Vol. 13, No. 6, p. 10. available from <http://www.Christianitytoday.com/bc/2007/006/2.10.html>; Internet; accessed November 2, 2007.

bags, blankets, pillows), outhouses, one pump (no running water), no recreational activities, no adults to supervise or cook or clean. The children were divided into 4 teams and each team had a representative on the town council. The children were to create their own community. My twelve-year-old daughter really liked the show. I watched a number of the episodes with her. What was interesting was the behavior of the participants. They were children and yet not children. One ten-year-old girl was particularly interesting to watch. She was one of the council members. She would make decisions with the other council members and then as the decisions were shared with the rest of the participants she would continually say, "Just deal with it!" When she was no longer on the council she was belligerent and uncooperative. I wondered what her mother was like. In terms of what this has to do with incarcerated men and their ability or lack of ability to be adult I listened to the inmate participants' stories of when they realized they had become adult. One man in particular related how he was caring for his siblings, making meals, changing diapers, and keeping them safe when he was six. He left home because he grew tired of the responsibility. The man also indicated that his parents were not capable of punishing him for wrong doing so it was difficult to discipline, or punish himself. He would rather have been appropriately disciplined than left to his own devices. However, after he left home and ended up in youth detention facilities he challenged anyone who tried to discipline him. The girl on *Kid Nation* and this man both did not want anyone to be their boss. No one could tell them what to do. It will be interesting to see what happens to the young girl as she grows up.

Christian Smith makes an interesting summary:

For most American youth there extends between high school graduation day and the eventual settling down with spouse, career, kids and house a very long stretch

of time in which to figure out life. For many, it is marked by immense autonomy, freedom of choice, lack of obligations and focus on self. It is also normally marked by high instability, experimentation and uncertainty. For many, emotions run high and low, as hopes and exhilaration recurrently run up against confusion and frustration...this socially structured and culturally defined phase of life seems itself to foster an intense concern for what is new, different, exciting, alternative, possible, and hopeful. Commitments that would curtail the exploration of options are often avoided.¹¹

How does one go from emerging adulthood to embodying adulthood? Sociologically there is this new reality of emerging adulthood. My suggestion is that not only are there young adults hesitant to embrace and embody being adult but that there is a reticence in those who are chronologically adult as well. I would also like to suggest that chronological adults do not like being challenged in how they embody being adult and, not only emerging adults, but many adults in different stages of adult life avoid commitment that “would curtail the exploration of options.”

Perhaps better questions would be: How do we call people to grow up? How are we inviting people to maturity? It is difficult to talk with people about how they are as adults. In some ways it is insulting. How dare one suggest that someone else has not grown up (unless that person is incarcerated or mentally ill or living on social assistance)! If a person can do as they please and not be accountable then why would that person want to hear anything about maturity? These are significant questions in this project.

Frederica Matthewes-Green in *Your World: Everyday is Casual Friday* says

Armchair anthropologists will note that the cultural meaning of a baseball cap has shifted in 20 years: it used to be the equivalent, for an adult, of a flashing sign reading I'M NOT SERIOUS. Today it is ubiquitous. The phenomenon of 'Casual Friday Creep' is elbowing business attire out of the rest of the week and "casual" is

¹¹ Ibid. , 11.

slipping from khakis-and-loafers to jeans-and-sandals. Many grownups dress like they're headed to a play date.¹²

This is not to say that how one is dressed indicates anything about their ability to be adult but I would wonder if there is something significant in this that needs attention in terms of how adults perceive themselves. Matthewes-Green goes on to say:

A corresponding shift is happening at the other end. Grammar-school girls used to wear puffed sleeves and a sash in the back. Now they wear skirts and knit tops, miniature versions of their moms' outfits. This is hardly the most pressing moral issue of our day. But the loss of separate clothing codes for children and adults is interesting, because it reveals the general loss of markers for adulthood. It used to be replacing your baseball cap with a Homburg told the world you had achieved grownup status. Now the boundary line for adulthood is less distinct. Some grownups are having trouble figuring out how to grow up, and there are reasons they might not want to. A century ago, adulthood was a proud achievement. Childhood was a time of preparation for adult life, and children were mainstreamed into that life as much as feasible. Parents diligently taught the skills and values necessary for effective adulthood, since that was where their children were going to spend most of their years. As children's abilities grew, adults guided them into increasing responsibility. Graduation into adulthood, and out of "short pants," was an honor. But in the past half-century, a sentimental view emerged that childhood should be a time *without* responsibilities--a precious season of sheer fun that precedes the gloomy adult world of bosses, bills, and worry. Adulthood seemed less an honor and childhood became something to cling to.¹³

Are we losing the markers for adulthood and is being adult less of an honor than it used to be?

The media portrays being adult in a variety of ways. A profile of a typical adult character on just about any kind of current prime time series is usually a single person (male or female), in their thirties, who has already been intimately involved in a serious relationship that did not last, most likely lives alone, has difficulty in familiar

¹² Frederica Matthewes-Green, *Your World: Everyday is Casual Friday*, Christianity Today, July 10, 2000 available from <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2000/july10/28.58.html>; Internet; accessed November 2, 2007.

¹³ Frederica Matthewes-Green, *Your World: Everyday is Casual Friday*.

relationships (with parents, children, ex-spouse or partner, but interestingly enough not with co-workers), if they have children they are not raising them and they are remorseful about this, and the only life they have is at work.¹⁴ Often a serious, responsible person is foiled with a carefree, boyish or girlish loveable character. This person just cannot get all of life together but since they are loveable and laughable everyone else puts up with them. The serious character is usually portrayed as the one who cannot have fun and whom no one wants to be like yet when there is trouble they usually assist in resolving the difficulty but with little thanks or credit. This type of comedy is not particularly new (e.g. where would Dr. Huxtable be on the *Bill Cosby Show* without his wife Claire?) but the portrayal of the carefree person is in keeping with the culture in that they are often not well employed, not able to live on their own, they are not married and if they have children they are not raising them.

Sociologically there has been a shift in what it is to be adult. The usual markers of being adult and the timeline for entering adulthood have changed significantly in the latter half of the 20th century and into the 21st century. There appears to be a reticence to becoming adult and possibly there is confusion about just what it is to be adult. Here is a thought to conclude this section on sociological and cultural issues of being adult:

Because everything is child-centered today, we're depriving children of adults, if they never see us as adults being adults, how will they deal with important matters when it is their world?¹⁵

¹⁴ This observation is from my own personal television viewing. Since embarking on this project I have been paying particular attention to how the media portrays being adult. I used these observations in the course I developed as a springboard into a discussion of worldview.

¹⁵ Alvin Rosenfeld – a Manhattan based child psychiatrist who studies family interactions as quoted by Jeff Zazlow in *Moving On*, The Wall Street Journal Online, Thursday, July 5, 2007 available from

2. A Discussion of Developmental and Self-Help Literature About Adult Life and Living

Two resources that were helpful in providing an overview of issues in adult development were *Becoming Adult, Becoming Christian: Adult Development and Christian Faith*¹⁶ and *Christian Life Patterns: The Psychological Challenges and Religious Invitations to Adult Life*.¹⁷ Both books contributed to my thinking on the developmental stages and processes of being adult. In *Becoming Adult, Becoming Christian*, James W. Fowler, known for his work on stages of faith, provides an easily-entered-into conversation about adult development. He provides reasons why perhaps being adult is becoming troublesome by suggesting that factors such as longer life-span, information overload, unclear images of what is a good person, mobility, cultural shift from an ethic of self-denial to one of self-fulfillment, and the successive waves of liberation movements (e.g. sexual, gender, political) are helpful towards explaining “a fundamental shift that has occurred in this culture’s images of adulthood in the past half century.”¹⁸ He reviews the developmental theories of Erik H. Erikson, Daniel Levinson and Carol Gilligan along with his own with a concern to “clarify the theories’ images of the human being struggling toward psychological and ethical maturity – their images of

http://online.wsj.com/article_email/SB11835840657463-IMYQjAxMDE3ODEZMTUxODEOWj.html; Internet; accessed January 2, 2008.

¹⁶ James W. Fowler, *Becoming Adult, Becoming Christian: Adult Development and Christian Faith* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, A Wiley Imprint, 2000).

¹⁷ Evelyn Eaton Whitehead & James D. Whitehead, *Christian Life Patterns: The Psychological Challenges and Religious Invitations to Adult Life*, (New York, NY: The Crossroad Publishing Co., 1979, 2005).

¹⁸ James W. Fowler, *Becoming Adult, Becoming Christian*, 1-6.

human movement toward wholeness and completion.”¹⁹ What was insightful from Fowler’s work was how he considered the developmental theorists to be the new storytellers of our time. He says:

One of the principal reasons for the present widespread acceptance and embrace of psychological theories of adult development, I believe, is that they provide us with narrative frameworks for holding together our profound experiences of change and continuity – and the attendant tensions. In this and in other ways that I shall consider with you now, they provide normative and descriptive images of adulthood that uniquely and powerfully speak to the situation of cultural ferment and confusion over vocational ideals in our society today.²⁰

Insightful here is Fowler’s suggestion that developmental theorists have in some respects become the storytellers and mythmakers of our culture and they also have taken on the “functions that philosophers and theologians performed in the twelfth through nineteenth centuries.”²¹ What was once the work of theologians in providing an understanding of what happens in this life is now perhaps a task that has been taken on by developmental psychologists and theorists because they speak of wholeness and completion as theologians once spoke of salvation.²² This is significant toward whom and what is shaping a person’s understanding of being adult because it was not long ago that Bible stories were one of the main contributors to our understanding of our selves. In a recent

¹⁹ Fowler, 11.

²⁰ Ibid. , 10.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid. Fowler goes on to say, “They name and map our experiences of personal change, providing reassurance that many of the crises we experience can be understood in developmental terms...They enable us to see that much of our dis-ease can be understood as ‘sickness unto health’ – a developmental transition – rather than as ‘sickness unto death.’ Providing language for our experiences of change, they also can offer normative depictions of *telos* of goals of human life. Their theories provide benchmarks or blazes by which we can determine where we are on the human life course. They provide guidance and encouragement regarding the challenges of the next step,” 10-11.

conversation someone shared with me he did not learn the stories of the Bible until he went to a Christian college when he was in his early twenties. It is also significant because of the quest inmates are on for something solid to base their lives upon. Fowler, later in his work says, “We do not live long or well without meaning.”²³ He goes on to provide a faith-based understanding of human becoming with the following underlying questions:

How do people awaken to and begin to form (or be formed by) life stances of trust and loyalty, belief and commitment, that carry them into the force fields of their lives? Are there predictable stages or revolutions in the life of meaning making? Must we, to become fully adult and to be fully human, have a deep-going and abiding trust in and loyalty to some cause or causes, greater in value and importance than ourselves?²⁴

These are significant questions for those who end up incarcerated! Many inmates I speak with have issues with trust, loyalty, belief and commitment. I would suggest most have really had nothing that has “carried them into the force fields of their lives” especially if they have lived in environments of neglect and abuse. Fowler shares seven stages of faith and human becoming followed by a conversation between adulthood, conversion and the Christian story where he outlines the narrative of the classic Christian story in seven chapters before going on to tie everything together in terms of how the developmental theories, the classic Christian story and vocation contribute to “enriched and strengthened visions of human maturity.”²⁵ In regard to vocation Fowler proposes that we are called to

²³ Ibid. , 39.

²⁴ Ibid. , 41.

²⁵ Ibid, 62 – The stages of faith and human becoming are: primal faith, intuitive-projective faith, mythic-literal faith, synthetic-conventional faith, individuative-reflective faith, conjunctive faith, and, universalizing faith (40-57). In terms of the 7 chapters of the Christian story Fowler suggests: God, Creation, Fall, Liberation and Covenant, Incarnation, Church, and Commonwealth of love and justice, 66-68.

personhood in relationships and “there is no personal fulfillment that is not part of a communal fulfillment.”²⁶ In trying to relate this to inmates it became apparent that most men in prison do not know how to be individual persons or how to live in community well. Fowler also emphasizes that vocation is mysterious and sacred and “There is truthfully nothing more sacred to a man or a woman than the meaning of his or her life, his value or purpose in being.”²⁷ I have listened to inmates struggle with value and purpose. Fowler does acknowledge that one’s vocational pursuits can be thwarted and this, to be sure, is often the plight of those who end up incarcerated. What is vocation for Fowler? It is “the response a person makes with his or her total self to the address of God and to the calling to partnership.”²⁸ Close to the end of the book Fowler makes this statement:

...in our present situation of confusion and ferment regarding images of human wholeness and completion, we are in *critical* need of a theory of transformation and development that takes account of the power and availability to us of the synergy of God’s grace.”²⁹

Here, I agree with Fowler and I would venture to suggest this supports my desire to develop the course on being adult for the inmates I encounter on a regular basis who, because of life circumstances, have not had opportunity to become adult.

²⁶ Ibid. , 83.

²⁷ Ibid. , 106.

²⁸ Ibid. , 77. Fowler continues this definition with “The shaping of vocation as a total response of the self to the address of God involves the orchestration of our leisure, our relationships, our work, our private life, our public life, and the resources we steward, so as to put it all at the disposal of God’s purposes in the services of God and the neighbour.”

²⁹ Ibid. , 116.

*Christian Life Patterns*³⁰ provided a different conversation with developmental theories. Authors Evelyn and James Whitehead talk about the changes in the length and shape of adult life over the past half century by saying that developmental psychologists and others have put together a

...new understanding of adulthood, not as a somewhat static period of relative stability but as a dynamic series of expectable changes that make up a normal sequence of adult development. Maturity appears now less a question of fidelity to expectations learned in early adult life and more one of effective adaptation to the different and often surprising challenges that arise during the five or six decades of one's adult life.³¹

Given the Whiteheads suggestion on maturity I would say that many men in prison I speak to struggle with being able to effectively adapt to the different and surprising challenges of being adult. The Whiteheads indicate there has been a radical change in the expectations of adult life and maturity and they want to provide some "religious responses to the changes in adult life that are both psychologically informed and thoroughly Christian"³² because most "Christian convictions and interpretations of maturity were elaborated during those centuries in which adulthood was a brief and relatively stable experience."³³ The book is an overview of adult development and the Christian life. The Whiteheads are careful to bring psychology and faith together showing how both inform one another. A place where these come together well is in their conversation about maturity and letting go.

³⁰ Evelyn Eaton Whitehead & James D. Whitehead, *Christian Life Patterns: The Psychological and Religious Challenges of Adult Life*, (New Your, NY: The Crossroad Publishing Co., 1979 - this printing, 2005).

³¹ Evelyn Eaton Whitehead & James W. Whitehead, *Christian Life Patterns*, 13.

³² Whitehead & Whitehead, *Christian Life Patterns*, 14.

³³ *Ibid.* , 14.

Letting go is a psychological ability with a rich tradition in religious history. In the Christian tradition this central act of mature self-denial is reflected in the religious ideals of renunciation and self-abandonment. A contemporary spirituality will recognize the religious invitation of renunciation and self-denial in the psychological challenge to let go of the firm hold on one's identity in the risk of intimate encounter and to let go of children and other creations in mature generativity. In the critical transitions of adult life some part of my self – an accustomed, familiar, and even cherished part - must be let go if I am to grow. This is renunciation, not out of masochistic or macabre motive, but in response to the invitation of growth. We find that when we cannot let go, when we do not pass through a crisis and become reconciled to a new way of life, we fail not only as adults but as Christians. We lessen our ability to love and work well.³⁴

In one sense this confirms the words I use in the *Being Adult* course that have to do with choosing to not let the past have power in the present and into the future. The men in the institution struggle with some of the ideas around “letting go” because for them it is like saying that past experiences, of abuse in particular, are of no account. My words are “making peace” with the past and with people not so the experience is discounted but so the experience no longer has a presence in the present. This peace-making is best done in response to an invitation to a different future. The difficult part of the process is being able to sit in the time of discomfort between the letting go of the power of the past experience and allowing the new to become comfortable and empowering.

Another book by the Whiteheads, *Seasons of Strength: New Visions of Adult Christian Maturing* develops an understanding of Christian adulthood around two images that have been central to Christian spirituality: vocation and virtue.³⁵ Their understanding of vocation is similar to Fowler's and they take longer in their explanation.

³⁴ Ibid. , 193.

³⁵ Evelyn Eaton Whitehead & James W. Whitehead, *Seasons of Strength: New Visions of Adult Christian Maturing* (Lincoln, NE: IUniverse, Inc., 1995, 2003), 14.

For the Whitehead's vocation is "first and finally, a sense that our lives are more than accidental, that we are 'for something'."³⁶ They go on to suggest that vocation is not a

...once-and-for-all call in young adulthood...It is a lifelong conversation with God...A Christian vocation is a gradual revelation – of me to myself by God...A vocation is not only vision; it includes my decision to live out this vision in the choices that give my life its actual shape...An adult identity, like a Christian vocation, is an imaginative creation...This is who I am and what I am for. To come to this conviction is an exercise of the imagination. It is also the beginning of a vocation.³⁷

Vocation is not often used in my own faith community. However, this sense of a radical call into an as yet waiting-to-be-discovered future is the invitation of Scripture where we are invited to "Come!" This is a message I regularly speak. What was helpful in this book was the depth of the call of vocation and the resulting maturity.

Added to this were conversations around imagination, forgiveness, reconciliation, anger, and a particularly helpful discussion of personal power that included the faces of personal power, power on, power over, power for, power against, power with, and power and weakness.³⁸ I am sometimes reluctant to use the word power because it is so, for lack of better words, powerful and in my mind somehow performance oriented. The Whiteheads address this and suggest that "...it is misleading to treat power as a thing, as though it were an internal 'packet' of energy. Power is more a process than a thing. Power points to something that happens *between* people, something going on - an interaction. Power is not so much a possession as a way of relating."³⁹ This I related to

³⁶ Evelyn & James Whitehead, *Seasons of Strength*, 14.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 21-22.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 149-161.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 150.

Edwin H. Friedman's work on family systems and emotional energy.⁴⁰ Understanding power as a process and what happens between people would prove to be helpful in assisting the inmate participants in the *Being Adult* course to see themselves and their relationships in a different light. A newer work by Friedman, *A Failure of Nerve: Leadership in the Age of a Quick Fix*⁴¹ puts forward an enlightening discussion around anxious emotional systems and self-differentiation. In regard to issues of power, and just what exactly is powerful in terms of persons, families or any kind of system changing Friedman notes:

Anyone who has ever been part of an imaginatively gridlocked relationship system knows that more learning will not, on its own, automatically change the way people see things or think. There must first be a shift in the emotional processes of that institution. Imagination and indeed even curiosity are at root emotional, not cognitive phenomena. In order to imagine the unimaginable, people must be able to separate themselves from surrounding emotional processes before they can even begin to see (or hear) things differently.⁴²

My desire for the *Being Adult* course was that inmates would be invited to imagine the unimaginable for themselves in terms of becoming healthier and more functional adults. I realized I could not do this through information alone and recognized there needed to be opportunity for separating themselves from the surrounding emotional processes which proves to be difficult in an institutional setting but not impossible. One way this happened in particular was through the community that developed in the groups that allowed the men to be open with one another.

⁴⁰ Edwin H. Friedman, *Generation to Generation: Family Process in Church and Synagogue*, (New York, NY: The Guilford Press, 1985).

⁴¹ Edwin H. Friedman, *A Failure of Nerve: Leadership in the Age of a Quick Fix*, edited posthumously by Margaret M. Treadwell & Edward Beal (New York, NY: Seabury Books, Church Publishing, Inc., 1999, 2007).

⁴² Edwin H. Friedman, *A Failure of Nerve*, 31.

A Failure of Nerve also contributed helpful ways and means to embody adulthood regardless of whether or not one is a leader. Friedman compares the emotional processes of medieval Europe prior to the Renaissance with what he perceives as the regression that affects American society today. He talks about maps and map makers, how one's orientation to the world affects one's view of the world and goes on to discuss what inhibits adventure and the ability to imagine. He describes the five aspects of chronic anxiety as reactivity, herding, blaming, a quick-fix mentality, and a lack of leadership. He proceeds to describe the imagination-limiting equators of our time which include data, empathy and self.⁴³ For Friedman an imagination-limiting equator is "an imagination-inhibitor or emotional barrier that prevents new thinking"⁴⁴ and that these have "the very same effect on limiting leaders' (and researchers') horizons today that the equator and a geocentric view of the universe had for the millennium before the Renaissance."⁴⁵ As an example, he says empathy has been distorted in our day and age to become a "power tool in the hands of the weak to sabotage the strong."⁴⁶ Following this Friedman invites the reader to consider what he calls "leadership through self-differentiation"⁴⁷ and presents a model of leadership that is based on a leader continually

⁴³ Ibid., 49. Friedman says this as a summary of how data, time and self are imagination-limiting barriers: "*Data* – that data are more vital to leadership than the capacity to be decisive; *Empathy* – that feelings for others helps them mature or become more responsible; and *Self* – that selfishness is a greater danger to community than the loss of integrity that comes from having no self."

⁴⁴ Ibid., 33.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 33.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 24.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 25-26. Leadership through self-differentiation "focuses leaders (or parents or presidents) on themselves rather than on their followers, and on the nature of

working on their own self-differentiation which in turn will increase their objectivity and decision-making capacities.⁴⁸ For me, the model for leadership that Friedman outlines, is a model for being adult. In the end, Friedman says not only leaders but parents and partners (and I would suggest individual persons) can resolve problems by “understanding that the problems they encounter may stem from their own unresolved family issues, the organization’s past, sabotage in response to their effective leadership, or a combination of these factors.”⁴⁹ Incarcerated men are often working through unresolved family issues, what has happened in the past in their current relationships, workplace or community, and either self-sabotage or the sabotaging behavior of those around them. I connected with Friedman’s work in my own family, and I also began seeing what he was saying about institutions as I observed life in the penitentiary especially in regard to anxiety and its effect on leadership and relationships. At one point, although Friedman is speaking about American society in general, he is describing the environment inmates deal with on a daily basis.

In the greater American family we call society all of the same attributes of reactivity are rife today: the automatic response, the pessimistic focus on pathology rather than strength, the intrusiveness into the boundaries of others, the loss of playfulness, the wearing down of leaders. As with any chronically anxious family, there is in American society today an intense quickness to interfere in another’s self-expression, to overreact to any perceived hurt, to take all disagreements too

their presence rather than on their technique and “know how.” He says later, “The key to positioning oneself in such a way that the natural forces of emotional life carry one in the right direction is self-differentiation, by which I mean his or her capacity to be a non-anxious presence, a challenging presence, a well-defined presence, and a paradoxical presence. Differentiation is not about being coercive, manipulative, reactive, pursuing or invasive, but being rooted in the leader’s own sense of self rather than focused on that of his or her followers.” 230.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 26.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 28.

seriously, and to brand the opposition with *ad hominem* personal epithets (chauvinist, ethnocentric, homophobic and so on). As in personal families, this hardens hearts and leaves little room for forgiveness or balanced accommodation.⁵⁰

A penitentiary is a very reactive environment and this describes it well. *A Failure of Nerve* was formational in terms of assisting me with understanding emotional processes and their effect on social systems and how one can respond to bring health. It was applicable to my ministry and to my understanding of being adult because it provided a means to understand one's relationships at various levels and a potential way to respond in those relationships.

Richard Rohr, author of *The Wild Man's Journey*⁵¹ and *Adam's Return*⁵², is a Franciscan whose ministry focuses on issues of masculine spirituality and initiation. In *The Wild Man's Journey* he describes the male spiritual journey that begins with initiation in early teens and ends either in holiness or bitterness.⁵³ He makes a point about male initiation that I believe needs attention, especially in regard to men who end up in prison. He says

...it is significant that most cultures seem to have considered male initiation absolutely necessary, whereas only a small minority had female initiation rites – and they had a very different message and function. Individuals at the bottom of a culture normally do not need to be “initiated.” Life has already taught them what the one with power must be explicitly taught...Initiation, like the male archetypes of king, warrior, lover and magician, are all about power – how to use it and how not

⁵⁰ Ibid, 64

⁵¹ Richard Rohr & Joseph Martos, *The Wild Man's Journey: Reflections on Male Spirituality*, revised edition (Cincinnati, OH: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1996).

⁵² Richard Rohr, *Adam's Return: The Five Promises of Male Initiation* (New York, NY: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2004).

⁵³ Richard Rohr & Joseph Martos, *The Wild Man's Journey*, xxxiv-xxxv. Here Rohr provides an illustrated time line of the male spiritual journey that is helpful in giving a road map of what a man may encounter in his spiritual life.

to use it. When a culture no longer initiates its males into the proper carrying of power, we can assume they will almost always abuse it or avoid it, both of which are a loss to the community.⁵⁴

I would suggest that Saskatchewan Penitentiary is rife with men who have not been initiated into the proper carrying of power. This supports what was suggested by Matthewes-Green in her article *Everyday is Casual Friday* mentioned earlier in this chapter where we have lost the markers between childhood and being adult. In Saskatchewan Penitentiary, a high percentage of inmates are of aboriginal descent. There is a very active Aboriginal Cultural Center in the institution that provides teaching and experiences in native culture and spirituality. As I have listened to inmates who access the Cultural Center they indicate to me it is a place where they are learning to be men. They sit with elders and participate in pipe and sweat ceremonies wherein some of this desire to be initiated into manhood is addressed because of the intentional connections with nature. A thought I have had in this journey is to find a way to provide some form of initiation ceremony for inmates that will invite them into being adult and address this issue of the proper carrying of power.

In *Adam's Return*, Rohr says "Ancient peoples saw that if men missed their initiation, they became unworkable human beings, for themselves and the community. Every missed rite of passage leads to a new rigidity of the personality, lessening ability to see, to adjust, to understand, to let go, to be human. It makes men finally incapable of the wisdom of the second half of life because they keep seeking the containment and private validation of the first half of life."⁵⁵ The image of "unworkable human beings" is

⁵⁴ Rohr and Martos, xxvi.

⁵⁵ Richard Rohr, *Adam's Return*, 9

reflected in the inmates of Saskatchewan Penitentiary. Rigid personalities always returning to what a friend describes as the “default setting”⁵⁶ The question becomes can the default setting be changed? Or, perhaps, how do we relate and minister to potentially “unworkable human beings?” Rohr’s five messages of male initiation⁵⁷ provided the basis for a discussion in the *Being Adult* course around these issues of initiation.

Rohr makes an interesting summary statement about postmodernism saying “There are no great people or great patterns. I will not believe in anything. I will not be disappointed again.”⁵⁸ He suggests that earlier cultures knew their youth needed to be exposed to greater meaning and greater people at key times in their lives, one of them being initiation into adulthood. He says

...I believe the lack of personal and social exposure to real depth and breadth makes most young people vulnerable to cheap religion, cults and crowds as a substitute for largeness, hoping for salvation from their jobs or companies, selling their souls for fame and fundamentalism. All of which will die and eventually disappoint...The momentum toward greatness is on the hard drive of our very brain. We were created for transcendence, and at our deepest level we all know it. But we have to install the software for one another. It is God’s great gamble and our great responsibility.⁵⁹

Designing the *Being Adult* course with a view toward exposing the inmate participants to real depth and real people was something I attempted to do through story, personal

⁵⁶ In many conversations with co-chaplain, Anne Riley, we discussed the “default setting” that we return to in times of stress and threat. Friedman in *A Failure of Nerve* calls this “reptilian,” 120 ff.

⁵⁷ Rohr, *Adam’s Return*, 32-33, provides the five essential messages of male initiation which are: 1. Life is hard. 2. You are not that important. 3. Your life is not about you. 4. You are not in control. 5. You are going to die.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 21.

sharing and insight and working with them in developing their own depth and reality. I saw the course providing one way to “install the software for one another.”

Self-help books I reviewed focused on emotional health⁶⁰, inner child issues⁶¹ and several written by Henry Cloud and John Townsend including *Boundaries, Changes That Heal, How People Grow* and *It's Not My Fault*.⁶² The most helpful contribution in regard to emotional health was *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*. Here, Peter Scazzero describes his own journey with both emotional and spiritual immaturity and contends that emotional health and spiritual maturity are inseparable.⁶³ He provides an overview of the symptoms of an unhealthy spirituality and then proposes a pathway to emotionally healthy spirituality based in contemplative spirituality. What he does is connect emotional health and a relationship with God where others like Beverley Engel in *Healing Your Emotional Self* focus on the self, re-uniting self, creating a separate self

⁶⁰ Representation of this type of self-help material includes: Beverley Engel, *Healing Your Emotional Self* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2006); Peter Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality* (Nashville, TN: Integrity Publishers, 2006); Anne Katherine, *When Misery Is Company* (Center City, MN: Hazelden, 2004).

⁶¹ Representing resources on the inner child are: John K. Pollard, *Self Parenting: The Complete Guide to Your Inner Conversations* (Malibu, CA: Generic Human Studies Publishing, 1987); Patty McConnell, *A Workbook for Healing Adult Children of Alcoholic* (San Francisco, Harper & Row Publishers, 1986); Kimberlee Roth & Frieda B. Friedman, *Surviving A Borderline Parent*, (Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications, Inc., 2004); John Bradshaw, *Homecoming: Reclaiming and Championing Your Inner Child* (New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1990); Jean Illsley Clarke & Connie Dawson, *Growing Up Again*, 2nd edition (Center City, MN: Hazelden, 1998).

⁶² Henry Cloud and John Townsend, *How People Grow: What the Bible Reveals About Personal Growth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), *It's Not My Fault: The No-Excuse Plan to Put You in Charge of Your Life* (Nashville, TN: Integrity Publishers, 2007).

⁶³ Peter Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*, 12.

from parents, positive self, and raising self-esteem.⁶⁴ Scazzero insinuates we learn to be competent in many areas of our lives such as work and education but we do not learn “the skills necessary to grow into an emotionally mature adult who loves well”⁶⁵ and from there suggests we can learn to make application of the practical and effective truths of the Christian faith.⁶⁶ This, of course, supported what I was attempting to do in designing the *Being Adult* course. In regard to resources that deal with inner child issues my bone of contention with them is that there is always some “inner child” that does not grow up and needs parenting. To me, this does not assist a person with becoming adult. I am fully aware that all of us have experiences from childhood that impact our ability to be adult. Working through past experiences is a crucial part of becoming adult. It seems to me that we should become adult in all of our being and not continually be in conversation with an inner child.⁶⁷

Drs. Henry Cloud and John Townsend have made a significant contribution to Christian self-help literature.⁶⁸ I have successfully used two of their courses in the penitentiary and in many respects these courses were the launching pad for this project.

⁶⁴ Beverley Engel, *Healing Your Emotional Self*, 4.

⁶⁵ Scazzero, 177.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 177.

⁶⁷ John K. Pollard in *Self Parenting* is the most pedantic with this idea and says in the conclusion of his work, “Have your Inner Parent cuddle your Inner Child when it is crying. Soothe your Inner Child when he or she is under emotional stress. Use the awareness of your Inner Conversations and the Self-Parenting Exercises to give yourself a sense of being nurtured and of meeting your own needs rather than waiting for others to provide them. Ultimately you can heal yourself completely, no matter how old the wounds may be,” 256.

⁶⁸ Cloud Townsend have produced over 30 self-help resources in the last 2 decades

Cloud and Townsend offer Bible-based, accessible and easily understood material about personal growth and relationships. I find their material very approachable and useable and they have provided me with simple, down-to-earth, and practical material to present to others. My problem with their work is some of their theological understanding especially toward how they understand the effects of the Fall and how God is in the process of putting the creation back to how it was before Adam and Eve ate the fruit in Eden.⁶⁹ In some ways I have had a “love-hate” relationship with materials by Cloud and Townsend in regard to their theology and their use of the Bible. On the one hand it is plausible, yet on the other hand, it is unsettling.⁷⁰ At the end of *Changes That Heal*, where he specifically speaks about becoming adult, Henry Cloud says

What I have written about is a model that can help us become functioning human beings. But, if that is the final goal, we have sold ourselves short. We were made to love, and the fully functioning person is one who takes his bonded, separate, forgiving, adult self into a world and denies that self for the sake of others. We have seen how this does not mean being without a person inside; it means having such a full one that it can be imparted to others.⁷¹

This resonates with me in regard to my image of dying thirst to living fountain, especially in terms of fullness that can be imparted to others, having a full self that has shape and form, and life giving resources in the presence and energy of the Holy Spirit to be offered in the relationships and circumstances of life. Also, I agree with his words that we are to

⁶⁹ Henry Cloud presents his view of creation, God and humanity in relationship, and the effects of the Fall in the first chapters of *Changes That Heal*. In a later work by both Henry Cloud & John Townsend, *How People Grow*, they articulate their theology of God and humanity in relationship, and the effects of the Fall more completely in chapters 2 & 3.

⁷⁰ As an example, I find in *How People Grow*, calling God “Rule Maker” and human beings as “Rule Keepers” to be unsettling (56-57), but perhaps it is more language than it is intention.

⁷¹ Henry Cloud, *Changes That Heal*, 334.

be more than just functioning human beings, and that this is expressed in loving God and other persons.

There is always something new to read in self-help but as Friedman so aptly puts it, more information is not the answer.⁷² My concern was to enrich what was already available and give voice to an articulation of being adult that would be helpful to inmates. Reviewing these resources provided me with valuable background information and useful presentations of behavioral patterns and processes toward embodying adulthood not just in the setting of the prison but in the community as well.

3. Worldview and Being Adult

Presenting a picture of being adult has a particular background of beliefs and values for that picture of being adult. I have come to understand that we act out our values and beliefs so, if I am going to provide a potential way of being adult it is important to articulate a set of beliefs and values that resource and foster it.⁷³ Using the Judeo-Christian Scriptures as the source for the understanding of being adult developed in the *Being Adult* course, Genesis 1-2 is the first place I located a picture of being adult

⁷² Friedman, *A Failure of Nerve*, Chapter 3, "Data Junkyards and Data Junkies", 95-131.

⁷³ Henry Cloud & John Townsend, *Boundaries: When to Say Yes, When to Say No to Take Control of Your Life*, 40-42. I facilitated two *Boundaries* courses prior to developing the *Being Adult* course. The inmate participants in the courses wanted to make behavior changes but were unwilling to make value and belief changes that would support the new behavior. Those who realized this kind of change was necessary fared better in understanding themselves and boundary issues. Inmates who tried to simply change their behavior were frustrated (self-reporting). To simply change the behavior was not enough. Something else needed to happen and this had to do with "why change?" They needed a new understanding of themselves and their world (self-reporting).

in terms of the image of God (*imago Dei*) and the blessing of God upon humanity. The second location for a picture of being adult was the gospels' portrayal of Jesus as a model for being adult, and in particular being an adult filled with the Holy Spirit. I chose *imago Dei* because it is ancient and it is the beginning for the people of God in being educated in how humanity is related to God, to creation and to one another. And, I chose to focus on Jesus because I believe he was showing his generation and the generations since how to live out *imago Dei* in all of its fullness as a human person. From my reading, in this section I will provide a conversation with worldview as the major focus, particularly related to Genesis and *imago Dei*.

James W. Sire in *Naming The Elephant: Worldview As A Concept* defines worldview this way: "A worldview is a set of presuppositions (which may be true, partially true or entirely false) which we hold (consciously or subconsciously, consistently or inconsistently) about the basic makeup of our world."⁷⁴ To convey the idea of worldview in the development of the course on being adult, the not uncommon illustration of eye glasses or contact lenses was used.⁷⁵ What was also significant is the understanding of what a worldview does.

⁷⁴ James W. Sire, *Naming The Elephant: Worldview As A Concept* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2004), 19.

⁷⁵ J. Mark Bertrand, *(Re)Thinking Worldview: Learning to Think, Live, and Speak in This World*, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2007), 26. Bertrand says this: "A worldview is an interpretation of influences, experiences, circumstances, and insight. In fact, it is an interrelated series of interpretations – and it becomes a method of interpreting, too. A worldview is something you are aware of only in moments of crisis or contemplation. In ordinary time, it is like a pair of glasses or contact lenses. You are so accustomed to looking *through* it that you barely notice it's there."

The task of every worldview is to see the world as it is, to correct your vision. The test of a good worldview will be whether it brings reality into sharp focus or leaves things blurry.⁷⁶

Worldview is influenced from within and from outside a person. In the *Being Adult* course, the challenge was in providing not just information but opportunity for those who would participate in the course to bring reality into sharper focus.

In regard to how the world around us influences worldview it was helpful to understand what was happening in the larger philosophical realm because again it was impersonal and it was a way for the inmate course participants to gain an understanding of worldview without being personally threatened.⁷⁷ Toward this, J. Richard Middleton and Brian J. Walsh in *Truth Is Stranger Than It Used To Be* provide an overview of the transition from modernity to postmodernity and the worldviews generated by both in

⁷⁶ Bertrand, 27.

⁷⁷ I began the worldview conversation in the *Being Adult* course with Columbus and his voyage across the Atlantic. He was used as an illustration in *Truth Is Stranger Than It Used to Be* and so I presented Columbus to the inmate participants. I found Edwin Friedman's conversation around Columbus in *Failure of Nerve: Leadership in the Age of the Quick Fix*, (New York: NY: Seabury Books, Church Publishing, Inc., 1999, 2007, eds. Margaret M. Treadwell & Edward W. Beal) to be particularly helpful in adding depth to the Columbus story. Friedman suggests "The quantum leap, or, if you prefer the 'punctuated equilibrium' that occurred around 1500 was a direct result of a complete reorientation to reality initiated by Columbus's discoveries and the subsequent exploration of geography...Columbus's voyage was a hinge of time...The great lesson of this turnaround is that when any relationship system is imaginatively gridlocked, it cannot get free simply through thinking about the problem. Conceptually stuck systems cannot become unstuck simply by trying harder. For a fundamental reorientation to occur, the spirit of adventure which optimizes serendipity and which enables perceptions beyond the control of our thinking processes must happen first," 32. During the course, I used these common 12 Step phrases: "Nothing changes because nothing changes" and the definition of insanity "Doing the same thing in the same way expecting different results" as a way to engage their thinking and understanding of worldview and how it works in us and on us. What was also interesting in presenting Columbus as an example was the response of the native men. Their emotional response was passionate and it stimulated conversation in different directions but the fact that they were personally engaged in the conversation was helpful for everyone as they grappled with the concept.

saying as modernity unfolded we discovered that this reality is not neat.⁷⁸ Step by step solutions do not solve all problems and there are always variables for which we cannot account and the dream of a better tomorrow that said if we worked hard, controlled nature, and followed the rules we would be happy and fulfilled. The problem was many people did exactly this and they ended up unhappy and unfulfilled. They summarize with this:

We in North America live in a Disneyworld culture, a Cool Whip society, in which we engage in autoerotic telephone sex in place of real intimacy, splash in simulated lakes and waterfalls at recreational waterparks rather than risk the pollution at the local lake or river, shop in climate-controlled malls that attempt to look like old-fashioned shopping neighborhoods and even watch the horrors of wars carefully sanitized on television to give us a sense that we are really there, yet leave us uncomfortable with what we have seen.⁷⁹

Middleton and Walsh note because modernism has failed to bring happiness and fulfillment people have gone in search of meaning outside of the institutions modernity created and continues to maintain. There is this longing for connection and community but not through institutions such as school, church, government and service organizations. Post-modernity says we live in a reality that is somehow relative, there is no stabilizing center. One can do their own thing, in their own way, tell their own story, believe whatever suits their fancy and, in and through it all, not be held accountable. They make a pointed comment on the state of the post-modern person:

The postmodern self thus finds itself ultimately homeless. The notion of a settled home or a stable world is, after all, an illusory modern (and premodern) construction that can no longer be believed. So the emerging postmodern vision disallows any such settledness for human life. Don't get too comfortable, this

⁷⁸ J. Richard Middleton & Brian J. Walsh, *Truth Is Stranger Than It Used To Be: Biblical Faith in a Postmodern Age*, (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1995), 20.

⁷⁹ Middleton & Walsh, 39.

vision tells us...There is another show to put on, there are other worlds to play with, other selves to try on for size.”⁸⁰

David Neff, in *Gen-X Apologetics: Passing on the Faith to Those Raised on Star Wars Spirituality*, an article which discusses several books that have attempted to answer the faith questions of today’s youth says:

...talking to young adults about the faith is a daunting apologetic task. Even today’s church-bred, church-raised young adults are as shaped by their peers and their culture as they are by churchly ways of thinking – perhaps more so. The shape of that culture is a quest, a pilgrimage, but it is a quest without a Holy Grail and without a Holy Land. Hall, Novak, and Grenz tell these questers that the search can have meaning and that God is both on the road with us and at the end of the road ahead.⁸¹

The image of a quest resonates with me as I observe inmates searching for meaning and direction and they are not alone in this search. It is not my intention here to give a thorough going understanding of postmodernism but simply to bring awareness to how most people in North America are being influenced by the mood of the culture and to provide how conversations about worldview today became a bridge to the ancient Mesopotamian worldview and the worldview presented in Genesis 1. I think J. Mark Bertrand summarizes it well:

As we are constantly being reminded, we live in a “postmodern” age, and the defining characteristic of this period is its skepticism toward what we are supposed to have been the unqualified assumptions of modernism – the belief in science, progress, reason, and what not. In the modern age, people were always trying to pin down objective reality, to define truth on behalf of everyone else in a kind of idealistic powerplay. Now, we are rightly skeptical of such attempts. If the modern world strived toward a kind of unity, the postmodern seeks to guard itself from the horrors of modernism by cultivating diversity. This shift has cast doubt on rational,

⁸⁰ Middleton & Walsh, 58. The previous paragraph is my summary of 54-59.

⁸¹ David Neff, *Gen-X Apologetics: Passing on the Faith to Those Raised on Star Wars Spirituality*, Christianity Today, April 26, 1999, available from <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/1999/april26/9t5090.html>; Internet; accessed November 2, 2007.

systematic attempts to describe reality. When we look out at the universe, postmodern people tend to find possibilities instead of rules. Instead of systems, we make stories.⁸²

This leads into a discussion of the worldview of the ancient world because to understand what Genesis says to us about being adult, about being human, was first spoken to people who had a particular understanding of the world. Worldview, I would suggest, has a much to do with being adult. Values and beliefs shape and inform how a person lives out their life. Worldview shapes values and beliefs. The question I would raise in the *Being Adult* course is “What is the worldview that shapes your values and beliefs and in turn shapes and forms how you are as an adult?” Worldview contributes to how we speak about who we are as the people of God.⁸³ *The Liberating Image: The Imago Dei in Genesis 1* by J. Richard Middleton⁸⁴ provides a discussion of the ancient

⁸² Bertrand, 97-98.

⁸³ James W. Sire in *Naming the Elephant: Worldview as a Concept* sets out to support the following: “The time for rethinking the concept of worldview has come. If the analysis that follows is correct, four important revisions to my own earlier definition of worldview are in order. First, is the recognition that a worldview is not just a set of basic concepts but a fundamental orientation of the heart. Second, is an explicit insistence that at the deepest root of a worldview is its commitment to and understanding of the ‘really real.’ Third is a consideration of behavior in the determination of what one’s own or another’s worldview really is. Fourth is a broader understanding of how worldviews are grasped as story, not just as abstract propositions,” 13. I read this following most of the development of worldview for the being adult course, however, these words express what I was trying to convey in my own approach to offering worldview as a way of understanding ourselves and our world. I also was intent on offering something that would be grounded in reality even though we all perceive reality differently. Again, in some of the material on the “nuts and bolts” of behavior a good number of them were concerned about a person being aware of what is real and not real in their circumstances [e.g. Cloud & Townsend’s *Boundaries and Changes That Heal*, (Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 1990) and Peter Scazzero’s *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*, (Nashville, TN: Integrity Publishers, 2006)].

⁸⁴ J. Richard Middleton, *The Liberating Image: The Imago Dei in Genesis 1*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2005).

Mesopotamian worldview and the corresponding Hebrew/Israelite worldview articulated in Genesis. I contend as does J. Richard Middleton that Genesis, chapter 1 in particular, presents a worldview that is meant to inform and shape the values, beliefs and resulting behaviors of the people of God, the Israelites, in their coming out of slavery in Egypt and in their exile in Babylon.⁸⁵ In his research on *imago Dei* Middleton provides a well-founded explanation of the first eleven chapters of Genesis responding to the ancient Mesopotamian worldview. For Middleton, Genesis 1-11 answers the worldview questions of: Where are we? Who are we? What is our problem? And, What is the solution? These questions are answered for the people of God as they journeyed through the desert following their deliverance from Egypt and then later, as they languished in exile in Babylon.⁸⁶

Middleton's discussion of the ancient Mesopotamian worldview as the foil for Genesis 1 was the starting point for engaging the *Being Adult* course participants in what the Bible has to say about being human and being adult. Middleton highlights the ancient Mesopotamian understanding of humanity as beings created to serve the gods and

⁸⁵ Middleton, pp. 10-11. Also, Pierre Gilbert in "*The Third Wave Worldview: A Biblical Critique*," *Direction Journal* (a publication of Canadian Mennonite University) Fall 2000, Vol. 29, No. 2, 153-68 available from <http://www.directionjournal.org/article/?1055>; Internet; accessed October 1, 2007, identifies the worldview of Genesis to provide an alternative worldview and says, "Moses had to transmit to his people much more than a few truths about this new God. He had to communicate a new worldview which would in fact compete with the Hebrews' understanding of the gods, the universe, and themselves. In a real sense, the creation story is a polemical text; it is designed to persuade recipients of the validity of concepts associated with the new worldview which is being presented to them," 159.

⁸⁶ Middleton, *The Liberating Image*, Part 2: The Social Context of the Image, 93-231. This is a major portion of Middleton's work. This book became foundational for me as I worked through understanding *imago Dei* and providing a framework for what I presented in the being adult course.

that their worldview was meant to sanction the city state, the king and the temple priests.⁸⁷ As far as regular citizens were concerned they saw their existence directly related to the gods. The gods provided for them, and they also took away, but if people served obediently they would be allowed to live their lives in relative peace and prosperity. The sun, moon, and in particular the stars, charted the course of a person's life. The king represented the gods to the people and, as the god's representative on earth the king was to be well cared for and obeyed without question lest the gods become angry. One's lot in life was ordered by the seasons and subservience was the order of the day. The king was in some respects divine. In ancient Egypt this notion of the divinity of pharaoh was even more distinct.⁸⁸ This very brief overview of the ancient Mesopotamian worldview provides a backdrop for the discussion of the worldview of Genesis 1. What was startling to me was the response of one particular inmate to the presentation I gave on the ancient Mesopotamian worldview in the *Being Adult* course. His words were

“This is what I grew up with. We have a violent view of the world, everything is still about sexuality. The chief rules us. We are slaves to whatever rules us...I was raised in a native home. I was told there was a god. I was told there were superstitions, that I could be crippled or blinded. We were fearful because god was vengeful. If you were not prepared you could curse yourself if you were around

⁸⁷ Middleton, 148-149. Here, Middleton explores how Mesopotamian ideas such as those noted above “form a coherent worldview that commends or shapes specific patterns of behavior and has historically functioned to legitimate the social order or political arrangement of actual societies in history,” 148.

⁸⁸ Ibid, 108-111 where Middleton notes “the reigning pharaoh is the bond and intermediary between the gods and the earthly realm...it is due to his effective potency and his rule according to *ma'at* (truth, justice, or cosmic order) that there is harmony in the social realm, military victory against Egypt's foes, and fertility in the land...The notion of the pharaoh as an image of a god must be understood in this context....The pharaoh was thought, in a fairly strong sense, to be a physical, local incarnation of deity, analogous to that of a cult statue or image of a god, which is also such an incarnation.”

holy things. Spirituality was based on fear. Then there was the Bible. It was the white man's Bible. It was their belief and it was taboo. It was hard to let go of what I was taught as a child. What you said about Mesopotamia was what I was taught as a child. It was passed on from generation to generation.⁸⁹

What was most enlightening was how a worldview can legitimate and then be embodied in a civilization, in a community, and in a person's life. Middleton says this of the ideology behind the ancient Mesopotamian worldview:

No element of this worldview – neither sacral kingship (in which the king was thought of as the image of a god) nor the mythic claim that humans were created to serve the gods nor the *Chaoskampf* motif (by which the cosmos was understood to be grounded in primordial violence) – was a freestanding theological idea. Rather, through their complex interweaving these elements formed a powerful matrix of ideology that both legitimated and found concrete socio-political embodiment in the Babylonian and Assyrian empires. These empires boasted not only immense political and military might, but also significant architectural and cultural achievements, which contributed to their prestige in the ancient Near East.⁹⁰

Genesis 1 sets the tone for the rest of the Hebrew-Christian Scriptures.⁹¹ In Genesis 1:26-28 the important words are “Let us make human beings in our image...” Here, the ancient Hebrew worldview is proclaiming all of humanity is the “image” of God as opposed to the ancient Mesopotamian worldview which proclaims the king as the only one who images the gods on earth. Middleton in *The Liberating Image* says:

⁸⁹ Inmate participant in Being Adult Class Session 3, June 19, 2007.

⁹⁰ Middleton, *The Liberating Image*, 183-184.

⁹¹ Middleton & Walsh, *Truth Is Stranger Than It Used To Be*, 110-111 and Middleton in *The Liberating Image*, 60 where he says, “First of all, the placement of Genesis 1 at the start of the biblical canon, as the preface or overture to the Bible as a whole, is of immense significance for anyone interested in reading the Bible as a coherent (though obviously complex) macrostory or metanarrative of redemption. This placement alone requires those who take Scripture as normative to treat this as paradigmatic for the character of the God disclosed in the rest of the Bible.” I also found evidence of this in other places such as “*The Crown of Creation – Commentary*” by Joseph Coleson in the Wynkoop Center for Women in Ministry Bible Studies; Internet; available from <http://www.wynkoopcenter.org/images/articles/u1/s1.pdf>, accessed June 15, 2007.

I will assume for the purposes of the argument what is no more than a plausible scenario, namely, that the author of Genesis 1 (whenever he lived) was acquainted (in either oral or written form) with the Mesopotamian notion of the kings as image of a god (as a particular crystallization of royal ideology) and that he intentionally challenged this notion with the claim that all humanity was made in God's image.⁹²

Secondly, humanity is created both male and female together in the same spoken word of God in fullness and I would like to suggest somehow in necessity. There is no subservience or primacy.⁹³ Thirdly, all humanity is called to rule suggesting there is no particularity to kingship. Ruling is an invitation to make history and to be creative as God is creative. By this it is meant that a human person has the capacities to live into the future. These capacities include making choices and being in relationship with the God the Creator, with one another and the created order which are not particular to the king but to every human being.⁹⁴

⁹² Middleton, *The Liberating Image*, 145.

⁹³ Joseph Coleson, "The Crown of Creation – Commentary," 4-8. Also, Stanley Grenz in *The Social God and the Relational Self: A Trinitarian Theology of the Imago Dei* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001) says "Barth and others derive from Genesis 1 the insight that humankind comprises a single creation that consists of two distinct ways of being in the world as embodied persons – male and female – and that these reciprocal ways of beings embodied are mutually constituting and mutually dependent. Although marriage emerges in the second creation narrative as the primal relationship, it is by no means the only male-female relationship. Their fundamental maleness and femaleness impels persons to come together in many relationships that characterize human community," 302. In *Man as Male and Female*, (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI, 1975) Derrick Sherwin Bailey declares, "The fact that God created Man as a sexual duality means that male and female, as isolated individuals, have been given no fixed and clearly-defined social status or function. They have simply been called to a life of partnership in all things – and as partners, therefore, they must seek together in love and humility to understand and fulfill their common destiny as Man," 46-47.

⁹⁴ Middleton & Walsh, 122-124 supports these thoughts. In trying to articulate *imago Dei* for the *Being Adult* course I wanted to provide a picture of what it was to be made in the image and likeness of God that was comprehensible to people with limited theological and biblical background. The idea of being a history maker and having the capacity to choose into the future was life-giving to a number of the inmate participants. Connecting all of this with the picture of the Hebrew slaves on the far shore of the Red

The idea of Genesis being revolutionary and counter-cultural was a catalyst that created a place to begin inviting the *Being Adult* course inmate participants to be adult in ways they had not thought possible for them. Most of them had heard the story of creation in Genesis but they had not considered it to be revolutionary. The image I used was that of a light switch. If I were simply to install a light switch on a wall without it being properly wired to a power source or to a light bulb in a socket what use would the light switch be?⁹⁵ Genesis 1 was to be the power source for the people of God as they stood on the far shores of the Red Sea and as they languished in exile in Babylon! What powers a person's beliefs and values and how they view their world and their part in it will be displayed in their attitudes and behaviors. How one lives out being adult is powered in significant ways by worldview.

To conclude this section on worldview, I will relate the worldview of Genesis to Jesus. Jesus came announcing a particular understanding of the world for which he used the words "kingdom of God." Just as Genesis 1 was revolutionary in its day Jesus' proclamation of the kingdom of God was revolutionary in his day. What was revolutionary about it was how Jesus lived out *imago Dei* before the people of his generation.⁹⁶ Jesus put new content into old forms, or perhaps it would be better to say

Sea beginning their journey with this God who had delivered them was also a helpful image. The inmate participants connected with the image of slavery and now being invited to live in freedom. That there was another way to see themselves and their world was exciting.

⁹⁵ See Appendix B for the transcript of the *Being Adult* course, Session 5.

⁹⁶ Kevin J. Corcoran, "A New Way to Be Human: A Christian materialist alternative to the soul," Books & Culture magazine, November/December 2006, available from <http://www.ctlibrary.com/39738>; Internet; accessed November 2, 2007, says "It is shocking to realize that Jesus Christ, the very incarnation of the second person of the Trinity, shows us what *creatureliness* means. Shocking too that if we want to

Jesus brought out of the old forms the original revolutionary content and invited people to a renewal of Genesis in their own lives. He and John the Baptist called this repentance – turning and going in God’s direction.

4. Theological and Biblical Concerns of Being Adult

In this section literature that discusses how *imago Dei* and the life of Jesus as portrayed in the gospels contribute to an understanding of being adult will be highlighted. Following these conversations research into a Wesleyan Holiness understanding of *imago Dei* and of being adult will be reviewed. Because of my own participation in the Church of the Nazarene I thought it important to look into what my own tradition had to say about being adult. Also, my concern to present a Wesleyan Holiness theology of being adult was fuelled by the frustration I felt using material that was developed out of other theological traditions, particularly *Boundaries* and *Changes That Heal* by Henry Cloud and John Townsend which were helpful in terms of practical application but not particularly Wesleyan in theological perspective.

a. Image of God

The Liberating Image by J. Richard Middleton as has already been discussed, provided background for understanding the cultural milieu in which Genesis 1 was perhaps first spoken. Through this Middleton puts forward a particular understanding of

know what it means to be human, we must look to the embodied Christ. What we discover is exactly what sober-minded theologians have been telling us all along: that an authentic human existence consists in a fully embodied life rightly lived in relation to God, to neighbor, and to the rest of the terrestrial world.”

imago Dei. Added to this, Stanley Grenz's work, *The Social God and the Relational Self*, offers a panoramic account of Christian teaching about the creation of human beings, and an understanding of the biblical basis for *imago Dei* with a connection to Jesus who "fully reveals God, and thereby is the *imago Dei* in fulfillment of Genesis 1:26-27 as he redeems mankind."⁹⁷ Grenz provides an interesting discussion around *imago Dei*, the relational self and human sexuality and it is worth noting his concluding remarks:

The character of the triune God comes to expression through humans in community. Wherever community emerges, human sexuality understood in its foundational sense – the incompleteness endemic to embodied existence, together with the quest for completeness that draws humans out of isolation – is at work. This sexuality gives rise to the primal male-female relationship – marriage. Yet more important is the role of sexuality in bringing humans into community with Christ and his disciples in the fellowship of his church.⁹⁸

This is significant because I am regularly asked about how I relate to male inmates as a female chaplain. Grenz indicates sexuality plays a role in bringing one another into the church and I believe there is something to this assertion in terms of how we as engendered beings live out our relationship with God before one another. Rob Bell in *Sex God* makes a similar assertion by suggesting we should call a person's inability to maintain relationships and do the work of forgiveness and reconciliation sexual dysfunction.⁹⁹ Although I did not spend a significant amount of time on human sexuality in the *Being Adult* course this is an important aspect of *imago Dei*. Part of not offering more in this regard in the course was intentional because of the frequency of sexual

⁹⁷ Stanley J. Grenz, *The Social God and the Relational Self: A Trinitarian Theology of the Imago Dei*, (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 18.

⁹⁸ Stanley J. Grenz, 303.

⁹⁹ Rob Bell, *Sex God: Exploring the Endless Connections Between Sexuality and Spirituality*, (Grande Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 45.

crimes and the potential for misinterpretation on the part of the inmate participants and my lack of expertise in addressing criminogenic factors such as sexual deviancy.

Some interesting conversations on the Fall were presented. One in particular is from Rabbi Lawrence Kushner who provides several midrashes through the ages on Genesis 28, the story of Jacob dreaming the ladder.¹⁰⁰ In one midrash he writes about the set-up in the garden: “Eating the fruit was not a sin but a necessary, pre-arranged passage toward human maturity. We have read it all wrong: God was not angry; God rejoiced at our disobedience and then wept with joy that we could feel our estrangement and want to return home.”¹⁰¹ In terms of being adult Kushner says “The price a human being pays for growing into an autonomous adult is the pain of leaving home.”¹⁰² This is perhaps a thought Christians would rather not entertain, however, what transpired in Eden needs to inform our understanding of what it is to be adult and our understanding of *imago Dei*. This reading has something in it we ought to pay attention to especially in terms of the relational aspects of personhood and separateness as persons as opposed to separation from God. How do we image God and not become God? What does the Fall teach us about being persons separate from God and yet in relationship with God?

In Free of Charge: Giving and Forgiving in A Culture Stripped of Grace

Miroslav Volf, presents a discussion of a person’s relationship with God.¹⁰³ He makes a

¹⁰⁰ Lawrence Kushner, *God Was In This Place & I, i did not know*, (Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Publishing, 1991).

¹⁰¹ Lawrence Kushner, 73.

¹⁰² Kushner, 71-72.

¹⁰³ Miroslav Volf, *Free of Charge: Giving and Forgiving in a Culture Stripped of Grace*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005).

point about ordinary life, and moments of giving that I think have something to do with trying to understand image of God. He talks about sitting on the couch and watching television as ordinary. He goes on to speak about earning a living as ordinary and then he says “You get up from the couch to play with your kids or you give time and energy to help educate a prisoner or lend an ear to an elderly person – that’s extraordinary...When a gift is given, life becomes extraordinary because God’s own gift giving flows through the giver.”¹⁰⁴ I wondered if perhaps image of God and living out that image in being adult has to do with bringing the sacred into the mundane. I also connected this with a word coined by Erik Erikson that Fowler alludes to in *Becoming Adult, Becoming Christian*. The word is *generativity* and it has to do with adult persons finding ways “through love and work, creativity and care, to contribute to the conditions that will provide the possibility for members of coming generations to develop their personal strengths...”¹⁰⁵ *Generativity* was a useful concept in the *Being Adult* course toward understanding leaving a legacy for those who will come after us.

b. Wesleyan-Holiness Understanding of *imago Dei* and Being Adult

Mildred Bangs Wynkoop writes about John Wesley’s understanding of human beings in *A Theology of Love* which was helpful in providing a background on the Wesleyan-Holiness understanding of *imago Dei*.¹⁰⁶ Wynkoop is careful to point out that

¹⁰⁴ Miroslav Volf, *Free of Charge: Giving and Forgiving in a Culture Stripped of Grace*, 53-54.

¹⁰⁵ James W. Fowler, *Becoming Christian Becoming Adult*, 21.

¹⁰⁶ Mildred Bangs Wynkoop, *A Theology of Love: The Dynamic of Wesleyanism*, (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 1972). Wynkoop addresses image of God in *Chapter VI: Man, Made in the Image of God*. I especially appreciated her comments

the biblical writers are concerned about how human beings are in relationship with God, one another and the created order as opposed to just describing what exactly constitutes human being. She says, “Image seems to refer to the experience of ‘standing before God’ in responsible personhood. Likeness makes sense when it is a way of saying what man ought to do and what he does about that experience of moral freedom.”¹⁰⁷ That human persons are relational and responsible indicates a need for something or someone to be in relationship with and something or someone to be responsive toward. This opens the door for Wesley’s understanding of prevenient grace. In *Words of Faith*, Rob Staples says

Wesleyans often speak of “prevenient grace.” The word “prevenient” literally means “to come before” (from the Latin *prae*, before, and *venire*, to come), hence “preceding.” In theology, the terms refers to the grace of God that comes before salvation, or the grace that we are given even before we respond to God in faith...All of God’s saving action precedes our own response. Long before we ever believed, even before we were born or conceived, God did what He needed to do to bring about our salvation. That’s what grace means.¹⁰⁸

Here, the notion of God already preparing the way into the life of God, that is salvation, supports the idea of the capability or the capacity of human persons to respond to God and it also suggests there is a necessity for some “thing” or some “one” to be present that can be responded to. This “thing,” this person, is grace, the presence of God, the preparation of God and the love of God already present and available. In *Responsible*

about dust and how it is not dust that constitutes humanity as sinful. She says, “It is not dust that predominates, but the breath of God, by virtue of which dust is lifted to dignity and man then stands in a relation to his Master so akin to Him as to make him a companion of God – relation both treasured and terrible,” 116.

¹⁰⁷ Wynkoop, *A Theology of Love*, 121.

¹⁰⁸ Rob L. Staples, *Words of Faith*, (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 2001), 52.

Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology Randy Maddox supports this by suggesting John Wesley's doctrinal understanding of prevenient grace dealt with "God's very first activity in human lives."¹⁰⁹ Prevenient grace could in some ways be regarded as a "relationship with God waiting to happen." This does not preclude the capability of human persons to respond. That God waits for a response in the ever-offered-invitation-to-relationship can only exist if there is provision made for God to be in the place of waiting, which I would suggest is in the offer to relationship that is found in the Wesleyan understanding of prevenient grace.

Randy Maddox goes on to articulate Wesley's view of our human situation this way:

We are creatures whose empowerment and fulfillment flow from relationship with God. We are creatures who have separated from that relationship, resulting in the debilitation of our faculties, the corruption of our moral nature, and the loss of our contentment. We are creatures totally dependent upon God's forgiving and restoring Presence if any of this is to change. Happily, we are each also recipients of this unmerited Presence in its initial degrees. For this reason alone, we are creatures capable of responding to and welcoming God's further transforming work in our lives; or, since God's grace is resistible, of culpably rejecting it.¹¹⁰

Randy Maddox's suggestion of responsible grace, that we are creatures capable of responding to the grace of God, necessitates the offer of relationship with God to be already present. This thought from Maddox about human persons being capable of responding to and welcoming God's further transforming work also speaks of prevenient grace in terms of being invited into a future yet to unfold.

¹⁰⁹ Randy Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1994), 87.

¹¹⁰ Randy Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology*, 93.

Locating image of God relationally as opposed to unique capacities or abilities sets the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition apart. Henry Cloud in *Changes That Heal* locates image of God in function in terms of how we “grow in the image of God” as God works with us in reversing the effects of the Fall.¹¹¹ However, Cloud does emphasize relationship; how God is a trinity of persons in relationship, how human beings are in relationship with one another and with the created order and suggests that humanity is “like God” in this aspect of beings capable of relationship.¹¹² I am not comfortable with the idea of reversing the effects of the Fall because we are invited into new creation and the new creation is a call into a future yet to unfold as opposed to a return to what was.

To add to this, the understanding of vocation from both Fowler and the Whiteheads, Theodore Runyon uses vocation to describe Wesley’s understanding of the image of God as:

...that to which human beings are called, the fulfillment of which constitutes their true destiny. Because it is not innate, the image can be lost, forfeited, or betrayed. It resides not so much in the creature as in the way the creature lives out relationship to the Creator, using whatever gifts and capacities have been received to be in communion with and to reflect God in the world.¹¹³

The renewal of the image of God is for Wesley the new creation and in the renewing of the image of God in a person there is re-creation and actual transformation.¹¹⁴ Renewing

¹¹¹ Cloud, *Changes That Heal*, pp. xiv-xv.

¹¹² Henry Cloud, *Changes That Heal*, 47-51.

¹¹³ Theodore Runyon, *New Creation: The Wesleyan Distinctive*, Wesleyan Theological Journal, Vol. 31, No. 2, Fall 1996; available from http://www.wesley.nnu.edu/Wesleyan_theology/theojrnl/31-35/31-2-01.htm; Internet; accessed November 2, 2007.

¹¹⁴ Theodore Runyon, *New Creation: The Wesleyan Distinctive*, 3.

of the image of God is not a return to what was in Eden prior to the Fall but rather an invitation to a new way to live out image of God.

This leads to a conversation about Jesus Christ as the image of God since I suggest in the *Being Adult* course that Jesus shows us how to be a human being filled with Holy Spirit living out the *imago Dei*. Dr. Kent Brower in his recent work *Holiness in the Gospels* puts forth how Jesus images a renewed relationship with God through his person and work.¹¹⁵ If Jesus shows us how to be a human being filled with the Holy Spirit then he also shows us how to embody adulthood. The understanding that Jesus is fully human and fully enters into the human condition living out his humanness in the power of the Holy Spirit becomes relevant in embodying adulthood because Jesus invites his followers to live out this Holy Spirit-enabled-life in the same way. Jesus provides the renewal of the image of God and it is not a return to Eden but a call to a new relationship to/with God in concert with the Holy Spirit. Rob Staples in “*Sanctification and Selfhood: A Phenomenological Analysis of the Wesleyan Message*” states: “The Bible’s picture of a Christian person will not differ greatly from the picture of a mature person presented by responsible psychologists. The only difference is that the Bible knows such personhood to be possible only by the grace of God.”¹¹⁶ This is not particularly new however it is

¹¹⁵ Kent Brower, *Holiness in the Gospels*, (Beacon Hill Press, Kansas City, MO, 2005). I worked through *Holiness in the Gospels* with my Sunday School class just prior to beginning this project. I was taken with his work on Jesus in the gospel of Luke and the essential humanness of Jesus and how his human life intersected with the Holy Spirit. This has been formational in the presentation of the Being Adult course toward how I offer what Jesus can teach us about being adult.

¹¹⁶ Rob L. Staples, *Sanctification and Selfhood: A Phenomenological Analysis of the Wesleyan Message*, Wesleyan Theological Journal, Volume 7, No. 1, Spring, 1972 available from http://www.wesley.nnu.edu/wesleyan_theology/theojrnl/06-10/07-1.htm; Internet; accessed November 2, 2007.

relevant to this conversation about renewing the image of God. If a person embraces the worldview of the Bible which gives God the “right” to speak into their life, this will prompt particular attitudes and behaviors. I contend in the *Being Adult* course that what shapes and informs our view of our environment and ourselves in that environment will be lived out in attitudes and behaviors. My goal in developing the course was to offer an alternative worldview and a Wesleyan understanding of image of God affirming the necessary activity of the grace of God to not only grow up into Christ but also to grow up in wisdom and maturity.

Craig Keen reiterates that *imago Dei* is about God’s action in creating human beings and not what is the nature of a human being.¹¹⁷ He goes on to say

The image of God is not simply there in us or about us...the image rather comes; it is a gift that never becomes a possession that never ceases being a gift. Genesis 1:27, therefore, speaks first of the God whose movement yields that which is most distinctive in the human being, and only then, derivatively, speaks of that human to whom God moves...it is not so much that the human “images God.” It is much more that the human is “imaged by God...This in turn means that the human is the one who answers the call of God, who lives from the insuperable gift that God gives, who turns to the God who first turns to humans, who thus is only in the space opened up by God’s image.¹¹⁸

It is not Adam who images God, but rather Jesus and as Jesus was open to God all of us are in and through God’s grace capable of being open to God, not in our own capacities, but in God’s openness to us. Keen says

“Restoration in the image of God” is the restoration of the capability of God which opens us to God the way lungs are opened to fresh air. We receive and we yield what we have received in a rhythm of love, praise, and prayer. Restoration in the

¹¹⁷ Craig Keen, *Homo Precarious: Prayer in the Image and Likeness of God*, Wesleyan Theological Journal, Wesleyan Theological Journal, Volume 33, No. 1, Spring, 1998 available from http://wesley.nnu.edu/wesleyan_theology/theonrl/31-35/33-1-7.htm; Internet; accessed November 2, 2007.

¹¹⁸ Craig Keen, *Homo Precarious: Prayer in the Image and Likeness of God*, 3.

image of God is bringing back to God what he has given, it is releasing one's grip, emptying one's pockets, yielding one's very life as a sacrifice to the One to whom the crucified one prayed.¹¹⁹

Unfortunately, Keen uses "restoration in the image of God" rather than "renewed in the image of God" even though his image is that of bringing back to God what God has given in the first place. For me, renewed in the image of God has more of a sense of something new taking place that happens in spite of what already is taking place. The call of God is into a yet to be discovered future and renewal conveys this thought more so than restoration. I suggest this because inmates speak about a misconception about rehabilitation. Some say they were never "habilitated" so why would they want to be "rehabilitated?" They have been lost: lost to themselves and to the community and lost to God. God is seeking the lost and to be found by God is a whole new starting point in the same manner as the freed Hebrew slaves who had just crossed over the Red Sea and heard Genesis 1:26-28 for the first time. I also continue to work through the understanding that it is God's grace that enlivens *imago Dei* and that *imago Dei* is not inherent in humanity but somehow called forth as God's grace goes out from God and comes to us. We are responders, responders to God's grace and we respond to/out of *imago Dei* that is called into being by God who loves us and calls us forth into love and life.

In regard to Wesleyan Holiness teaching on being adult I think this is often couched in terms of holiness and/or entire sanctification. My thought goes along the lines of Paul Bassett in *Culture and Concupiscence: The Changing Definition of Sanctity in the Wesleyan Holiness Movement, 1867 – 1920*. Bassett outlines the Wesleyan

¹¹⁹ Keen, 11.

Holiness movement's response to cultural changes in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. He discusses how events in the culture precipitated changes in the Wesleyan Holiness understanding of carnality and how, as a result, behavior codes about what was holy living and what was not were changed.¹²⁰ At one point Bassett says

Holiness people have continually insisted that this religious experience (entire sanctification) does not entail, physical, moral or ethical perfection. Rather, they have insisted the experience is a grace-given, grace-maintained perfection in love. It is an unconditional love of God and neighbor, which is ever liable to flawed practical expression in this life. Therefore, restitution and correction, even rebuke and reproof as well as begging for, receiving, and tendering forgiveness, are always in order. Maturation is to be expected.¹²¹

The notion that maturation is to be expected is where I think we as Wesleyan Holiness people have not followed through. By this I mean while we expect people to mature, there is little or no provision made for this maturity to take place. Maturity is expected but not intentionally cultivated. I think that John Wesley himself was intentional in providing opportunities for people to mature in holy living through the Methodist societies. It is in these gatherings Wesley provided opportunities for spiritual and personal growth which shaped and formed how those involved embodied being adult. An article which gives a very brief overview of the impact of Wesley's groups says

They created a system where sincere seekers could receive guidance and instruction. In fact you could say that the whole Wesley revival was really a revival of pastoral care and spiritual guidance. The diaries are what clued me in to this. Over and over the person says, "I went to this pastor and they weren't interested, and I went to this person and they couldn't help me, and I read this book,

¹²⁰ Paul Merritt Bassett, *Culture and Concupiscence: The Changing Definition of Sanctity in the Wesleyan Holiness Movement, 1867 – 1920*, Wesleyan Theological Journal, Vol. 28, 1993; accessed from http://www.wesley.nnu.edu/wesleyan_theology/theojrnl/26-30/28-4.htm; Internet: accessed November 2, 2007.

¹²¹ Paul Bassett, *Culture and Concupiscence*.

but I had no one to guide me in the divine life.” The phrase *no one to guide me* opened my eyes.¹²²

This was the genius of the Methodist societies: guidance in spiritual and practical living. Being adult and living as a human being filled with the Holy Spirit connect in holiness. I think Wesley challenged the people of his day to grow up in and through the message of holiness and the opportunities for becoming and maturing in holy living the Methodist small groups provided. Wesley provided for the intersection of responding to grace spiritually and the living out of that grace in ordinary life.

All of this together: sociology and culture; adult development, male spirituality and self-help books; worldview past and present; and theological conversations around *imago Dei* and being adult contributed to the development and design of the *Being Adult* course. The interaction with the literature from each of these perspectives enriched my own thinking and stimulated conversation with colleagues and friends throughout the project. I will have food for thought well into the future.

¹²² Tim Stafford, *Finding God in Small Groups: Tom Albin's doctoral research reveals why the Wesley's system worked so well*, Christianity Today, 8/01/2003; available from <http://www.christianitytoday.com>; Internet; accessed November 2, 2007.

CHAPTER THREE

STUCK IN JAIL

Many people who enter Saskatchewan Penitentiary for the first time are struck by its massive presence. Built in the early 1900's (the cornerstone indicates 1911) this institution has been a place of imprisonment for over 100 years. Prior to the building of the walls the prison was operating in a smaller enclosure. Inmates who have served over 30 years in this institution will tell you things have certainly changed over the years. Things like the operation of the prison, the inmates themselves, the officers and the staff. Saskatchewan Penitentiary was a maximum security prison until the early 1990's. Officers carrying weapons were a common sight and inmates themselves followed their own "con code." Those who reflect on the "max" days say there was a more secure feel to the institution. Inmates knew where they stood with staff and with one another. There seemed to be a certain symbiotic relationship between the keepers and the kept. In recent years this sense of interdependency and "knowing where one stands" has become precarious. Those who have been incarcerated for 10 plus years lament "Things are not what they used to be." They talk about being able to count on one another, to have solidarity. These days older inmates who are serving long sentences (life or indeterminate) will say there is no trust, they are uncertain about how younger inmates, correctional officers and staff will act or react.

Today in Saskatchewan Penitentiary there are men serving sentences for a minimum of two years to life 25 (serving 25 years before being considered for parole) or indeterminate (no definite release date). The crimes committed to be incarcerated at a Canadian medium security federal institution can be anything from several impaired driving charges to multiple murders, armed assaults, sexual assaults and most any other crime of varying degree or nature. Based on statistics gathered from information on the inmate population at Saskatchewan Penitentiary in late November 2007¹²³, approximately 68% of the inmates are of aboriginal descent from a variety of tribal affiliations including Cree, Salteaux, and Dene.¹²⁴ This also includes the Metis inmates. Young men between the ages of 18 and 30 years old comprise 39% of the prison population. Many have a connection with a native street gang. There is a growing African and Middle Eastern population. In early 2007 there were less than 20 inmates of African or Middle Eastern descent. As of November 2007, 11% of the population is from other world areas. Cultural diversity beyond the Canadian aboriginal cultures is beginning to play a role in the daily operations of the prison. Aboriginal culture and spirituality has been an integral part of Saskatchewan Penitentiary for over well two decades.

Currently the inmate population at Saskatchewan Penitentiary is just over 500 which means the institution is full. There are no empty beds. This creates challenges in

¹²³ Correctional Service of Canada Report Generated by RADAR Prairies (Protected B); available from <http://infonet-radar-ptl-pra/en/profiles/population/facility.asp> accessed by tanasicukdj@csc-scc.gc.ca November 29, 2007.

¹²⁴ The Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations indicates their membership includes the following nations: Cree, Salteaux, Assinboine, Dakota/Sioux, Nakota/Lakhota, and Dene available from <http://www.fsin.com/aboutfsin/membershipoffsin.html>; Internet; accessed January 31, 2008.

how the inmate population is managed in terms of compatibility between inmates and issues of safety and security. Another significant population in the penitentiary is inmates who have mental health issues. Many inmates take prescription medication for depression, bi-polar disorder, schizophrenia and mood disorders. The Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) is in the process of implementing strategies to provide adequate care to this increasing population in federal institutions.¹²⁵

Since Saskatchewan Penitentiary is an older facility inmates live in 5' X 10' cells on ranges that house up to 50. The cells have bars, not solid doors and a typical range is two-tiered and long and open. Each cell has a toilet and sink, a bed and a small table attached to one wall. Privacy is at a premium. Most inmates have a television and a stereo which often makes for a continually high noise level. Correctional programming is provided to meet a variety of criminogenic factors including violence, substance abuse, sexual deviancy, family violence, childhood abuse, and anger and emotional issues. The ideal would be for every inmate to be in a program, involved in education (many complete high school while incarcerated) or employed in an institutional job. However, there are more inmates than there are jobs, programs or spaces in the adult learning center.

¹²⁵ The Correctional Service of Canada is in the process of implementing the following strategies: "In response to requirements to manage a changing offender profile and contribute to public safety, CSC will focus on five strategic priorities: Safe transition of offenders into the community; Safety and security for staff and offenders in our institutions; Enhanced capacities to provide effective interventions for First Nations, Métis and Inuit offenders; Improved capacities to address mental health needs of offenders; and Strengthening management practices;" available from <http://www.scs-scc.gc.ca/text/organi/prio-eng.shtml>; Internet; accessed January 10, 2008.

There are the usual structured leisure activities including a gymnasium, weight room, music room and outdoor recreational facilities, library, AA groups and chaplaincy. Some inmates rarely go outside because many of their needs are provided for in the main building of the institution. I asked the inmate participants as a group in the *Being Adult* course about the impact of the institutional environment on their ability to be adult. Their perception of institutional life indicated: they were not allowed to be adult; there was no responsibility in terms of caring for one's self (i.e. food, clothing, shelter and spending money provided, no taxes to pay); there is little accountability for both inmates and staff; and, a perception that "they" do not want inmates to be adult or make changes.

Not only does the prison environment itself affect one's ability to be adult, making the transition to the community is difficult for most. I have spoken with many men who have served the mandatory two-thirds of their sentence. They were released to the community only to find themselves back in prison, some in a matter of days, others weeks and months. The tragedy is they return and they are bewildered about what went wrong. Recently, one man indicated to me that he returned to jail because he did not know how to "handle himself out there." He indicated to me that he had spent so long in jail he was institutionalized and he did not know how to live outside the confines of the institution. He went on to say that he really needed to grow up. Even though he considered himself to be an adult, he had no idea how to be an adult. This is the story of many men I have encountered over these past six years.¹²⁶

¹²⁶ Recent statistics (2006) indicate 58.2% of inmates released from Canadian penitentiaries on statutory release remain in the community. The percentages increase for those released on full parole (73.1%) and day parole (84.7%) available from <http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/dpr-rmr/2006-2007/inst/pen/pen04-eng.asp>; accessed January 10, 2008.

Research on the effects of incarceration supports what these men are experiencing. In an article the John Howard Society published the following was noted;

The world of the inmate is characterized by a multitude of rules and commands designed to control his or her behaviour... Long term inmates often lose their sense of self efficacy once autonomy is taken away. Offenders are told where to live and when and what to eat, they are required to wear regulation clothing, perform certain jobs and follow numerous rules (Santos, 1995). Self motivation and personal achievement are neither facilitated nor reinforced among inmates... Thwarting the inmate's ability to make choices and refusing to provide an explanation for prison rules and regulations involves a profound threat to the inmate's self image by reducing the inmate to the weak, helpless, dependent status of childhood (Sykes, 1966). Loss of autonomy can also entail a serious threat to the inmate's self image as a fully accredited member of adult society. Public humiliation, enforced respect and deference, the finality of authoritarian decisions, and the demands for certain conduct because it is in the individual's best interest are all features of childhood helplessness in the face of a superior adult world... Treating inmates as if they were children is contrary to the best interest of society: when long term prisoners are released they may have lost the ability to make decisions for themselves and are less likely to be able to live productive lives in the community.¹²⁷

I began reading in a variety of disciplines focusing on issues of being adult and maturity. These included sociology, theology (in particular *imago Dei* and Jesus as an adult), worldview issues, stages of adult development, self-books, and Wesleyan perspectives on adulthood and maturity. My reading helped me to formulate issues I wanted to focus on in the course I was developing. I became particularly interested in worldview and how values and beliefs guide thoughts and behaviors. My previous experience in offering courses indicated that an eight to ten session course with each session being two hours in length would be manageable. I chose to focus on the value and belief system of being adult rather than the behaviors of adulthood because it became apparent that values and beliefs will generate a particular way of being adult. Values and

¹²⁷ John Howard Society of Alberta, *Effects of Long Term Incarceration*, available from <http://www.johnhoward.ab.ca/PUB/c35.htm>; Internet; accessed January 14, 2008.

beliefs are shaped and formed by culture and experience. I found J. Richard Middleton and Brian J. Walsh's *Truth is Stranger Than It Used to Be* and Middleton's work *The Liberating Image* to be most helpful at this point. What I wanted to do was offer a Christian perspective on being adult. My intention was to provide a particular way of being adult that was based in the Judeo-Christian scriptures with an emphasis on image of God as presented in Genesis 1 and the gospels' portrayal of Jesus as a model for being adult. Developing this framework would lead to offering practical suggestions for becoming adult in the present circumstance of incarceration and perhaps become a foundation for maintaining themselves in the community upon release.

I knew I could not design a course without feedback so I invited three men who had participated in the *Boundaries and Changes That Heal* courses to assist me. These three would be the core of my "think tank." There ended up being several others who attended sessions through an invitation from the inmates or from me. I began by asking them questions about being adult. This proved to be productive because these questions shaped the basis for the pre-course interview I would conduct. From the basic questions about being adult and maturity the conversation turned to influences on being adult. We discussed cultural messages about being adult and in particular talked about media and the influence of media on being adult. This was a most interesting session as the participants grappled with the influence of the media in their lives. We came to the question: What is informing your values and beliefs concerning being adult? This became the springboard for a session on worldview which was background for a presentation on Genesis 1:26-28. From image of God in Genesis 1 we turned to the gospels to look at Jesus. Jesus shows us how to be adult in the image of God. Jesus

lives out image of God as no other had. The focus of the next sessions was on the messages on being adult we could learn from the life of Jesus. The last sessions of the course were spent in practical application. I thought there was a need to have a “So what?” moment. Now that we know what the Judeo-Christian scriptures teach us about being adult how do we live as adults who are shaped and informed by the Judeo-Christian scriptures? I used chapter two “You Can Learn to Think Differently” from *It’s Not My Fault* by Henry Cloud and John Townsend as a road map. I found Cloud and Townsend to be so practical. They have an ability to put into words things about healthy living that I do not have the background in psychology and counseling to be able to do. Another helpful resource at this point was a book by Catholic Franciscan, Richard Rohr, called *Adam’s Return: The Five Promises of Male Initiation*. Rohr has developed what he calls the five essential messages of initiation as part of his work in masculine spirituality¹²⁸ and these messages were fruitful discussion starters to begin talking about and working through how to be adult. Two other books that influenced me were *A Failure of Nerve* by Edwin H. Friedman and *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality* by Peter Scazzero. The course concluded with a review and a blessing to go and be adult. Each session was audio-recorded. This helped me to be consistent in what I would later present to other inmates and in the church. Recording would also give me the opportunity to compare sessions and to address issues that would arise from the group discussions that happened throughout the presentation of the course.

¹²⁸ Rohr, *Adam’s Return*, 32-33. These 5 messages are: 1. Life is hard. 2. You are not that important. 3. Your life is not about you. 4. You are not in control. 5. You are going to die.

Involving the men in developing the course gave me the opportunity to make the content of the course meaningful and approachable to the participants. Now that the course had shape and form I wanted to present it to inmates who had little or no previous experience with me as a facilitator. I advertised the course and personally invited a number of inmates to participate. Once I had 8-10 participants I began the pre-course interviews. Because many of the men have reading and comprehension challenges I decided to conduct verbal interviews with the participants which I also audio-recorded. This was an enlightening time for me. The interviews gave the men an idea of what the course would be about and, they also provided a venue for me and the participants to get to know each other which helped in forming community in the beginning course sessions.

Following the interviews I began the course. There were enough participants to have two groups. However, after 3 sessions I ended up combining the groups. I had planned for some attrition but institutional life does not lend itself to consistency. There is movement between institutions, core programming for which participation is mandatory and the ebb and flow of life in an institution. Combining the groups was not particularly difficult and by the second session the participants were comfortable with one another. I had designed the course to be presented over 8 sessions but ended up doing 10 sessions. A typical course session was approximately 2 hours long. We began with devotion and prayer, followed by a story or newspaper article that I thought was applicable. There was usually lively discussion on either the devotion or the story. There was a "check-in time" either in regard to homework or reflection on the impact of the previous session in their daily living. Course material for the session was presented and discussion took place in response to it. The participants enjoyed the discussion and there

was opportunity given for personal sharing and controversy. Some of the most interesting sessions involved one participant making a statement that another participant decided to probe further. These times were thought provoking and stimulating for inmates and me.

The last session was a wrap-up along with a group conversation around two of the post-interview questions. My intention was to go through the entire post interview however the group ended up talking more than I anticipated! We ended the group with some suggestions for the future which included continuing to meet to talk about issues surrounding being adult in a support group type configuration. The participants felt they needed to continue to have a place to address issues of being adult in their own lives. Following this, I conducted individual post-course interviews with the participants. Here, the men shared what they had learned and offered suggestions for the future which was fruitful in terms of directions that could be taken in developing the course and in how to implement the course for other inmates.

One of my intentions for the project was to present the same material to a group in my local church. Prince Albert Church of the Nazarene has been in the community for 77 years. The church is mostly middle income to lower income family units of a variety of configurations including single parents, seniors (one couple brings their great grandchildren with them for Sunday School and church), and single persons. The average Sunday service attendance is 80 and the average attendance in the adult Sunday School class is 15-20. I decided to present the course to the Adult Sunday School class I have been teaching for the past 5 years. The class is a cross section of the congregation including young, middle and senior adults. The class was aware of my project because I

would share with them insights from the penitentiary that applied to what I was teaching at the time. There is a core group of attendees however, over the weeks I presented the course there would be some fluidity in attendance. One of the regular attendees is an inmate from the minimum security institution located next door to Saskatchewan Penitentiary. Another dynamic of the class is the mother/daughter and mother/son relationships of four of the attendees. There are single persons and married couples who regularly attend the class as well.

Because of time constraints rather than do individual pre-interviews I asked some of the questions to the class in the beginning session. I presented the course content in more or less the same manner as I did in the penitentiary and as I had done in the penitentiary the class sessions were audio-recorded. There were some differences in community building. I did not provide a devotional thought to begin the sessions. I would begin with a relevant Scripture passage and a prayer but there was less discussion. I also did not take time to have class members check in about how the course material was affecting their lives. I did spend more time re-capping the previous sessions because of the fluidity in attendance. I was more the teacher in the SS class than I was a group facilitator. In hindsight, the SS class venue was not my best choice for the community aspect of the *Being Adult* course. The one hour time frame of the class was a limitation in this regard. I did not give formal homework to the Sunday School class as I had in the penitentiary but I did challenge class members to think about their own adulthood, listen to media messages about being adult, and consider what the Bible has to say about being adult. I decided to keep a journal about the differences between the penitentiary and the

SS class. This exercise was worthwhile in that it allowed me to reflect on course design and content and on the differing responses between the penitentiary group and the class.

For the Sunday School class, I added a session on holiness to the *Being Adult* course. After the last session of the course material I had already developed I sensed more was needed. In reflection, I realized I had not specifically addressed holiness and being adult. One class member said, “Psychology can tell us how to be a mature adult but we will never be able to be mature without help. We need God or it won’t work.” Since this was the point I was trying to make I thought I would intentionally connect holiness and being adult. I developed and presented the session to the class and discovered it was a much needed component.

I compiled the pre and post interview responses, comparing them to one another and to the group responses of the Sunday School class. From here, I responded to this data with evaluations and interpretations looking for outcomes and implications from which I drew final conclusions and responses for ministry. Over all the development and implementation of the project was a valuable exercise and I anticipate the experience will continue to resonate in my life for a long time to come.

CHAPTER FOUR

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GROW UP?

The data gathering for this project was accomplished in two primary ways. The first was through a personal interview with inmates who were interested in participating in the *Being Adult* course. I did a verbal interview with eight participants prior to the beginning of the course. When the course was finished I did verbal exit interviews with five of the participants. Data was also collected in the group setting of the course sessions in both the penitentiary and in the Adult Sunday School class at my local church through survey type questions that were asked to those in attendance. I asked similar questions in both settings and recorded the responses. What will follow here is an overview of the results of the pre and post course interviews I completed with the inmate participants. I will then provide observations about the group responses to the questions concerning being adult that I asked during the course itself.

1. Pre-Course Inmate Interviews

My main objective with the pre-interview was to find out what course participants understood about: being adult and what is needed to help a person become an adult; how they perceived themselves as adults; the effect of incarceration on one's ability to be adult; their understanding of maturity; media messages about being adult; and, what they understood the Bible to say about being adult and maturity. I also wanted to ask what

they hoped to learn from the course. I designed ten question clusters that I thought would provide data for these concerns (see Appendix A for Pre-interview questions). The inmates who participated in the interviews were of different ages and had spent varying lengths of time in prison.

Fig. 1 Overview of Inmate Pre-Interview Participants

Age	18 – 25	2
	25 – 35	3
	35 – 45	1
	55 – 65	2
Number of Years incarcerated (including youth detention)		
	2 – 5 yrs	3
	10 – 15 yrs	3
	30 + yrs	2
Race	Caucasian	2
	Metis	2
	Aboriginal	4

The respondents are fairly representative of the inmate population at Saskatchewan Penitentiary. In chapter 3 I indicated that the typical inmate at Saskatchewan Penitentiary was under 35, aboriginal or Metis, and serving a sentence between two and five years in length. Five of those interviewed were under 35 and either aboriginal or Metis, three of whom are serving a sentence of less than five years. Two of the interviewees who were under age 35 indicated they were incarcerated at provincial and youth detention centers prior to the federal sentence they are currently serving. The younger and older age ranges are represented, however there was only one interviewee who fell in the 35 – 55 age range. There were course participants representative of this demographic but they were not interviewed because they joined the course after the interviews were completed. I

will summarize the responses around themes and then discuss the results as they pertain to the information noted above I was hoping to obtain.

a. Being Adult and What Is Needed to Help a Person Become Adult

I asked two question clusters that I thought would provide this information:

1. What makes a person an adult? Describe your picture of a healthy adult person.
2. What do you think is needed for a person to become a mature adult? What do you think would help someone to “grow up?” Describe what would be helpful for someone to become adult and continue to mature as an adult.

Every interviewee answered “What makes a person an adult?” with something to do with responsibility. One indicated being adult is “living up to your responsibilities.” Another said, “An adult is someone who accepts responsibility and is responsible.” One aspect of responsibility that one respondent was emphatic about was in regard to being legally responsible for actions and that, at 18, a person is treated differently in terms of the law than when they are younger. The next most frequent answer (4 out of 8) indicated that being an adult was to look after your family. The third most frequent response had to do with employment (3 out of 8). Here are some other responses that indicate the breadth of response to this question:

- Looking after yourself (2/8)
- *Being civilized*
- Helping people when they need help
- *Being respectful*
- Honest – more or less genuine
- *Good role model*
- Being understanding especially with children
- *Someone who has matured enough that they don't come into conflict with the rules*
- Someone who is an asset to the community – they do not cause the community harm

- *Knowing you can handle whatever situation comes up without reverting to childlike ways*

The second question noted above provided an opportunity for response to “What is needed to make a person an adult?” and here the most frequent answer centered on the need for a role model (6 responses). One respondent offered, “You need the opportunity to grow up and you need the example which is even stronger. Not many of us in these places have had good examples.” Three responses offered that good parenting was needed. Along with this was a need to have adults involved in a child’s life. One man articulated it this way: “If I had someone to listen to me when I was a kid maybe I wouldn’t be in trouble and in prison.”

b. The Effect of Incarceration on One’s Ability to Be Adult

I asked the following in order to prompt responses on how they viewed how life in prison affects a person’s ability to be adult:

What have you learned about being adult from incarceration? Describe how being in prison helps or hinders you being an adult.

The most pointed response was “It (prison) destroys you. Being an adult and being an inmate don’t fit. To my thinking they don’t allow it (being adult). They expect a certain kind of behavior and it is not adulthood.” Six respondents indicated that prison in some way or another goes against being an adult. Here are some of those responses:

- All the free time goes against being an adult
- *We get treated like kids*
- I don’t think being in jail helps me be adult
- *It’s easier to act like a kid in prison*
- You are not taught to be an adult in prison because you really don’t have any responsibilities
- *You are treated as a non-entity*

Some also indicated that prison has been helpful in their learning to be adult. One indicated “There are challenges in here that I have learned from.” Other responses in terms of incarceration being helpful include:

- Getting an education here helps me be adult. Watching older guys get their education too.
- *I've learned to respect other people in here*
- A lot of staff I've known over the past 10 years have seen me go from a punk kid to being a man who is more responsible and more respectful
- *In prison you have to find ways to put up with all different age groups and levels of maturity*
- Since I arrived here I want to stay out of trouble and act like an adult

I had anticipated the responses that indicate the institutional environment hindered being adult but I was mildly surprised at the responses the prison was helpful. The positive responses were from interviewees under age 25. A question to consider is: Does the timing of when a person is incarcerated impact one's view of the prison environment?

Two respondents in particular noted the difference between prison and the community. One commented “Being an adult in jail and being an adult on the street are two different things. In prison you have all these rules to follow like respect and honor. On the street when someone hurts your family you are supposed to tell somebody. In the prison you are not supposed to tell...” Probably the most poignant response offered was:

It's easier to act like a kid in prison. When you grow up in youth centers and foster homes you don't really get to grow up...We do crazy things just to laugh so we can feel normal, so we don't have the tension. A good example is my friend who is 21. He laughs lots and is always doing crazy kid things. Some days I will tag along and do what he is doing...I didn't get to be a kid. At six I was taking care of my younger siblings for two or three months at a time while my parents were drinking. When I was ten we were put in foster homes and then I went to youth centers. They would say, “Act like a man” so I never got to have fun like normal kids.

I asked the inmate course participants as a group about the institutional environment's effect on a person's ability to be adult. They indicated:

- not allowed to be an adult
- *given everything to survive*
- no responsibility for making a living - food, clothing, shelter, spending money provided, can sleep all day, no taxes, no bills
- *some think this is all right*
- our society - our young raised to think world owes them a living
- *big part of prison - staff and inmates not doing their jobs but asking for higher pay*
- no one held accountable (staff)
- *banging head on brick wall trying to get things done*
- lots of men act like kids - have to join gangs, crews, to feel like men
- *some don't even take showers for a week or more*
- we get sucked into this mentality
- *inmates sit around and complain but don't do anything - they are the first to run and hide*
- if you stand up for yourself (be adult) you get a childish response from staff - they won't let you be an adult
- *get locked up*
- "they" don't want you to be an adult - positions of responsibility are "token"
- *"they" don't want things to change or people to change (they includes staff and inmates)*
- boredom - nothing to do
- *tension creators in jail - staff and other inmates*
- reaction creators - they make me mad.
- *environment of prison - if people would treat me right I will be happy - I will get you before you get me - "I think I am worthless so I gotta teach the other guy a lesson..."*
- choices limited or taken from you in regard to what you eat, wear and living space
- *live under suspicion*
- lack of respect by staff – ignorance
- *see negative, not positive*
- not allowed to argue – not allowed to have an opinion
- *robotic – no spontaneity – no identity*

The group responses reflect a more negative impact than the individual responses from the interviews. I did ask the group if there was anything in the institutional environment that supported being adult but they had difficulty responding.

c. Understanding of Maturity

The question cluster on maturity was:

What is maturity? Describe what you think it means to be mature. Give me a picture of someone who in your eyes is mature. What characteristics do they have? What makes that person mature?

Every interviewee had a different response.

- Growing and learning as you go
- *People who don't go around calling other people names. They don't mess around. They don't play jokes on others.*
- Maturity is to respect other people and get respect back.
- *Mature is basically looking at your life and understanding things that are positive and negative and choosing the positive and trying your best to keep yourself in that direction.*
- A mature person doesn't act like a kid, doesn't expect something for nothing, doesn't put guilt trips on people, doesn't get angry when they don't get their own way...Mature is being responsible.
- *A mature person would be able to keep himself busy doing good things instead of at the first opportunity doing whatever is available to do whether it is good or not.*
- Maturity to some degree is a person who has gone through some tough times in life and has learned something from them.
- *Being mature is accepting responsibility and doing the things that have to be done for whatever reason.*

Although all eight indicated that being responsible was important to being adult, only two indicate here that being responsible is what makes a person mature. These responses seem to indicate that maturity is a process that happens and is on-going in a person's life. There is a fixed arrival point but it requires experience to arrive at. This would be a difference in understanding between being adult and maturity. The responses on being adult were more about behavior (e.g. being civilized, taking care of yourself, being respectful, and a good role model) than process or journey.

d. Media Messages About Being Adult

I wanted to hear from the participants their thoughts on how the media portrays being adult and so to this end I asked:

Describe how you think messages we receive through the media (television, radio, music, newspapers and magazines) support being an adult. What are messages about being adult you have received through the media? How is being adult portrayed/pictured?

Once again, there were a variety of responses: from media portraying being adult in positive ways to media not supporting being adult at all. The positive responses included:

- Not to be drinking and driving and to live a healthy life.
- *They try to have wholesome family values. There is always something that happens wrong and they turn it into a learning experience.*
- There are lots of family shows where you see parents being honest with their kids.

Six out of eight indicated that media messages on being adult were helpful. One respondent, at one point, compared the father on WB's *Seventh Heaven* with Charlie Sheen's character on CBS's *Two and a Half Men*:

On Seventh Heaven, the father is portrayed as a responsible, respectful father. On Two and a Half Men, Charlie Sheen is like a kid in how he acts and talks. He is not responsible or respectful...both these shows are for teenage boys and they are watching those shows they will wonder what is right and what is wrong. You have both ends of whatever.

Because I was approaching media messages from a particular point of view I was not looking for positive messages like not drinking and driving as being helpful toward being adult. These responses made me more aware of personal prejudices and my own lack of objectivity. One who indicated that the media did not "show that much about being adult" said this because he likes to watch the Comedy Network show, *Trailer Park Boys*, where "they are always drinking and smoking marijuana and on

that show they go to jail too.” The other response that suggested the media does not support being adult was “I don’t think the media supports being adult because everything in the media is geared for the younger generation. It is geared to being fit, young, beautiful, lots of sex and violence and I don’t think this is being adult.”

e. What the Bible Says About Being Adult and Maturity

Since I was presenting the *Being Adult* course from a Christian perspective I wanted to know what the participants knew about what the Bible teaches about being adult and maturity so I asked:

Since the course I am going to present is from a Christian perspective, give me your understanding of what the Bible teaches about being adult. How do you think the Bible addresses issues of maturity? Describe anything you may recall from teaching or preaching about being adult or maturity and whether or not it was helpful to you.

Three indicated that they did not know anything about the Bible. They all were under age 25. The other five were able to offer either a particular passage of Scripture, book of the Bible, or examples of people from the Bible that they thought described being adult and that they found to be helpful. Those who articulated an awareness of biblical teaching on being adult were regularly involved in chapel services and programs. An interesting response from one interviewee at this point was about being questioned about one’s maturity level. He said, “I never heard preaching or teaching about being adult but I have heard questioning. I don’t know if everyone who comes to prison sees a psychologist but the one I have seen has questioned me about my maturity level but they have not taught me to change or mature.”

f. Self-Assessment On Being Adult

In the interview I asked three sets of questions for responses in this regard.

1. What was the moment in your life when you considered yourself to be an adult? Describe the circumstances in which you knew you had become an adult (age, what was it about the circumstances that made you aware of your own adulthood).
2. From what you described as being adult, tell me how you see yourself as an adult. Provide me with a description of how you see yourself as an adult in light of what you said is a healthy adult person.
3. What do you hope to discover about being adult through this course? What is it about your own adulthood that you would like help with?

The descriptions of the moment of recognition of their own adulthood were again varied and poignant. Three responded they considered themselves adults before reaching the societal age marker of eighteen. Three others spoke of events that happened when they were eighteen. One indicated that he was sentenced to a federal prison when he was eighteen and he realized that he had become an adult. The other said “When I turned eighteen the first thing that came to my mind was that I had to start looking for a job and I had to try to look after myself and live up to my responsibilities. I was getting into trouble and I started realizing I had to grow up and start acting like an adult.” The third response that focused on age eighteen was about becoming addicted to a particular drug and the man’s mother refusing to give him money to support his habit. He said, “I had to do things on my own.” One man shared that his moment of becoming aware of having to grow up happened when he was thirty. There was also one who responded that they did not have a moment of realizing he had become an adult. I was slightly taken aback by this response because it was given by one of the older interviewees. In the interview no further insight was given even after some probing on my part.

The responses to the questions about how they see themselves as adults, I thought were sincere and seemed to suggest they were quite aware of themselves.

- I am being responsible – I am trying to get my education.
- *I see myself as an adult. I try to live healthy and I try to learn new things. I am trying to get a job so I can be somebody to look up to.*
- A lot of me is not adult because I grew up in youth centers and foster homes. I am respectful and honest and I try to be responsible for myself and the people around me. I still do things that are childish.
- *I don't know if I have hit that stage because I came to jail when I was really young.*
- Comparing my description on a scale of 1 to 10 with 10 being a healthy adult I would be somewhere around 6...
- *I see myself as growing...not all the way there yet.*
- I am extremely limited. I will not attain what I said (about being adult) until I get out of here. I stand up for others and I won't sell myself out...I won't compromise myself.
- *I would call myself an adult. I accept responsibility for the things I do. I don't see myself as a leader but I am mature enough to give direction to others.*

The responses to the question about hopes for the course in terms of their own adulthood and maturity were as follows:

- I don't know – that's why I am here.
- *I want to be more responsible about things and live a better life.*
- I just want to show my mom I can do better on the street.
- *I kind of lost my direction... I want this course to help me get my feet back on the ground and get back on a direction toward being an adult.*
- *To see the kinds of things I am still immature about.*
- I want to learn to be more consistent.
- *When I have a fear or an anxiety I usually go to it rather than against it...I have a fair amount of anxiety about what I have to face in the future and I want to face it.*
- Someone said you should learn something new every day. Perhaps there is something I can learn about being adult from a woman's perspective and I see you as a fairly mature person.

2. Post Course Interview Data

I was able to conduct four post course interviews. Only two of the interviewees participated in a pre-course interview. One who participated in a post-course interview joined the course in the second session. The other post-interviewee had participated in

the design stage of the development of the *Being Adult* Course. The differences in participation between the pre and post interviews were again due to participants not completing the course. They did not complete the course for a variety of reasons including: incompatibility with another participant; attending a CSC core program; transfer out of the institution; and, not being able to consistently get up in the morning. This last reason has been a typical response for other groups and courses that have been offered through the chapel. It is not unusual for me to hear “If you offered this in the afternoon I would attend. I usually don’t get up in the mornings.” The post interviews were more personal in nature than the pre-course interviews. I thought the self-reflection the respondents provided was quite honest and open in terms of what was learned in the course, how the course challenged them, and what they were attempting to do in their personal lives as a result. The post interview question clusters are included in Appendix A.

Of those who participated in the post interview one was in the 25 – 35 age range and the other three were in the 55 – 65 age range. The younger participants who began the course did not complete the course for reasons mentioned above. The questions I designed for the post interview turned out to be useful prompts for the respondents in helping them clarify their thoughts. I gave the post interview questions to the men prior to our meeting. I did this because I wanted them to have time to reflect on the course before the interview. I also thought it would be an interesting exercise to hear responses in the group setting to the first two questions. I will conclude this section with a review of the group responses to the questions that focused on what they learned about being adult and how the course impacted their self-perception as adults. In the individual post

interviews I asked for responses from the participants on what they learned about maturity; what they learned from the Bible about being adult and maturity; how what they learned impacted their lives; and, if the course missed anything they thought should have been covered.

a. Participant Responses on Being Adult and Maturity

The four responses to the question “What did you learn about maturity?” were:

- I liked the definition of maturity at the end – we are adult when we are responsible for our actions and when our days are challenging we can ask for help.
- *For me I find it hard to be mature when others don't treat you as mature. You want to revert back to your old ways and act like a kid. You need to look at the whole picture.*
- I believe the difference between maturity and immaturity is in the choices one makes. I have made choices on the importance of me instead of on what is right and wrong. I need to see myself as mature and begin acting mature.
- *I did not learn anything new but what you said brought things into perspective that I already knew. I had head knowledge but didn't connect with it and what I was supposed to do.*

These responses on maturity do not particularly connect with the pre-interview questions because they are more event-oriented than process oriented. I realized I did not mention maturity in the course until the last session and this may be the reason for these responses.

b. What Was Learned From the Bible about Being Adult and Maturity

In the question I asked I wanted the interviewees to provide a description of what they learned from the Bible about human personhood, being adult and maturity. I also wanted to know if what they learned was similar to or different than what they knew prior to participating in the course.

- *We are to step back and take responsibility. The whole course was about taking responsibility. We are to look at the whole picture and what you are doing in it. I think as humans we are stuck in denial and we don't know how to advance even though Jesus shows us how to be a true adult.*
- I was empowered when you did the Mesopotamian part and about saying we are not servants anymore and we have the power to create. I also decided to start reading the Bible again and I read Mark. What I got out of it is the Spirit lives within you and if you allow it this is what you can depend on. This is what Jesus was doing and he suggested we do the same. Instead of worrying act on it. The whole idea is to let go of your doubts and give them up in order to be opened up to the new. I need to work on this.
- *We covered a lot of territory. My favourite scripture for this is "Awake, O sleeper." It is time to wake up.*
- I've read about Jesus but never really put it together that what he did was a role model for the rest of us...When you started off it kind of surprised me you went back to the creation story. It reinforced what I knew but I kind of never connected that God was a giving God. The overall picture that I got was because we are created in God's image he has a responsibility to us and we also have a responsibility to him. If both are met, life is good. If not, there is chaos.

The sense I received from these responses is that they learned something about what the Bible says about being adult. That one respondent was challenged to read the Bible was positive reinforcement. The respondent who commented that the course helped him put some things together in terms of his understanding of Jesus suggested to me the course material met a need.

c. Course Impact on Life

I wanted to know if the course had an impact on their lives, whether or not it was helpful for them as they live in the penitentiary and if there was anything they thought might be helpful as they prepare to return to the community. Below I have attempted to summarize each respondent's response.

- The only way to make the past go away is to take responsibility for it and be honest about it. You cannot change the past but you can change your

behaviours and your belief system....In here I've always been worried about the small things. What I think you said is "Don't sweat the small stuff." I can't let nitpicking and name calling bug me. If I go on with my day I will be fine. This has been a big change for me...All I know is that I have to be focused on the future and keep the big picture – what is going to happen later on in life instead of worrying about the past. I'm starting to get some direction.

- *I had no idea where you would go with this. When I attended the thing that stuck out was there was a similarity in my life. When I do AA and I do a daily reflection that helps me. What you talked about fit with this and encouraged me to do that pattern. There are challenges you have made that I am avoiding right now. I have been too afraid to work with my God and come to terms with him...This has given me a perspective on what is happening. Now I am more open to people who irritated me. They were so far gone that I didn't want to have anything to do with them. My compassion has come back and some openness. On the range there is this man in here for molesting children and the other guys were isolating him. There were after me because I was speaking to him. One guy asked me why I was associating with him and didn't I know what he was in for. I said, "The damage is already done. How I treat him is not going to make it worse." It seems to have affected the range...I really don't know how it is going to turn out taking this into society. I can't answer.*
- I realized negativity never leaves. I will go through tough times yet I will be in control because I decided the avenues I choose to use...There are guys like me that don't get a chance for parole and they don't have a chance to progress and learn and develop boundaries and have self-control. Trust is important to growth yet it is one of the main ingredients of the crime cycle – the more you trust me the more I will harm you – Yet trust is important so I can feel safe. This is a suspicious environment. This is something that needs to be developed...A person has to be their own policeman. I am controlling me and it goes right back to the place where I made the choice. I am responsible. When I put ownership on me I am in control. When we can see this as inmates then we are on our way to a healthier lifestyle.
- *I read Luke and the story of Mary. It clicked. Here was this young girl and she is giving all the glory back to God. She is showing us a picture of how we are supposed to live. I never made that connection before. We are to give God thanks for what he gives us. I should have been dead 50 times over and I am not sure what my purpose is yet. My purpose might be to just play music with the guys but at the right time the purpose will be revealed...*

Because they had time to reflect, I think these responses are honest. One thing I have

learned about incarcerated men is that if they have participated in any kind of CSC core

programming they tend to be more self-aware and have an ability to articulate what they are thinking and feeling. There is a genuineness that comes through and the responses reflect this.

d. What Was Left Out of the Course

I wanted to know from the participants what was missing from the course. I thought this would contribute to making adjustments to the course in the future. I also heard from some of the respondents what they liked about the course which is also included here.

- Do you have any more courses?...For all the groups I have been in I like this one because it helps me look at all the other groups (programs) and helps me bring them all together. It helps me turn inward – use your program and internalize it and the others fit together.
- *We did not cover boundaries – are you going to offer a course on boundaries?*
- The course could be a good thing in here. I don't know what approach would be helpful to get through to guys in here. If done in a good way they will listen and they will smarten up for a while and then they will act up again. If younger guys can get the sense that what they are doing now is not what a responsible person does – not being a two-year-old but being adult – how you get someone to think like that I don't know.
- *It would be kind of neat to have a support group so we can continue.*

All seem to indicate the need for more whether another course or a support group. The challenge to find a way to offer the course in a way that would be meaningful to younger inmates is significant because I realized I was not connecting with them which was reflected in them not completing the course.

e. Group Response to Being Adult Course

As mentioned, in the last session of the *Being Adult* course in the penitentiary, the group responded to the questions about the course that I had given to them prior to the

session. The responses were to focus on what they had learned in the course and how this was affecting their lives. The discussion took a variety of twists and turns. The group had a particular synergy that lent itself to every participant offering insight and suggestions to one another and to me. Here is a summary of insights that were unique to this session.

- Jesus had input from the Father. That's where he got words and wisdom and power. Jesus said we would do greater things. It is our lack of belief that prevents this. We have belief systems that say we can never rise above and amount to anything.
- *What is disconcerting is now that I know this I have to do something. It is time to grow up!*
- The most significant thing I learned is that if you accept responsibility for being adult it is not just growing up. It is being mature enough to accept responsibilities.
- *This course gives strength and power. It can give you substance so you can face things.*
- Doing this course gave me a bigger picture of who I should look up to. I was taken out of my home at age 13. I did not know who to look up to or follow. I went through 6 institutions and was not able to talk to staff. I only had my peers to look to and everyone acted like children.
- *This course and others (Boundaries and Changes That Heal) are teaching me to change my self-talk much for the better. I've been in for 5 years. Six or seven years ago my self-talk was horrendous. Now it is much better*
- You have given me more tools and some ideas on how to be healthy. I can go to these when things are tough.
- *This helps me understand what I missed growing up. I had parents but they called me dumb and stupid. Most of us did not know what to do or how to make decisions.*
- One of the biggest things about this is the empowerment this can give a person. They need this more than they need anything. To all of a sudden see Jesus and maybe you don't have to do this stuff and that the cycles can be broken. It is tough to break cycles but it is possible. I haven't had a charge or talked back for months and this is huge for me.

Some of the discussion in the group centered on whether or not there was a difference between being in prison and living in the community in terms of being adult and being able to make changes. I believe it is important to note what was said:

Because you have a different environment does not make you different. We all have the same tools. Inmates are not one way and healthy people another. We are

human on both sides. We may not be facing the same obstacles or the same lifestyle. I am as content here as anyone out there. I am doing as good here in this environment as they are in their environment...Whether it is out there or in here, you can overcome things. We put too much emphasis between prison and freedom. If we do this we have lost the whole thing. Don't listen to inmates who say "You don't understand me."

Participants found the course helpful and they were able to make sense of what they received and apply it to their lives. I wondered whether or not the course was too theological and cognitive. There was significant opportunity for interaction in the sessions. The men who did not participate in the conversations around the table in response to the material I presented did not complete the course.

3. Response Comparison Between the Inmate Group and the Adult Sunday School Class

In the first session of the *Being Adult* course I asked participants questions about: what they understood to be adult; when they knew they were adult; frustrations about being adult; and, media messages about being adult. Another other question I thought interesting to explore is: What does Jesus show us about being adult? The proceeding figures show the responses in comparison. Following each figure I will make brief observations.

Fig. 2 Being Adult Response Comparison

Inmate Responses	Sunday School Class Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Personal growth - Independence - Maturity - Being responsible - Being committed - Making decisions - Learning new skills - Making healthier choices - Respectful - Not doing things that make others angry - Have a life foundation – solid or shaky - Recognize the truth - Aware of God, others, right and wrong 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Responsibilities - Maturity - Produce fruit - Financial responsibility - Productive - Reproductive - When you turn 18 - Emotionally secure - Wise - Response to authority is different than when a child

Both groups indicated responsibility and maturity as markers of being adult. In some ways the lists are similar, the inmate responses are more nuanced in terms of specifics than the Sunday School (SS) class responses. An example of this is the SS class uses the word “wise” to say something about being adult whereas the inmates articulate something similar in “having a life foundation, recognizing the truth, making healthier choices and awareness of God, others, and right and wrong.” The inmate responses do not speak to reproducing or the future in the same way the SS class responses do. The inmates did not mention being productive, reproductive or producing fruit.

Fig. 3 Recognition of Being Adult Response Comparison

Inmate Responses	Sunday School Class Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Responsible for a child - Going to work daily - Marriage - Going to prison - 16 – my target to leave home - Decided I had to do something about me 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Started paying rent - Became a parent - Marriage - First job - Moved out of parents home - Filling in income tax forms - Being given a key to the house - Consequence changed – had to be more responsible for my actions (getting driver's license and first ticket) - First time I was called "Ma'am"

The two inmate responses of "16 – my target to leave home" and "decided I had to do something about me" are worthy of note because they speak of an action or decision that was made in becoming adult. All of the other responses are events that happened to the respondents. This perhaps speaks to being responsible because one chooses to be so rather than imposed responsibility (e.g. started paying rent, being given the key to the house).

Fig. 4 Frustrations of Being Adult Response Comparison

Inmate Responses	Sunday School Class Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Responsibilities - Expectations from others - Jealousy and betrayals - If it's going to be it's up to me - Daily expenses, debt and having a place to live - Wasted life – growing up too fast – growing old too soon - The “might have beens” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not wanting to lose control - Not being as wise as I need to be - Lingering emotional insecurities - Life going by too fast - Trying to find joy in menial tasks - Trying to be joyful about choices that we no choice about

I think there is a different tone to each list of responses. Both reflect insecurities but they are of a different nature and tone. The inmate responses somehow reflect a connection with the more mundane aspects of being adult such as being responsible and the basic needs of food, clothing and shelter. The SS class responses appear to be centered in attaining a particular reality such as wisdom or joy.

Fig. 5 Perceived Media/Cultural Messages On Being Adult Response Comparison

Inmate Responses	Sunday School Class Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mixed messages - “Old men” still living at home - Women/men not marrying, multiple partners - Commercials – ripping you off is good business - Standards and principles have been removed - Not being honoured or respected for doing good - Diminishes aging – look younger, be younger, no respect for growing older 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Physical intimacy too early - Making money, debt is okay - Material things are important - Adult toys - Money for retirement - Freedom of expression - “It’s all about me”

The responses are similar. The inmate responses do not reflect pre-course interviews which indicate media messages on being adult are helpful. The discussion of media took place in the third and fourth sessions of the course and perhaps those inmates who saw helpful messages in the media were no longer attending.

Fig. 6 How Jesus Models Being Adult Response Comparisons

Inmate Responses	Sunday School Class Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Meek and mild" - Humble and holy - Righteous – pure - Passive - Was a black man - Human - Drug free - Wise, knowledgeable - Connected to God - Patient - Awesome - Healer - Loving, caring - Considerate, compassionate - Rich with thanksgiving - Not selfish or greedy - Non-judgmental - Strong - Giver - Deliverer and Savior - Doesn't give up on us 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Treats people equally - Has boundaries – he knew he needed to rest – would leave crowds - Nature of a servant - not about us but about others - Wasn't afraid to get his hands dirty – there were those who weren't loveable or clean – washed disciples' feet - Treated others better than himself – How did he do this? - Took authority - Better to give than receive - Constant and true to himself and what he believed in - Fulfills responsibility - Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief – only when you are an adult can you deal with grief - Handles pain

As can be seen the responses from both groups were varied. Although not a particularly qualitative observation, I like the inmate response list better. It has an earthiness to it. The SS class responses are perhaps more theological. Both reflect an understanding of how Jesus models being adult in ways that do not necessarily connect with how each group described what it is to be adult. The SS class said Jesus fulfills responsibility but the inmates do not mention Jesus as responsible even though responsibility figured largely in the pre-course interviews. Both groups indicate Jesus was unselfish. This also was not a description of being adult in the pre-course interviews or in the class responses.

Both groups described Jesus similarly in being non-judgmental and treating people equally.

As I offered the *Being Adult* course in the church I noted there were some differences between what was taking place in the Sunday School class and the institution. I decided to keep a journal of reflections recording my thoughts and feeling about these differences. After the first presentation to the Sunday School class I noted:

I found the presentation and the responses of the SS class to be quicker. The answers to the questions I asked were given quickly and assertively. There was certainly less storytelling and life sharing in the SS class. I commented on this to a fellow chaplain who suggested there is more honesty in the penitentiary than we realize. The men in the penitentiary were more interactive and personal. The SS class was somehow looking to spiritualize their answers and somehow give right or correct responses.

In the third session at the church I made a presentation on the ancient Mesopotamian worldview as I had done in the penitentiary. There was some resistance to the presentation. Here is an excerpt from my journal reflection:

I began to present the ancient Mesopotamian worldview indicating that the Bible was not written in a cultural or contextual vacuum. I offered that Genesis was not the only ancient creation account...About half way through the presentation one of the senior members of the class said, "You don't believe this do you?" (I had been describing one of the ancient Mesopotamian creation stories). This was a totally different response than in the penitentiary! In the penitentiary the response was "This is what I grew up in." There was insight into seeing this ancient worldview as connecting with what he knew as a child. It is interesting presenting something other than the creation account of Genesis to a group of conservative evangelicals. I found the class to be somehow resistant. I felt that the question "You don't believe this do you?" was somehow a challenge to my integrity as a teacher. I had to lovingly reassure this person (and the rest of the class) that I was offering a creation story from another time and culture and that it was not necessarily about what I believed. Later in the church service the person who asked the question said, "I knew you didn't believe that but I had to ask the question." Perhaps it is the venue, perhaps it is the fact that it is Sunday morning, but I found presenting the course to be easier in the penitentiary. The inmates have a sense of wanting to know how to be an adult whereas I think the SS class somehow thinks I think they are not being adult.

It is worthwhile noting here that my pastor encouraged me in this endeavor. He saw the need for a focus on issues of maturity, especially spiritual maturity. Issues of maturity include more than just the spiritual dimension thus embodying adulthood is a necessary focus of what I was presenting. The resistance in the class did dissipate. Even though I had a sense there was resistance and hesitancy from the class members, the class continued to be well attended. In fact there was an increase in attendance as the weeks went on. The person who asked me whether I believed the Mesopotamian worldview did not attend the class for several weeks. As the proceeding sessions unfolded there was more openness. And, as in the penitentiary the discussion around Richard Rohr's "Five Messages of Male Initiation" was a real point of connection. I felt the class was with me and there were a variety of responses and insights from the class. Following one of the later sessions a class member said to me, "It was what I needed to hear. It made me think."

Designing questions and collecting data was an enriching experience. It was also worthwhile and applicable to the project. Prior to this project, I had not experienced responses to my teaching as formally through interviews and group questions that were recorded for later interpretation. The responses were revealing about what participants understood about being adult. The inmate responses in the last session of the course and in the post interview gave me an indication of whether or not I had accomplished what I intended in the project. The data was beneficial to me in terms of whether or not the project had merit and it provided input to respond to as I presented the *Being Adult* course. I stayed with the original design of the course but the group responses in both settings presented opportunities to respond to the participants in a meaningful way. I

used responses like “an adult is responsible” to begin conversation that would lead to points I wanted to make about being adult. The responses to the question on media messages and being adult were a springboard for the presentation I had developed. In all, a worthwhile and growing experience in the unfolding of this project.

CHAPTER 5

Living Fountain: Embodying Adulthood

The image of dying thirst to living fountain undergirds the development of this project on being adult in an adolescent world, especially the adolescent world of incarceration. What began as a small thought in the back of my mind has now become the focus of many conversations and lived out practice in my own life. What will follow here is the interpretation and application of the results of the research for this project. Also, the five assumptions made in chapter one will be addressed in terms of verification and validity as part of the interpretation and application process. Added to this, I will discuss the anticipated outcomes as to whether or not they were met, along with applications and possibilities for the future, and then make some concluding remarks.

1. Interpretation and Application of Research Results

The research revealed that inmate participants had an understanding of being adult that was consistent with one another and the SS class participants. Some of the basic sociological markers of adulthood were noted including being employed and being able to raise a family. Inmates and SS class participants did not mention maintaining a residence as an indicator of being adult. I would propose this was perhaps a given although it was alluded to when questioned about when they considered themselves to be adult. I anticipated that the understanding of being adult would be consistent. The most

frequent response revolved around the idea of responsibility. When pressed to articulate what it means to be responsible there were a variety of answers but the general consensus was responsibility had to do with a person being capable of caring for themselves and caring for others. One of my assumptions was incarcerated men do not embody being adult in recognizable ways. In terms of self-understanding, the responses from the inmates indicated some understood themselves to be adult and some did not. Others indicated that they were growing and one in particular indicated he did not know if he was adult because he had been incarcerated at a very young age. My own observations, along with research on the effects of incarceration, and the inmates' observations about whether or not the institution helped or hindered one's ability to be adult indicate that the environment of a prison does not necessarily support inmates in becoming or being adult. My assumption that inmates do not embody being adult in recognizable ways in some respects can be attributed to the prison culture itself. I would also suggest the fact that many inmates do not embody being adult in recognizable ways has some roots in their childhood environment. Inmates related they did not have good role models in the adults of their childhood whether it was parents or other care givers. This leads to my next assumption that the incarcerated are, in many ways, prevented from growing up because of sociological, environmental, developmental and emotional factors. My research supports this. Inmates, in sharing their own stories, told of their struggles as children to live through various forms of abuse, neglect, and parents and caregivers who were incapable of providing nurture, security and direction. I would wonder if there are inmates who do not realize what they are missing in their lives in terms of their own ability to be adult.

My third assumption focused on the local church. Here I suggested adults in a local church setting are not aware of how they embody being adult and that how they embody being adult affects the life of the faith community and their participation in it. The most telling moment for me toward this was the description of a parent by a middle-aged class participant in response to a character in the Canadian comedy, *Corner Gas*, produced by *CTV*. I described Oscar, in his early sixties, who is portrayed as incapable, selfish, incompetent and more often than not belligerent and a trouble maker. I talked about Oscar as a caricature and suggested he was not a good model of being adult. The response to this was “watching Oscar is like watching my Dad” and the person said it almost with pride. I wondered if this person realized what they were saying about their father. That a television caricature was embodied in a parent was to me a telling sign of how he (the “real life Oscar”) had embodied being adult in the church. In *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality* Peter Scazzero contends there is a dis-connect between emotional growth and spiritual growth in many Christians today.¹²⁹ Although he describes the problem from this perspective I concur that there appears to be a lack of maturity, of growing up in adults, who participate in churches today. As has been noted maturity is expected but perhaps not cultivated and/or made an intentional point of accountability. I would also like to suggest this is perhaps one of the problems with the institutional environment of incarceration. Inmates are expected to act as adults but the environment does not cultivate adult behavior nor does it typically require any accountability in this regard.

¹²⁹ Peter Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*, 7.

I wondered if the SS class was resistant to the whole idea of me offering a course on being adult because of the lack of response and conversation in the first two sessions. Generally, the class is quite interactive and good conversation takes place. Other than my questions that required input they were untypically silent. By session three they found their voice and began interacting with me and with one another. In ensuing personal conversations I discovered class members were finding the material I presented to be thought provoking and an opportunity to reflect on their embodiment of being adult. One class member indicated a desire to share some personal concerns about being adult but felt the SS class was not the place to do so. Along with this was a comment about attending the same church since birth (from a person in the 45-55 age group) and things to work through especially in connection with parents. Another indicated this was “good stuff” and “if we could hear this all of the time we would be able to learn and grow – we need this.” If anything, the *Being Adult* course brought some issues to light that needed to be addressed. The question remains: Where do we go from here? This was also a concern for the inmates and although there were differences in terms of mood and response to the *Being Adult* course I believe both inmates and SS class members were challenged and saw a need for further conversation and opportunities to work through personal issues regarding their own embodiment of being adult.

I did not present anything on the developmental stages of adulthood. I did this intentionally because I did not want the participants to think their age was a factor in being adult. What I wanted to do was provide an understanding of being adult that could be characteristic of any age. We did discuss maturity and considered there was always growth but that there were some basic characteristics of being adult that could be said of

most adults. I would interpret the response to the *Being Adult* course from both groups as an indication of a concern in their lives to understand themselves and how they are as adults. I think many have questions and concerns about issues of being adult and being mature and I believe it is because of the messages about being adult they are receiving from the world around them. I would wonder if people are bewildered about how to be adult and perhaps the inmate who offered "I kind of lost my direction" is not alone in this. My suggestion toward this is perhaps there has not been a direction to go in toward being adult.

My fourth assumption, that the Bible offers a particular shape and form to being adult first, in its presentation of *imago Dei* in Genesis and secondly, in the life of Jesus in the gospels proved to be true. Although the words being adult are not actually used in Genesis and the gospels regarding Jesus I believe it is implied. The writer of Genesis was speaking to adults, to those who had grown up in slavery in Egypt and to those who had grown up in exile in Babylon. I found both Genesis and the life of Jesus to be helpful starting points for developing a definition of being adult. I arrived at the following conclusions about being adult toward the end of the *Being Adult* course:

- God breathed life into us and God gave us a blessing. Whether or not we live out the blessing is up to us. We are responsible to God and to the created order around us. Our worldview shapes and informs the expression of being adult.
- An adult knows that one's actions have outcomes that bring life or death. Our task as adults is to be aware of the outcomes of our actions.
- An adult recognizes there are few excuses that can make one not accountable for his or her actions. An adult does not blame others for what is her or his responsibility.
- As an adult I am to leave something behind for the next generation. I cannot use up all of the resources of my life on me. To be an adult is to be generating life for those who will come after me.
- An adult recognizes the past has an impact on the present and the future. There are influences and forces in life that shape and form current circumstances. An adult understands and/or realizes that these past influences and forces do not have

to continue to shape and form the present and the future. The future can be different as an adult participates in the blessing of creation and in learning how to live as a person filled with the Holy Spirit as Jesus models.

- An adult has a grasp of what is real and what is not real and continues to learn to live faithfully and truthfully: faithful to the call of God, living out this invitation in ordinary life and, truthfully in terms of the truth about God and humanity revealed in the Judeo-Christian Scriptures.

These conclusions were helpful to course participants in both venues and they provided opportunities for dialogue. They are also my starting point for developing a theology of being adult.

I had the most difficulty with my fifth assumption about the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition where I wanted to show the support of the tradition for embodied adulthood in spite of the prevalent culture and that the instructive support of the faith community facilitates a vigorous embodying of being adult that manifests itself in holiness. My difficulty here was being able to verify through research what I know to be true in my personal life as the tradition has shaped and formed me. I fell short in research especially in examining Wesley's class groups and how they provided a venue for growth not only in spiritual matters but also in the daily life of participants. It would seem that Wesley cultivated opportunities for embodying adulthood in the class structure he devised for those who embraced Methodism in his day. There was intentionality in one's growth and maturing as a Christian and in consequence a transformation of values and beliefs that were embodied in daily living. My interpretation of the culture, the faith community and the prison is there is less intentionality toward providing instruction, opportunity and accountability in being adult than there has been at other times in history. Becoming adult requires intentionality. Without a vision of being adult that is inviting there will be little to attract a person to be adult. Somehow there is disillusionment with the adulthood

that has been modeled in the last several decades. It is no longer inviting and worth growing into. This should be a concern for the faith community especially in light of the exodus from the Church of those who are under age 30.

I think this also speaks to the issue of prevenient grace in terms of the invitation into a God-designed future. My thoughts on prevenient grace center on the understanding that human beings are designed as responders, and in particular we are designed to be responsive to God, and that without something (i.e. God's grace being offered freely out of the life and love of God) to respond to or be invited into then there is no reason or cause to live life in any different manner. The future or a person's destiny is set by the past. A person will do as he or she has always done mostly because the past is real and the future is not. When a different option is presented there is an opportunity for something different to take place. The prevenient grace of God is God's presentation of a different option that flows out of the life and love of God. I put up a poster to advertise a *Being Adult* course from a Christian perspective and a dozen inmates signed up! This is prevenient grace – the life and love of God being offered – a different option being presented so something different can take place. For me in my context, in a multi-faith, inter-denominational context, I do not know how one can work without having this understanding of who God is and how God operates. God is always inviting us and giving us this invitation. God is showing up and offering life. Without this how can I speak into these lives? Here is this given-ness of God, the call, the invitation to participate in the life of God and whoever you are is not outside of it - it is where you are as you are. God's grace is offered here in where we are. God's grace is not somewhere where we are not. Grace is here where we are.

In the Bible the evidence of prevenient grace is seen in Noah who responds to the God option of building an ark, in Abraham when he responds to the God option of being the father of a nation, in Moses when he responds to the God option by taking off his shoes to stand on holy ground, in Mary when she says yes to become the God-bearer. As one who confesses Jesus as Lord and has received the Holy Spirit I am a partner with God in the offer of the life and love of God. By simply showing up and living out the life and love of God I am participating in God's offer of prevenient grace – grace that goes before, grace that calls or invites human beings into the life and love of God. In the penitentiary two events were happening at the same time. The inmates were searching and I chose to offer something. Prior to developing and offering the *Being Adult* course, one inmate shared with me that he had been praying and asking God to give him something in his life and this word “boundaries” came to mind. He then came to the chapel and I had posted an announcement that said a course on *Boundaries* would be offered. So, the presence of God, the grace of God, me showing up and being present to the grace of God and offering something provided a place of invitation. Was he here by God's design? Yes. There are these unfolding, these God invitations being offered all of the time. Prevenient grace gives us the place of opportunity, this place of intersection, this place of unfolding of the grace of God that leads us in new directions that requires my cooperation/participation and the participation of others. There were some that did not show up but there were those who did. As they participated and responded to what was offered in Jesus' name, it became this place of intersection, this place of holiness.

In Isaiah 43:18-19 there is an invitation to see God's new thing: “Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up;

do you not perceive it?” (NIV). I would suggest this is prevenient grace. God is doing a new thing and it is already present waiting to be perceived. And not just waiting to be perceived, but to be embraced and lived out. How can we see anything if there is nothing to see? Prevenient grace gives human beings something to see – the life and love of God! And, it also provides an opportunity to respond as God designed human persons to respond. Mildred Bangs Wynkoop says “Grace is not the irresistible power of God overcoming the will of man, but it is the loving hand of a Father enabling the child to use the resources given him in the first place by that Father.”¹³⁰ In the *Being Adult* course I invited those who participated to see a new thing, and hopefully God’s new thing, in terms of what it is to embody adulthood as expressed in *imago Dei* in Genesis and in the portrayal of Jesus as a human being filled with the Holy Spirit in the Gospels. In this my goal was to invite the participants to use the resources given to them by God in the first place in response to God’s invitation to the life and love of God already present because of God’s presence in this created order. It would seem to me this project proved to uphold this Wesleyan-Holiness distinctive.

2. Anticipated Outcomes

I had anticipated that the inmate course participants would develop a new understanding of being adult and some useful tools for being healthier adults while incarcerated. The responses from participants affirmed they did learn about being adult in ways that made sense and were helpful to them. Comments that spoke of personal empowerment, pulling things together, creating a whole picture and one’s part in it,

¹³⁰ Mildred Bangs Wynkoop, *A Theology of Love*, 155.

recognition that what had been presented fit in their personal life, and understanding their own part in being adult suggest to me that participants became more aware of their own embodiment of being adult. As to whether or not their experience will assist the inmate participants in living as regular citizens I am not able to speak to this at this time. What could be useful is remaining in contact with an inmate course participant after he returns to the community. This would provide data on the impact of the course in the community. One participant was released soon after the completion of the course and more than anything he took away the realization he was responsible for his choices and he could no longer blame others, his past or his circumstances. He was looking forward to seeing how he would be able to live in the community. In regard to the course assisting the participants who remained incarcerated to be adult in the institutional setting two of them indicated that since being involved in the course they were responding differently to their environment. One focused on how he was treating others and another spoke of changing belief systems and different behavior as a result. The inmates who completed the course were engaged in what was being presented and there was a genuine interest in wanting to know about being adult. I would suggest the course was meaningful to them at this particular time in their lives. The course challenged them and they asked for a support group and other opportunities to continue learning and growing.

Another outcome I anticipated was in regard to the embodiment of being adult in my own faith community, the Church of the Nazarene. Presenting the *Being Adult* course in my own local church is a beginning for being able to assist us in becoming healthier persons and faith communities. Offering an understanding of being adult that is rooted in Genesis and in the gospels has stimulated personal reflection on the part of the course

participants. My concern in the church is what do I do next? I would like to provide a venue for intentional and accountable growth in being adult. At the time of writing I am looking for ways to make this happen. I still contend our Wesleyan-Holiness tradition is rich with wisdom and resources in regard to embodying a mature adulthood. I want to explore this further in terms of Christian perfection. Mildred Bangs Wynkoop suggests

Life needs discipline; immaturity needs to come to adulthood; childishness must change to responsibility; ignorance must be overcome, and smallness stretched out into a great heart. Narrowness cannot remain content with itself but must give place to increasing vision and expanding understanding, love and empathy.¹³¹

I contend our Wesleyan-Holiness heritage does uphold embodied adulthood that is Spirit-filled, growing in grace and being lived out in maturing fullness in the lives of those who recognize God as Creator and confess Jesus Christ as Lord. In *Responsible Grace* Maddox notes that Wesley had a therapeutic approach to growth as a Christian and the accompanying attitudes and behaviors. He says “For Wesley Christian holiness was fundamentally a matter of purified and strengthened tempers. As such it was dependent upon God’s grace which empowers and purifies one’s affections, but it was also integrally related to disciplines which nurture and reshape those affections.”¹³² My intention in presenting *imago Dei* and Jesus as a model for being adult was in some respects to present Christian holiness. I see, as did Wesley and others in the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition, the necessity of shaping and forming the embodiment of holiness that requires active participation in a setting that provides for teaching, practical life application and consistent accountability. I would put forward another necessary component is a model that is inviting and calls for a response. By this I mean there needs

¹³¹ Mildred Bangs Wynkoop, *A Theology of Love*, 339.

¹³² Randy Maddox, *Responsible Grace*, 201.

to be an embodied adulthood worth becoming. I was called or invited into being adult by adults about whom I thought “I would like to be like you.” These adults were Christians as well, living out the life of God. I wanted what they had. I want others around me to want what I have – to be what I am – a living fountain, a Spirit-filled adult living out *imago Dei* as Jesus modeled and provided for through His life, death and resurrection.

I also hope this *Being Adult* course will be useful to other chaplains. Recently after a major review, Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) made recommendations for the future which included offender accountability.

First and foremost, it is the responsibility of CSC to provide the opportunities and tools necessary to the offender – to provide the offender with ample opportunity to learn skills required to correct behaviour. However, to change his or her behaviour, **the offender must seize opportunities offered to change – to pick up the tools of rehabilitation and use them.**¹³³

I would like to present this *Being Adult* course as an opportunity to change. I see CSC chaplains as major contributors in providing opportunities and tools toward not just rehabilitation but life transformation. I believe the Christian faith is one of the opportunities that can be seized. I am not sure if what I have developed so far will be useable by others but I would like to work on the course so it can be. In order for another chaplain to use the *Being Adult* course it would be helpful if it could be made into a video series providing presentation of the course material. Along with video clips, a discussion guide and a participant workbook would assist others in presenting the course. At the time of writing I am considering offering the course in another institution to see if it is viable. Another piece I think would be helpful is developing a way to attract the 18 – 30

¹³³ CSC Review Panel – Executive Summary: *A Roadmap to Strengthening Public Safety*, available from <http://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/csc-scc/report-eng.aspx>; Internet; accessed January 13, 2008.

age group to take the course. I recognized I did not address this age group well and I believe it is important to the future design and presentation of the course. Again there is the necessity for spiritual formation, a compelling model, and a community for teaching, accountability, and nurture.

The feedback received from the SS class was unexpected in terms of its depth of response. Individuals have been requesting more! The venue of the SS class was not particularly conducive to personal sharing but several people have asked to speak with me about personal issues. One person in particular thanked me for how I connected being adult to holiness because both made more sense in terms of being lived out in an ordinary life. I sense I have met a need, a thirst, in my local church. SS class members have asked me to continue with similar material. At the time of writing, I am considering options in this regard which include studies of *Changes That Heal*, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality* or *A Failure of Nerve* all of which were useful resources in developing the Being Adult course and I thought I would like to share with others.

Looking to the future, I will offer the *Being Adult* course again at Saskatchewan Penitentiary. I would like to develop community building and add spiritual exercises to the sessions because I think this would involve the participants experientially. I will also consider offering the *Being Adult* course again in my local church but do so in a venue other than the SS class. Presently, the church is experiencing growth in terms of numbers and this course might be a way for the church to speak into people's lives in regard to practical life issues and holy living. Here, I would want to develop the holiness component further beyond one session and I would add the same community building and spiritual exercises. I believe I have only scratched the surface of the issues and

concerns addressed in this project and I see myself doing further work, as I connect what I have learned through this project with future courses I present both in the institution and in the church. Already I am thinking in different ways as I facilitate Henry Cloud's *Changes That Heal* in both venues. The work on being adult is affecting my presentation in terms of background information, understanding of *imago Dei* and just what it is to be adult. I am interacting with the material with an astuteness I did not have before and I am asking questions in terms of how my work through this project can be reflected in what I am now facilitating.

I also am concerned theologically in terms of holiness and being adult: how the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition needs to work on how we are giving shape and form to our distinctive as a holiness people. Here, the image of living fountain provides a picture of the life of holiness – resourced by the River of Life who is God in Christ and in the Holy Spirit. It is alive with vitality because of the overflow of resources flowing steadily into it. I would suggest this is what Jesus meant in John 4:14 when he said “a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” Not unbounded life yet-to-come but unbounded life in the here and now. I think being adult, *imago Dei* and holiness need an opportunity for a new conversation. *Imago Dei* and holiness have typically been counter-cultural and revolutionary. Both the writer of Genesis and the human life of Jesus lived in the fullness of the Holy Spirit support this. Who and how we are as adult human beings is being shaped and formed by a worldview. The question is: Which worldview? As a Wesleyan-Holiness people, the Church of the Nazarene has indicated over the past 100 years their mission as “advancing God’s kingdom by the preservation and propagation of Christian

holiness.”¹³⁴ This articulates a particular worldview. I am wondering if a starting point might be a renewal in our understanding of who we are, where we are, the evils/problems we encounter, and the solutions to these not just in light of the past 100 years but in light of the Scriptures and the theological contributions that have spoken into the denomination as it has developed and evolved. Living out a God-designed and God-enlivened adulthood requires a sense of adventure and an openness to God that enables the constant and full infilling and flowing out of the life of God in and through and in spite of the culture around us that desires to “bring us down to its level of immaturity” (Romans 12:2 The Message). Perhaps it is time for the Church of the Nazarene to “grow up,” to embody a robust adulthood communally and personally – to be a living fountain. In Twelve Step groups there is a saying: “Nothing changes because nothing changes.” I am wondering if we need to be asking different questions, asking what the imagination-limiting equators are, and then stepping out into a waiting to be discovered future.

3. Embodied Adulthood: A Living Fountain

The images of dying thirst to living fountain and the movement from adolescence to adulthood in some respects are parallels. They run side by side. *Dying Thirst to Living Fountain* is about transformation – first, to go from being thirsty to being able to quench another's thirst and second, to go from being not an adult to being an adult. That is, to be adult out of this one who is not adult, embracing the invitation to become responsive to the invitation to grow up so that being adult can actually take shape and form in a person's life. To go from always being one who thirsts and is never satisfied to

¹³⁴ *Manual Church of the Nazarene 2005-2009* (Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 2005), 7. See also the Historical Statement on 16-26.

being one who offers out of the resource coming into that person's life captures the concept of generativity which is about living and giving in such a way there are resources for the next generation.¹³⁵ An embodied adult, especially an adult who is shaped and formed by the power and presence of the Holy Spirit is a living fountain. These persons are living fountains because they are using their God-designed capacities to give and to speak into the lives of others around them. They are also living fountains because they have not only received the life of God but they are a place of resource that is capable of offering the life of God out of their life into the lives of others. The living fountain is embodied in the life of a Holy Spirit-filled person. Jesus shows humanity how to live as a human person filled with the Holy Spirit. Jesus embodies God designed adulthood. We are invited to live out the same God-designed embodied adulthood. We are invited to be living fountains.

As a chaplain in a Canadian medium security penitentiary, I serve in a context that is demanding in terms of being mindful of my own health and wholeness as an adult person. It is demanding because of the constant pressure to compromise, to say "no" when it seems easier to say "yes," to maintain boundaries, to be responsible spiritually, relationally and administratively. What I have discovered through this project are some tools and resources for my own embodied adulthood. I am paying closer attention to how I am as an adult. I am thinking in different ways about my relationships especially in terms of emotional systems and maturity "as willing to be responsible for my emotional being and destiny."¹³⁶ I am attempting to ask different questions. Like Columbus, I am

¹³⁵ James W. Fowler, *Becoming Adult, Becoming Christian*, 21.

¹³⁶ Edwin H. Friedman, *A Failure of Nerve*, 8.

trying to find a way to the east by going west, by doing and being what is not typical of me in some areas of my life, and I am finding it is making a difference. An example of this is keeping my eyes open when I am in the midst of the church. I pray with my eyes open, I keep my eyes open when others pray, I keep my eyes open when I sing. For a long time I have kept my eyes closed when I gather with God's people. I thought it was easier to worship with my eyes closed because I was focusing on God. I came to realize I was not connecting with the body of believers nor was I connecting with God in any meaningful way while I was in the midst of the church. By simply opening my eyes I am connecting with the people around me and I am connecting in new ways with God. I gather with others to be in community and communion so keeping my eyes open is a way in my life to be present to the rest of the Body of Christ.

Jesus invites us to receive springs of living water welling up into eternal life (John 7:39). The process of designing and presenting the *Being Adult* course was an opportunity to receive something of the springs of living water in my own life. It was a venue to share the overflow of the life of God in my own life with others. The living water continues to flow as those who have been through the course in both the penitentiary and the church ask for more. I am being called into a future that I had not imagined! My confidence is this project has been the outflow of the River of Life through me - from dying thirst to living fountain as they learn to live in the life and love of God. "O let the living waters flow! Let the River of Your Spirit flow through me!"¹³⁷

¹³⁷ Graham Kendrick, *Is Anyone Thirsty?* Makeway Music, 1994 (Administrated in the Western Hemisphere by Music Services, Brentwood, TN).

APPENDIX A

BEING ADULT

PRE-COURSE INTERVIEW QUESTION CLUSTERS

1. What makes a person an adult? Describe your picture of a healthy adult person.
2. From what you just described tell me how you see yourself as an adult. Provide me with a description of how you see yourself as an adult in light of what you have said is a healthy adult person.
3. Describe how you think the messages we receive through the media (radio, television, and music) support being an adult. How are adults portrayed and/or described in the media?
4. What was the moment in your life when you considered yourself to be an adult? Describe the circumstances in which you knew you had become an adult (age, what were you doing, who was with you, what was it about the circumstance that made you aware of your own adulthood).
5. What have you learned about being adult from incarceration? Describe how being in prison helps or hinders you being an adult.
6. What is maturity? Describe what you think it means to be mature. Give me a picture of someone who is mature in your eyes. How do they act? What characteristics do they have? What makes that person mature?
7. How do you think a person's maturity affects their ability to live? Describe for me how a person's maturity (or lack of maturity) affects relationships, lifestyle, and behavior. Do you think a person's maturity is a factor in how they deal with being imprisoned?
8. What do you think is needed for a person to become a mature adult? What do you think would help you to "grow up"? Describe what would be helpful for someone to become adult and continue to mature as an adult.
9. Since the course I am going to present is going to be Christian in perspective, give me your understanding of what the Bible teaches about being adult. How do you think the Bible addresses issues of maturity? If you can recall anyone preaching or teaching about adulthood or maturity describe for me what you remember. Relate anything that was particularly helpful or anything that was not helpful.
10. What do you hope to discover about adulthood through this course? What is it about your own adulthood that you would like help with?

BEING ADULT
POST COURSE INTERVIEW QUESTION CLUSTERS

1. What are the most significant things you learned about adulthood from the course? What was helpful? What was disconcerting?

2. Describe how what you learned from the Bible about human personhood, adulthood and maturity is either similar or different to what you knew before the course.

3. How has this information affected you? What impact has the course had on how you see yourself as an adult? Describe any changes in your life that are taking place as a result of what you have learned about adulthood and maturity.

4. What do you think the course missed? Where do you think we should go from here? If you would like more opportunity to learn about being adult what would you like to see take place?

5. What did you learn about maturity? In light of what you learned in the course how would you like to make adjustments in your behavior in regard to maturity?

6. Describe how what you learned from the Bible about human personhood, adulthood and maturity is either similar or different to what you knew before the course.

APPENDIX B

BEING ADULT COURSE SESSIONS

BEING ADULT Session 1

1. Why I have gathered the group.
2. What is adulthood to you?
3. How did you know when you became an adult? What was the event surrounding where you became aware that you had become an adult?
4. What frustrates you as an adult? What frustrates you about being incarcerated? Do you have a sense of being adult here in the institution? What makes you feel like an adult? When do you not feel like an adult?
5. How do you think our culture describes adulthood?
6. Do you think there is a gap between being an adult chronologically and being an adult developmentally and emotionally? If there is a gap what created it?
7. Since this is a Christian based course what if anything do you know or think the Bible says about adulthood – or perhaps about maturity?

Read passage from the *THE VELVETEEN RABBIT* by Margery Williams, Courage Books, Running Press, Philadelphia, 1984) – hand out

The skin horse had lived longer in the nursery than any of the others. He was so old that his brown coat was bald in patches and showed seams underneath, and most of the hairs in his tail had been pulled out to string bead necklaces. He was wise, for he had seen a long succession of mechanical toys arrive to boast and swagger, and by-and-by break their mainsprings and pass away, and he knew that they were only toys, and would never turn into anything else. For nursery magic is strange and wonderful, and only those playthings that are old and wise and experienced like the Skin Horse understand about it.

“What is real?” asked the Rabbit one day, when they were lying side by side near the nursery fender, before Nana came to tidy the room. “Does it mean having things that buzz inside you and a stick-out handle?”

“Real isn’t how you are made,” said the Skin Horse. “It’s a thing that happens to you. When a child loves you for a long, long time, not just play with, but REALLY loves you, then you become Real.”

“Does is hurt?” asked the Rabbit. “Sometimes,” said the Skin Horse for he was always truthful. “When you are Real you don’t mind being hurt.”

“Does it happen all at once, like being wound up,” he asked, “or bit by bit?” “It doesn’t happen all at once,” said the Skin Horse. “You become. It takes a long time. That’s why it doesn’t often happen to people who break easily, or have sharp edges, or who have to be carefully kept. Generally, by the time you are Real, most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you get loose in the joints and very shabby. But these things don’t matter at all, because once you are Real you can’t be ugly, except to people who don’t understand.”

“I suppose you are Real?” said the Rabbit. And then he wished he had not said it, for he thought the Skin Horse might be sensitive. But the Skin Horse only smiled.

BEING ADULT
Session 1
Homework Assignment

1. Do some thinking and researching on your own about what it means to be an adult. Perhaps you have taken a program or been involved in a group or had some counseling that might have addressed what it means to be an adult. Write down what you discover and be prepared to share it with the group next week.

2. As you watch television this week look for what the media tells us about being adult. Watch the main characters in the shows and ask yourself:
 - How do they portray adulthood?
 - How do they not portray adulthood?
 - Is there anything in their behavior that suggests they are not acting like adults?

3. Look and listen for clues from the media about how our culture portrays adulthood.

4. As you go about your regular routines be aware of how and when you are engaged by other people as an adult – how do you feel? How do you respond? What about when others do not engage you as an adult? How do you feel? How do you respond?

BEING ADULT Session 2

Check in from last week:

- What did you think about the session?
- What about the homework questions? Did you think about how you were being treated as an adult/not an adult?
- Any discoveries from your own life, programs, workshops, etc., about adulthood?

Show video clip from “Learn to Discern” from Focus on the Family. Use as background for what we are going to talk about today.

Video: *Learn to Discern: Help for a Generation at Risk*, featuring Bob De Moss, Focus on the Family, Colorado Springs, CO, 1992. (I used this video because it was available. I did not look for a more current resource but would do so for future presentations).

Do you think about what messages you are hearing and seeing through the media? How do you learn to discern? What kind of person do you want to be? Do you want to be like people we call celebrities? What makes their lives so desirable?

CULTURAL MESSAGES ABOUT ADULTHOOD

1. What do Seinfeld, Friends, Corner Gas, and CSI: New York, Miami & Las Vegas have in common?
 - all have adults who are unmarried (most if not all of the cast)
 - all have adults who have no children
 - all have adults who have trouble with relationships
2. What message about adulthood do shows like 10 Years Younger, Nip & Tuck, and Extreme Makeover give us?
 - showing your age is not culturally acceptable
 - looking younger is important
 - culture has a certain image everyone is to look like
3. What about reality shows? What do they tell us about adulthood? (Shows like Survivor, Amazing Race, The Bachelor, Fear Factor)
 - competition is key
 - don't trust
 - do things that are disgusting!
 - Celebrity is important - fame - get your face on television
 - We'll do anything for money

BEING ADULT
Session 2
Homework Assignment

Ask yourself these 4 questions:

1. **Where are we?** – describe your environment, what is the nature of the reality in which you find yourself (values, beliefs)?

2. **Who am I?** – how do you function where you are? What is the nature and task of being human where I am?

3. **What is our problem?** – what do you face on a daily basis? What is the biggest challenge you face? How is evil and brokenness accounted for?

4. **What is the remedy to the problem?** How do you solve the problem? How do you keep living in your environment? How do you find a path through brokenness to wholeness?

From what you remember about your home life – how would you answer these questions?

Think about your return to the community - how would you answer these questions?

BEING ADULT Session 3

WORLDVIEW

Hebrew understanding of the cosmos and humanity's place in it is hugely different from what the rest of the world was thinking. They asked these questions: Why did God make us? What are we created for? What makes us uniquely human? These are good questions for all of us. Not that long ago in the Christian world a man by the name of Rick Warren wrote a book called "The Purpose Driven Life" which attempted to answer these questions. I think we all ask the question "Why am I here?"

In the ancient world people asked the very same questions. In fact, how we answer these questions has an awful lot to do with how we view the world. What is our worldview? I can see the boy on a television commercial from a number of years ago standing in front of the mirror in his room and saying, "Are you ever stupid. What did you do that for? Don't you know any better?" Then the camera moves to an adult male who is calling the boy names. I think the commercial was about what we say to our children. The boy looking in the mirror was developing a worldview out of what was being said to him.

Well, the first books of the Hebrew-Christian Scriptures were written in response to a worldview. It is hard to talk about something that speaks of beginnings, of creation, but nonetheless we need to try to wade through this so we can see how much our worldview affects us. Genesis is about creation but it is not the only account of creation. In fact, every civilization has a way to talk about how things began. We like to say things about the theory of evolution or the big bang theory – every culture has a way to describe how the world began. If you were raised in a traditional native culture you will know a story about how the world began.

For the most part, we usually say Moses wrote the first 5 books of the Bible. Moses was not writing in a vacuum. He was writing at a particular time and place, to a particular people in a very particular situation. These people had been slaves for centuries in Egypt and now by a miracle of a god called YHWH, the One who calls himself "I AM," has delivered them out of slavery in a miraculous way. They are no longer slaves – who are they now? Why did this god rescue us? How are we supposed to live? How do we not be slaves? Huge questions! I think these are the kinds of questions we all ask when we are trying to climb out of an addiction or become a contributing member of society.

Moses was responding to a particular worldview – the worldview of what we now call Ancient Mesopotamia. Mesopotamia was the dominant civilization for 3000 years in the Ancient Middle East – before the Greeks. They were the civilization that was birthed in what we now call Iran and Iraq. In between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers is the where the cradle of this great civilization was shaped and formed. The ancient Mesopotamians influenced all of the surrounding cultures for centuries, including Egypt which was great and powerful in its own right.

Let's look at how the ancient Mesopotamians described creation:

- It seems this reality had a watery beginning just like in Genesis
- There was an orderly development – the sequence of events is similar (the order of the firmament, dry land, luminaries, then plants, fish, birds, animals and then humanity)
- There was a huge interest in the power of the sun, moon and stars – without these great lights nothing could take place – they had the power to control everything that happened on the earth – astrology was developed in Mesopotamia – the stars were in charge of destiny –
- Humanity was created because the gods already “peopled” the universe and these people, these gods, had needs – they ate, drank, fought, sought power, were engendered and engaged in sexual activity and were busy for the most part being mean and nasty to each other – in fact I would say they had similar attributes to human beings! Perhaps it was even a question of who created who?
- In the ATRAHASIS EPIC the story begins with a situation before humans existed (TLI, p. 151) – when the gods had to do their own work of canal digging and growing food and keeping the greater gods fed and watered – the work was so laborious and burdensome that the lesser gods upon whom the labour had been imposed went on strike and they took their grievance to the high god ENLIL – they get their hearing and the greater gods agree that the complaint is legitimate – so they propose the following solution: ENKI, the god of subterranean waters calls upon the mother goddess, MAMI or NINTU, to create humanity – MAMI declines to do it alone so a god is slaughtered and his flesh and blood are mixed with dirt by MAMI in order to create humanity (TLI, p. 152)
- The result of this mixture of divine substance and clay is that the god’s spirit will remain a constituent part of human nature, memorialized in the pulsating of the human heart (TLI, p. 153)
- Once humans are birthed, with MAMI as midwife, they begin to multiply and it seem that humans are put to work maintaining the canals and producing food (TLI, p. 153)

It all has to do with keeping the gods fed and watered! The order of the cosmos is violent and sexual! The gods are self-serving. They like to be maintained in a lifestyle they are accustomed to. The creation accounts in ancient Mesopotamia supported what they considered to be the purpose of humanity which was to relieve the gods of their toil in maintaining the canal system, which was essential for irrigation farming and the ultimate purpose of this was so that the god’s needs might be met, specifically through the regular cultic sacrifices (TLI, p. 154).

All of this was propaganda to keep the city state of alive and well! Without this theology or worldview the king and the priests would have no reason to exist! Humans were created to serve the gods, thus relieving the gods of their burdens. Typically, this service which included the building and maintaining of temples, the provision of the cultic sacrifices and the upkeep of the irrigation and agricultural systems upon which the temple economy depended is viewed as the express purpose of human existence (TLI, p. 149)

Source: (TLI) *The Liberating Image; imago Dei in Genesis 1* by J. Richard Middleton, Brazos Press, Grand Rapids, MI, 2005.

BEING ADULT
Sessions 4 and 5

IMAGO DEI

This material took two sessions to cover. There was a great deal of discussion and explaining of terms and providing background so the participants could understand what was being said.

Recap of Mesopotamian worldview

Read The MESSAGE intro to Genesis

Rolheiser article (below)

Rob Bell, *Sex God* (see bibliography)

J. Richard Middleton, *The Liberating Image* (see bibliography)

Notes from: *Jewish Teaching and Practices on Brokenness and the Path to Healing* led by Itzchak Marmorstein CSC National Chaplains Conference, May 29, 2007 in Vancouver, BC.

What is Genesis 1 saying about God?

- creates by/through an act of will/desire - not violence
- speaks creation into being - God takes the initiative
- God has ordered and designed the universe - God is creative!

Meaning of "a'dam" - red blood, of the earth (from Itzchak Marmorstein)

- refers to human race not just one man named Adam
- humanity together, including all of its members
- this new species of creatures will exercise God-given regency over all the rest of the earth
 - not as owners, not as rulers, but as stewards over God's creation - answerable to God for the way this privilege and responsibility is carried out from Coleson, Joseph. *The Crown of Creation – Commentary*. Wynkoop Center for Women in Ministry Bible Studies available from <http://www.wynkoopcenter.org/images/articles/u1/s1.pdf>; Internet: accessed June 15, 2007.

Blessing in Genesis 1:28

- same blessing given to humanity as to the rest of creation
- this is a direct challenge to the fertility theology of many of ancient Israel's pagan neighbors - they thought they had to beg, plead, cajole, remind and bribe the gods to ensure the fertility of the land - of its fields, its trees and flocks and the females in their own homes - but in the creation account - the true and transcendent God granted universal fertility as a blessing, a gift, even a procreative command.
- The natural right of living things to reproduce is simply in their/our nature as God's blessed creatures
- **THE BLESSING CANNOT BE CARRIED OUT ALONE**

What is Genesis 1 & 2 saying about human beings? (Joseph Coleson, Wynkoop Bible studies on Genesis (above) and J. Richard Middleton – *The Liberating Image* (TLI)

- we are created out of God's design- every element of the account of human creation on the sixth day (image and rule, fertility and food) articulates a vision of the human role in the cosmos that is diametrically opposed to that of ancient Mesopotamia...God in

Genesis 1 creates for the benefit of the creature, without explicitly asking for a direct return of any kind. And humans, in God's image, I suggest, are expected to imitate this primal generosity in their own shared rule of the earth (TLI, p. 211).

- The sun, moon and stars serve humanity by giving light and providing a temporal framework of days and seasons...the text subverts the notion that human behavior is fated by astral forces, thus contributing to the exalted picture of human agency and purpose associated with creation as *imago Dei*. This affirmation of human agency in Genesis 1 gives new significance to the notion of divine rest in 2:1-3. Thus, when the creator ceases work on the seventh day, it is not the abdication of a petty deity from a burdensome task, as in some Mesopotamian creation accounts. Rather, God's rest in Genesis 2 represents the delegation to humanity of the royal task of administering the world on his behalf. Humans are entrusted with nothing less than *God's own proper work* as the creator's authorized representatives on earth (TLI, p. 212).
- we are of the earth - we are also given life by God
- we are complete - male and female are in full partnership with one another
- we are designed to "rule" - we have the ability to be creative as God is creative
- we have the ability to lead, to invent, to keep creation continuing into the future
- we have the ability to reproduce - God blessed us with the ability to be fruitful
- we are able to subdue the earth - we have the where with all to work out problems
- we are connected/in relationship with God and one another
- we are limited - there are the trees we are not to touch
- we will reap the benefits of creation as long as proper regency is exercised

Regency, agency, dependency, mutuality, creativity (imagin-ativity) - use Rolheiser article (attached) on who we are - the best can be the worst - even "living thirst" - desire is God-given and God-intended - it pushes us out and up into life - who are we? - is a question that comes out of where are we? If you are in exile or in slavery the easy thing to do is give in to what the culture around you is telling you about yourself. (TLI, pp.230-231)

What does Genesis 3 tell us about what went wrong?

- broken relationships between God and people
- we learn about being disconnected
- our regency and agency is fractured

Coping with the Divine Fire Within by Ron Rolheiser

"Our life is a short time in expectation, a time in which sadness and joy kiss each other at every moment. There is a quality of sadness that pervades all the moments of our life. It seems that there is no such a thing as a clear-cut pure joy, but that even in the most happy moments of our existence we sense a tinge of sadness. In every satisfaction, there is an awareness of limitations. In every success, there is the fear of jealousy. Behind every smile, there is a tear. In every embrace, there is loneliness and in every friendship, distance. And in all forms of light, there is the knowledge of surrounding darkness. ... But this intimate experience in which every bit of life is touched by a bit of death can point us beyond the limits of our existence. It can do so by making us look forward in expectation to the day when our hearts will be filled with perfect joy, a joy that no one shall take away from us."

Henri Nouwen wrote that and the older we get the more we experience its truth. In this life, there's no such a thing as a "clear-cut pure" joy. But that doesn't make our lives less-worth living, it simply changes our perspective. Karl Rahner said a similar thing: "In the torment of the insufficiency of everything attainable, we learn that here, in this life, all symphonies remain unfinished."

What this means is that we aren't restful creatures who occasionally get restless, fulfilled people who occasionally are dissatisfied, serene people who occasionally experience disquiet. Rather we are restless people who occasionally find rest, dissatisfied people who occasionally find fulfilment, and disquieted people who occasionally find serenity. We don't naturally default into rest, satisfaction, and quiet, but into their opposite. Why?

We too easily assume that we must be doing something wrong to trigger all this restlessness and disquiet. Sometimes that's the case, but our deepest emotional aches and pains have their real root in what's best in us rather than in what's worst in us. Ultimately, our profoundest dissatisfactions take their root in what's deepest inside us, the image and likeness of God.

As Christians, we believe that we bear the image and likeness of God inside of us and that this is our deepest reality. We are made in God's image. However we tend to picture this in a naive, romantic, and pious way. We imagine that somewhere inside us there is a beautiful icon of God stamped into our souls. That may well be, but God, as scripture assures us, is more than an icon. God is fire - wild, infinite, ineffable, non-containable.

If that same fire is inside us, and it is, then there are divine appetites inside of us too, appetites that are not ever satiable in this life. There's a divine restlessness written right in our DNA.

And that divine fire is at the root of most of what is problematic in our lives: grandiosity, jealousy, rage, egotism, our incapacity to be satisfied, our constant longing for more, our restless ambitions, our pathological complexities, our greed, and our propensity for addiction. It's difficult to live in this world and be satisfied, humble, chaste, and not jealous of others. It's difficult too to have to share this world with six billion others who are just as special as we are. Something in our very make-up wants always to stand out, to be recognized as unique, to own the world, and to be acknowledged as godly. No wonder there are so many jealousies and wars

on this planet.

But this divine fire is also the root of all that's good in us. When we have divine fire inside of us, it's also impossible to be satisfied with mediocrity, with sin, with lack of meaning, with only this world, with what's second best, and with anything less than a full surrender in love to all that's good - others, the world, God. When we're in the image of God it's impossible not to go through life and be relentlessly driven to search for love and to search for God.

Being in the image of God is our greatest blessing and our greatest struggle. Because of it, we search for meaning, give our lives for each other, create magnificent works of art, and bow in worship to God. But because of it we also spend too many sleepless nights, are often furiously jealous of each other, and too often see others as rivals, give in to rage, and murder each other. It's not a simple thing to carry infinity in a finite body and a finite world.

St. Augustine summarized it all in one line: "You have made us for yourself Lord and our hearts are restless until the rest in you." Given the way we're made, it's hard to live in this world and settle for second-best - and, in that, lies the roots for both greatness and self-destruction.

Ron Rolheiser, *Coping With the Divine Fire Within*, Column for June 25, 2006; available from http://www.ronrolheiser.com/columnarchive_display.php?rec_id=42; accessed August 12, 2007.

BEING ADULT

Session 6

What does Jesus teach us about being adult?

How does Jesus show us how to be human living out the blessing of God from Genesis 1?

What can we learn from Jesus about being an adult human?

Jesus shows us:

- There comes a time when everyone leaves home (going to Jerusalem with his family, not being welcomed in Nazareth, unless you leave your home behind...)
- Everyone faces challenges – Temptation story – Jesus shows us what we face when as humans – it is a test of Jesus’ humanity
- There will be losses – the rich young ruler, Judas Iscariot,
- Not everyone will like you
- Humanity can fulfill the blessing of Genesis 1 – Jesus was regent and agent in healing, casting out demons, raising people from the dead, feeding the crowds, calming the wind and the waves, walking on water
- Humanity has hard choices to make – being run out of Nazareth, the Last Supper, the Garden of Gethsemane, staying while Lazarus was dying
- There is no excuse – let me bury my family, let me say good-bye
- There is a need for a connection with God (prayer life) – life here is not just about ourselves

The parables of Jesus tell us some things about this life:

- The Parable of the Sower tells us God is gracious and that not all of life brings the same results
- The parable of the Prodigal Son teaches us about leaving home, about making choices, about being responsible
- The parable of the Talents indicates we have been given resources that are to be used – we are invited to be regents and agents of creation
- The parable of the seed being buried and dying tells us that death is a very integral part of this life
- The parable of the Wedding Banquet teaches us that there is more to life than meets the eye

I guess we haven’t really come up with a definition of adulthood. How would you define adulthood?

- Being responsible for your own life – God breathed into us life and God also gave us a blessing – whether or not we live out the blessing is up to us
- Knowing that my actions have outcomes that either bring life or death – consequences is a negative term – every action has an outcome that we cannot put positive/negative or good/bad terminology to. We can be rest assured whatever action we take will cause a “re-action.” Our task as adults is to be aware of the outcomes of our actions.

- There is no excuse that cannot make me accountable for my actions (I cannot blame others for what is my responsibility)
- As an adult I am to leave something behind for the next generation. I cannot use up all of the resources of my life on me. To be an adult is to be generating life for those who will come after me (*generativity* from the Whiteheads) – Jesus knew he had to leave in order for the Holy Spirit to be given – every father in the OT blessed their sons – left something for the next generation – the Prodigal Son took his inheritance and squandered it on himself – there was nothing left for those who would come after him – the elder son stayed home and worked for his father – he also did not go out and generate something for those who would come after him – he was building something for himself in working for his father – he had not received his inheritance yet
- As an adult I recognize that the past has an impact on my present and my future. There have been influences and forces on my life that have shaped and formed my current circumstances. An adult understands and/or realizes that these past influences and forces do not have to continue to shape and form the future. The future can be different as an adult participates in the blessing of creation – to be regent and agent, creator and steward of their own energies and of the forces that can influence and shape their lives
- An adult has a grasp of what is real and what is not real (Cloud & Townsend – CTH). We are by design dreamers and visionaries (Abraham, Jacob, Joseph) – but we are also designed to be aware of the realities of this creation (perhaps this is part of regency – an awareness of what is ours to be creative with and stewards of)

What are we up against? (James Fowler's *Becoming Adult, Becoming Christian: Adult Development and Christian Faith*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc., 2000. pp. 1-6)

- self-denial to self-fulfillment
- demise of religious authority
- we live longer
- we are mobile
- we are information freaks
- old images of adulthood vs. new images of adulthood

BEING ADULT Session 7

Living Out God's Design for Adulthood

Review:

- Worldview
- Genesis 1:26-28 - rule and subdue, fruitfulness and fullness
- Note the image of God was not lost in the Fall - what was lost was the relationship of freely given love
- Jesus shows us how to be a human person filled with the Holy Spirit - Jesus shows us how to rightly live out image of God - that was never lost - He shows us:
 1. there comes a time when everyone leaves home
 2. everyone faces challenges - there are hard choices to make
 3. there will be losses
 4. not everyone will like you
 5. there is no excuse
 6. life here is not just about ourselves
 7. we will die

What I would like to do is give us some practical things about being adult that I have gleaned from a variety of different sources. Most of them speak to the issues listed above. Over the next 3 weeks we are going to use these as our guide as we figure out how to embody adulthood - to go from a living thirst to a living fountain.

Modern psychology informs and shapes - we need to bring God into the mix – if not, then it is just another program. Emotional stuff is the twin of spirituality - we can do all sorts of things to assist us with our emotions but if we never do anything for our spirits we will still be bent out of shape - our emotions take us wherever - like energy with no direction - where does anger go without direction - it becomes violence - emotion with direction gives us ability to make changes - when we are overwhelmed with sexual desire we act inwardly or outwardly - both destructive - but with God's help the desire can be shaped and transformed.

Emotion with direction – this is spiritual formation. This is not an overnight fix or a something you do in your spare time. This requires all of your energies! It requires choosing power. It requires physical stamina. It requires thinking long and hard. It requires a thick skin. It requires soul searching. It requires nothing less than total transformation that can only happen with God's help. We are made in the image of God. This was not lost in the Garden of Eden but it was disconnected from the source. The Bible is all about getting us re-connected to the Source! There is shaping and forming that needs to take place. I've offered 7 areas where Jesus shows us how to be an adult – how to be a human person filled with the Holy Spirit – how to truly live out the image of God that we are already designed to be but which does not have the shape and form of God because we are not in relationship with God.

So, let's begin with these seven characteristics and see where we end up.

1. There comes a time when everyone leaves home.

Sociologically leaving home is a sign of adulthood. By this I mean physically leaving the home you were raised in and striking out on your own. However, most of us never leave home emotionally. We are tied to our past in a hugely tangled web of hurt, pain, anger, misunderstandings, fear, broken dreams, and catastrophes of every sort and description. Talk about:

- self-differentiation
- the script that plays in your head from childhood events
- the relationships that shaped and formed us
- parents – care givers – grandparents – role models of every description
- false information we continue to listen to that we received in our childhood or adolescence

How do we get from where we are to where we want to be as adults who not only leave home but are capable of creating and building their own home?

- make peace with the past
- recognize that not everything you learned as a child is the whole truth – there are other ways of living!
- Self-differentiate
- Take ownership of your life – you are responsible for how you think, act, feel, choose, believe and for what your values will be – what or who is shaping your values? Remember it is not what goes in that makes us unclean – it is what comes out!
- Learn to renovate your own life! What are you putting in that will make for a different future? What are your warning signals that something is not right?
- We need to understand that not only do we envision our lives we also are the ones who create our lives (*Seasons of Strength* - SoS, p. 22) – to let the past continue to create our present and our future is to be passive – when we are called to be active in fulfilling what is the image of God in us in ways that truly say to the world “This is the image of God in fullness and holiness in my life!” What is my life to be about? Can you imagine who you are going to become? The Velveteen Rabbit has something to say to us here – the rabbit imagined what it was to be real and did his best to become just that! What can you imagine for your life? If you can imagine it – it is also for you to be possibly become. We let our past dictate our imaginations – notice image/imagination – we allow all sorts of things imagine what is God’s image in us – someone has said to be human is to have imagination – perhaps “image-ination.”

Whitehead, Evelyn and Whitehead, James D. *Seasons of Strength: New Visions of Adult Christian Maturing*. Lincoln, NB: iUniverse, Inc., 2003.

BEING ADULT

Session 8

Continuation of being adult as Jesus modeled and taught.

1. There comes a time when everyone will be challenged to leave home.
 - We all have scripts from our childhood and from our culture that shape and form our beliefs. The question becomes what am I going to be shaped and formed by: my childhood scripts, cultural scripts, scripts from my family, from my friends
 - Home is not a geographical location - it is the sum of all of the "scripts" we have received in childhood, adolescence and adulthood up to this point
 - Jesus challenged people to leave what they knew behind and embark on an adventure filled life with God - living out that in us which is designed to be responsive to a relationship with God

2. Everyone faces challenges: there will be hard choices to make
 - What makes choosing a new path so difficult?
 - What is the "so what?" in each of these obstacles?

DISCUSSION OF Richard Rohr's "Five Messages of Male Initiation" from Rohr, Richard. *Adam's Return: The Five Promises of Male Initiation*. New York, NY: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2004.

3. There will be losses
 - What makes us crazy about losses? Why do we grieve so much?
 - Jesus said, "Do not suppose I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to turn...Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves a son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it." (Matthew 10:34-39)

4. Not everyone will like you - but we are called to forgiveness
 - Why is it so important for us to be liked? Peer pressure is huge - even as adults! The drive in us for community and relationship compels us to be liked
 - What do you do when you encounter someone who does not like you?
 - What do you do when you do not like someone?
 - Why is the Bible full of forgiveness yet we still don't get it or give it? What is important about forgiveness and our relationships with others?

5. There is no excuse!
 - What are the usual excuses we give when we are not able to do something?
 - What is your typical justification for when things go awry in your life?
 - How do we as adults own our life?

- We each one are responsible and accountable for how we think, act, feel and choose. Our values and beliefs are ours. We own them whether we realize it or not. The issue is knowing what values and beliefs are driving your thoughts, choices, actions and feelings

6. Life here is not just about ourselves

- Being adult is about creating and generating resources for the next generation. How are you doing that now? If you are not what is preventing you from doing so?
- How do we build good relationships with others? What makes a relationship toxic?

7. We will die

- We have a hard time facing death in this culture. Why are we so busy cleansing death from our lives?
- Why is it good to face your own mortality?

BEING ADULT

Session 9

You will be challenged to think differently! There is a particular worldview that you have been embracing throughout your life. There will come a time when this worldview will be challenged! Who you are is shaped by where you are and what you perceive to be the problem you are addressing. The solution to this problem is shaped and formed by worldview. If you are going to embrace the “worldview” that is offered in the Bible, you will have to answer these questions.” How can we know what we should do if we have no clear idea of ourselves or the world”? (*Truth is Stranger*, p. 57) These questions are part of the challenge you will face. How you answer the questions will depend on how you are able to make choices. “In real life every choice of any consequence inevitably rules out a whole series of other options.” (*Truth is Stranger*, p. 59) Choosing is important! “Unless the choice carries with it the possibility of making a difference, of changing the course of events, of setting in motion a chain of events that may prove irreversible, it negates the freedom it claims to uphold”. (*Truth is Stranger*, p. 59)

From: Middleton, J. Richard and Walsh, Brian J. *Truth Is Stranger Than It Used To Be*.
Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1995.

Practical Application – Summary of Chapter Two “You Can Think Differently” from *It’s Not My Fault* by Henry Cloud and John Townsend (Nashville, TN: Integrity Publishers, 2007).

Your mind may not always be telling you the truth – LEARN TO DISCERN! The problem with our present culture is that every option is offered as a right and good option. It is almost as if there are no bad or wrong choices. One of the reasons we practice spiritual disciplines is so we can learn to discern the voice of God. We also practice spiritual disciplines so we can get a better grasp of reality. So we can see what is real and what is not real.

Know the difference between IDEAL and REAL! Know the difference between what the script in your head is saying and the facts of reality. We often think things that have nothing to do with reality. GIVE UP THE IDEA THAT WHAT YOU THINK IS ALWAYS THE WAY THINGS ARE! This is the first shift in your thinking. One of the primary indicators of a character problem is a person’s resistance to questioning their perceptions about their situation or relationships. We need to bring our perceptions in line with reality. IF YOU BELIEVE YOUR PERCEPTIONS ARE THE ONLY REALITY – YOU WILL BE FRUSTRATED. Do you believe any of the following statements?

1. **I’VE TRIED EVERYTHING AND NOTHING HELPS** – a person with this mentality believes there is nothing left but to accept a bad situation with no hope of change. Ask yourself:
 - i. What is “EVERYTHING”?
 - ii. What do you mean by “TRY”?

Sometimes a person is afraid of failure, discouraged or just plain worn out, or they may feel that they are powerless in general and thus incapable of being an agent for change. ***NO DEVICE HAS BEEN INVENTED YET THAT CAN REWIND THE PAST AND REPLAY IT BY A***

DIFFERENT SCRIPT. Dealing with the inevitability of the past is more a matter of knowing how to grieve and adapt. There will be challenges – especially to how you have been viewing the world and responding to the world around you.

2. **I CAN'T** – people feel profoundly helpless – your goal may have been achievable but you were just not able to bring it about.

I CAN'T comes from experiences in which we LEARNED TO FEAR RISK AND FAILURE.

Could have come about by:

1. Criticism by significant people in our lives
2. Learning that life is easier when you don't try because when you avoid risk you do not have to hurt so much

PRACTICE is one of the antidotes to I CAN'T. More accurate statements for “I CAN'T” include:

- I am avoiding difficulty
- I am afraid
- I am not sure
- I WON'T

If you learn to label your excuses honestly, you can learn to face difficulties and challenges you are avoiding.

PASSIVE LANGUAGE – this is talking about that whatever has happened is not your fault. You are simply the passive recipient of the action. **ACTIVE AND PASSIVE** are neither right nor wrong, good nor bad – **THEY JUST CONVEY DIFFERENT REALITIES!**

Active Language

I quit

I was uncommunicative

I was driving while drunk

Passive Language

I was laid off

My partner left me

I got a DUI ticket!

YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR LIFE! YOU MAKE CHOICES! CHOICES ARE NOT FORCED ON YOU! You can do differently.

- Scratch the surface a little and try to understand why negative thoughts are activated and in what circumstances. The mind will create a million excuses and defenses designed to keep us snug in our comfort zone and away from anxiety and tension.

We do this through:

- Denial
- Minimizing
- Excusing
- Rationalizing

Ask yourself: ***WHEN I FACE A CHALLENGE OR I AM CONFRONTED WITH A PROBLEM, DO I AUTOMATICALLY DEFAULT TO AN EXCUSE?*** (Yes, but...)

Don't be afraid to look at yourself honestly and critically. Be curious and question whether you have difficulty seeing yourself as you really are.

IT IS MUCH BETTER TO KNOW THE TRUTH THAN TO PRESERVE YOUR COMFORT WITH AN ILLUSION THAT KEEPS YOU STUCK IN UN-REALITY.

- **We need to know WHAT IS TRUE, not what we think is true.** ASK: What is real and true here? What is my thinking missing that I need to know? **REALITY WILL NOT FAIL YOU.**
- **Become a humble person.** Humility is the ability to see yourself and your situations clearly, for good and bad.
- **Give up the idea that your past, your problems and your limitations are all that powerful.** Be humble enough for the possibility that you can be and do better and then act on that possibility.
- **Be a SELF-OBSERVER – CHECK YOURSELF BEFORE YOU WRECK YOURSELF!** Rooting out the truth about yourself may not be fun, but it will reap great rewards for you, for it allows you to see and **OWN WHAT YOU NEED TO DO TO SEE AND CHANGE.** Without this ability, people are forced to interpret every bump in the road as fate, bad luck or bad people. Nothing is their own fault. They are rendered hopeless because everything is beyond their control. **THE SELF-OBSERVANT PERSON** who takes **OWNERSHIP** of their past and present stands a better chance of creating and living in a fulfilling future.
- **FORGIVE**
- **YOU CAN MAKE CHOICES AND THERE ARE CHOICES THAT ONLY YOU CAN MAKE.** The question is: *Who's owning the RESULT?* To take ownership would mean problems always end up on the doorstep of the one who is responsible for correcting it. The problem may not be the person's fault but they are the one's bearing the results – they are living with them! This means that the person is **RESPONSIBLE** for **SOMETHING ABOUT IT.** It is up to them to find what choices are available that they are not yet seeing and attempting.
- **YOU ARE NEVER WITHOUT OPTIONS** – If you don't consider options you will remain stuck in your miserable condition
- **ADAPTABILITY** – is one of the strengths that vaults a person into adulthood. **A MATURE PERSON IS ON THEIR OWN TO FIND A WAY TO ADAPT TO REALITY.** Most people hit obstacles and think they have no choice but to live with the problem
- **LEARNED HELPLESSNESS** – some people learn early in life that no matter what they do, persons significant to them cannot be pleased. "No matter what I do...I cannot escape the bad outcome. It's just the way it is." These people quit trying. In addition to giving up on trying, they develop a way of seeing themselves as powerless in relation to the world. **LOOK PAST THE CHOICE YOU WISH YOU COULD HAVE AND SEARCH FOR ONE THAT WORKS** (this is ruling and subduing – we are not without options or resources). Most people grow up in situations where

looking for choices was not modeled to them and they do not even know what the process looks like.

- **FIND SPOTS WHERE YOU LOSE YOUR FREEDOM OF CHOICE.** No one can take away your freedom – you usually choose to give it up (Eden).
- **WE DO NOT DO WELL IN PRISON BECAUSE WE WERE NOT DESIGNED FOR IT.** In some ways life is a continual struggle to gain, re-gain, and live out our God-given freedom from the forces both internal and external that would take our freedom away.

We have free choice, not free will. We are designed to choose freely. We best fulfill that ability to choose and carry out those choices in relationship with God. Sin is not a thing but is about relationship – broken relationship. Sin is when the relationship between you and God, the one in whose image we are created is broken or severed. Holiness is about relationship as well. Holiness happens when the relationship between us and God is connected and communion and community is happening between God and those created in the image of God. I can be holy because I am connected, in relationship with, in communion and community with the One who is holy. Holiness is about love. Love is about relationship.

BEING ADULT Session 10

WRAP UP

Some Understandings of Being Adult:

- ❖ God breathed life into us and God gave us a blessing. Whether or not we live out the blessing is up to us. We are responsible to God and to the created order around us. Our worldview shapes and informs the expression of being adult
- ❖ An adult knows that one's actions have outcomes that bring life or death. Our task as adults is to be aware of the outcomes of our actions.
- ❖ An adult recognizes there is no excuse that can make one not accountable for their actions. An adult does not blame others for what is their responsibility.
- ❖ As an adult I am to leave something behind for the next generation. I cannot use up all of the resources of my life on me. To be an adult is to be generating life for those who will come after me.
- ❖ An adult recognizes the past has an impact on the present and the future. There influences and forces in life that shape and form current circumstances. An adult understands and/or realizes that these past influences and forces do not have to continue to shape and form the present and the future. The future can be different as an adult participates in the blessing of creation and in learning how to live as a person filled with the Holy Spirit as Jesus models.
- ❖ An adult has a grasp of what is real and what is not real and continues to learn to faithfully and truthfully.

What worldview are you buying into?

The worldview of Scripture and in particular Genesis 1-3 teaches us about being human, being adult humans. We are created by God - in love, in relationship, not in violence, not for subservience.

God breathed into humanity the breath of life and the "a'dam" became a living being - a living desire, a being enabled to make history, to be creative, to choose.

Genesis 1:26-28 says humanity was created to:

- rule
- be fruitful
- fill the earth
- subdue the earth

It also says humanity was:

- created in God's image
- created in God's likeness
- created male and female

Jesus shows us how to live out the image of God. He shows us how to be a human adult filled with the Holy Spirit.

One of our questions becomes: What are we leaving for the next generation? Are we using up all of the resources or are we planting seeds for those who will follow after us?

Death has to do with disintegration. Dust is something you cannot hold together - it is particles of matter that simply cannot hold together - you can sweep up the particles but they do not form together - to go to dust is to not be held together - God took the dust and formed it - he took that which cannot hold together and he made it hold together through His own creativity and power. We are held together by God!

Emotional Systems

*There was a crooked man and he walked a crooked mile,
He found a crooked sixpence upon a crooked stile.
He bought a crooked cat, which caught a crooked mouse.
And they all lived together in a little crooked house*

Available from http://www.rhymes.org.uk/there_was_a_crooked_man.htm; accessed, February 20, 2008.

When you live in emotional systems that are bent out of shape there is bound to be conflict! What happens when one person chooses to do something differently? Perhaps they choose to say "no" or they choose to let someone in the system know what they will or will not be doing. The whole crooked system goes crazy! One of two things will happen: either the system will change or the system will not change. Paul encountered this in with the Jews in Jerusalem - in fact he got arrested because he made a change that affected the whole system. He did that wherever he went (e.g. Philippi).

Maturity is defined by someone (Edwin H. Friedman in *A Failure of Nerve*, p. 8) as the willingness to take responsibility for one's own emotional being and destiny. What do you think of this definition?

Here are some things to consider about maturity: (from *A Failure of Nerve*, 8).

- children who work through the natural problems of maturing with the least amount of emotional or physical residue are those whose parents have made them LEAST important to their own salvation
- children rarely succeed in rising above the maturity level of their parents, and this principle applies to all mentoring, healing or administrative relationships
- parents cannot produce change in a troubling child, no matter how caring, savvy, or intelligent they may be, until they become totally fed up with their child's behavior
- it is easier to be the least mature member of a highly mature system than to be the most mature member of a very immature system

The following is the daily thought from Todaysgift@Hazelden.info Saturday, July 28, 2007. It is from *Wisdom to Know by Anonymous* (Center City, MN: Hazelden Foundation, 2005).

You're never too old to grow up.

--Shirley Conran

A child's view of adults is that they have arrived at some fixed point where they are emancipated and have all the tools necessary for life. An adult knows that we never stop growing. Many of us have been stuck in an immature level of development. Our life stresses and our addictions took us off the track of emotional growth. We found substitutes and evasions for truly dealing with the normal life problems. Now we are back on the much more rewarding path of truly living and growing.

We accept the adult wisdom that we all need help and we all continue to learn and grow throughout our life span. We finally feel like adults because we take responsibility for our actions. We don't blame others for our problems, and when our days feel challenging, we can ask for help. Back on our path, we are never alone.

BEING ADULT
Session 11

HOLINESS AND BEING ADULT

Ask question: What is holiness?

Woman at the well - Cisterns in Jeremiah - Jesus

NOTE: The following are the notes I used as I wrote them for this session. I have left the hyphens on purpose so that the reader might get a sense of how I was attempting to construct my thoughts.

Galatians 5 – the acts of the sin nature – living out of the worldview of other gods – to worship Aphrodite was to be sexually active in a particular way – to worship other gods was to want to know the future – to worship other gods was to be casting spells and doing evil to others – to worship other gods was to be nasty, violent and never satisfied

To live as a person filled with the Holy Spirit – to live out a life that is responding to God's grace means some changes – how you worship is different – how you live when you leave worship is different – there is more to your religion and your relationships than meets your eye than you previously thought - there is correspondence – relationship that is in communication and communion – it is in constant giving and receiving, in constant communion – and it is about what controls, energizes, informs, re-configurations your “heart” – the place in you that guides your actions and attitudes – your worldview – your faith – your beliefs and values are all here – as we think in our hearts so we are – the question is what is influencing our heart?

There is a part of me that wants to equate holiness with being adult but that is not necessarily a good connection to make. Don was right last week when he talked about modern psychology gives us a picture of a mature/maturing adult and that no matter how hard you try on your own you will never get there – I would offer that the best way to be a mature/maturing adult is to trust in the Lord with all of your heart – to repent – to Go in God's direction – to be drawn into the life of God through the grace of God which is Jesus – his birth, life and teachings, death and resurrection – we are to confess Jesus as Lord – receive forgiveness through the broken body and shed blood of Jesus – and then live out the same kind of life that Jesus lived in and through the power and presence of the Holy Spirit.

This is participation in grace – this is responding to God's grace – this is corresponding to God in grace and love – what about sin? – sin is not a thing but a relationship – sin is where we are and because of where we are – separated from God – our lives become sinful – because we live out of relationship – out of connection to God – our attitudes and behaviors are sinful because we are not in relationship with God – our lives designed to be enlivened by God and lived out as image of God are not capable of doing so because we are not present to God – God is present to us – that is what is called prevenient grace – God coming to us and offering life, God-filled life, God-sustained life – life that images God's life – so we do things like Jeremiah talks about – digging cisterns that will somehow give us water to quench our thirst for life when really what has

happened is that we have cut ourselves off from the flowing river of the life of God – because of where we are – not present to God

God offers life through Christ and the power and presence of the Holy Spirit – we are present to God when we choose to turn to God and be open to the life of God – to remain there we need help – we need to be cleaned up from the effects of living un-present to God – not present to God – this is called the sin nature in Galatians 5 – because we have not been present to God – not been receiving the life of God in our lives – our lives have a build-up that can be removed (made useful in terms of being redeemed) – it is removed through receiving Christ and being present to God – we are present to God in the Holy Spirit – the Holy Spirit is offered from the heart of God to our hearts – the Holy Spirit brings the constant presence of God to our lives and in the Holy Spirit we are constantly in the life of God – the effects of living absent from God – not present to God have had their effect on our lives – the effects of being absent to God are diminished when we become present to God – this is holiness – living out the life of God – living out image of God – in the power and presence of the Holy Spirit – enabled by God in the capacities we as human beings have received in the creation

What does it mean to be holy? It means being present to God as God is present to us – it means making a choice to live in God’s presence – it means cooperating with the presence of God in your life – it means making choices that will exclude other options because now you are living in the presence and power of the Holy Spirit so some options are no longer open to you – it means having your desires quenched – fulfilled – it means no longer dying but living – it means being connected to the life of God – the river of God – the river of life – it means having your desires transformed – it means no longer being one who is hungering and thirsting but one whose life overflows with the life of God into other lives –

How do we live out holiness? We live out holiness in the power and presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives – we repent – we make a choice to become present to God – God has been presenting Himself to us in grace – in Christ – and we have the freedom of choice to open our lives to God – once we do this we are no longer our own – we are no longer just our “self” alone, disconnected, out of communion – now we are our “self” connected to the God’s “self” – we become beings in communion – beings in correspondence with one another – and we also become a “self” that is to be in communion with others – we lose the self that has been present to sin and as we offer the new self that is present to God back to God we begin changing and becoming the self we were designed and destined to be – there is an unfolding – a call into the future of God – as we are present to God and God is present to us our view of where we are and who we are is transformed – we become beings who offer life instead of beings who take life into ourselves and use it up and are never satisfied

Jeremiah says it best – Jeremiah 2:13-19 – My people have committed two sins – they have forsaken me, the spring of living water – and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water – they want to drink from the Nile and the Euphrates (be shaped and formed by the worldview, by the culture around them - forsaking God is turning our backs on God – not being present to God – refusing to give God the opportunity to speak into our lives – and because we do this we try to find ways to quench our thirst for God – so we build our own wells and we go looking to be satisfied by something other than the “spring of living water” of the life of God

Passage Jeremiah 2:13-19:

¹²⁻¹³"Stand in shock, heavens, at what you see!

Throw up your hands in disbelief—this can't be!"

God's Decree. "My people have committed a compound sin:

they've walked out on me, the fountain Of fresh flowing waters, and then dug cisterns—
cisterns that leak, cisterns that are no better than sieves.

¹⁴⁻¹⁷"Isn't Israel a valued servant,

born into a family with place and position? So how did she end up a piece of meat
fought over by snarling and roaring lions? There's nothing left of her but a few old bones,
her towns trashed and deserted. Egyptians from the cities of Memphis and Tahpanhes
have broken your skulls. And why do you think all this has happened?

Isn't it because you walked out on your God

just as he was beginning to lead you in the right way?

¹⁸⁻¹⁹"And now, what do you think you'll get by going off to Egypt?

Maybe a cool drink of Nile River water?

Or what do you think you'll get by going off to Assyria?

Maybe a long drink of Euphrates River water?

Your evil ways will get you a sound thrashing, that's what you'll get.

You'll pay dearly for your disloyal ways. Take a long, hard look at what you've done and its
bitter results.

Was it worth it to have walked out on your God?"

God's Decree, Master God-of-the-Angel-Armies.

The Message (MSG)

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Galatians 5 in the Message says some things about what is not holy living – when we are not present to God – and holy living – when we are present to God – when we choose freely to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit – some changes take place – we are present to God and present to other people in a way we were not before!

Galatians 5:13 – 6:10

¹³⁻¹⁵It is absolutely clear that God has called you to a free life. Just make sure that you don't use this freedom as an excuse to do whatever you want to do and destroy your freedom. Rather, use your freedom to serve one another in love; that's how freedom grows. For everything we know about God's Word is summed up in a single sentence: Love others as you love yourself. That's an act of true freedom. If you bite and ravage each other, watch out—in no time at all you will be annihilating each other, and where will your precious freedom be then? ¹⁶⁻¹⁸My counsel is this: Live freely, animated and motivated by God's Spirit. Then you won't feed the compulsions of selfishness. For there is a root of sinful self-interest in us that is at odds with a free spirit, just as the free spirit is incompatible with selfishness. These two ways of life are antithetical, so that you cannot live at times one way and at times another way according to how you feel on any given day. Why don't you choose to be led by the Spirit and so escape the erratic compulsions of a law-

dominated existence? ¹⁹⁻²¹It is obvious what kind of life develops out of trying to get your own way all the time: repetitive, loveless, cheap sex; a stinking accumulation of mental and emotional garbage; frenzied and joyless grabs for happiness; trinket gods; magic-show religion; paranoid loneliness; cutthroat competition; all-consuming-yet-never-satisfied wants; a brutal temper; an impotence to love or be loved; divided homes and divided lives; small-minded and lopsided pursuits; the vicious habit of depersonalizing everyone into a rival; uncontrolled and uncontrollable addictions; ugly parodies of community. I could go on. This isn't the first time I have warned you, you know. If you use your freedom this way, you will not inherit God's kingdom. ²²⁻²³But what happens when we live God's way? He brings gifts into our lives, much the same way that fruit appears in an orchard—things like affection for others, exuberance about life, serenity. We develop a willingness to stick with things, a sense of compassion in the heart, and a conviction that a basic holiness permeates things and people. We find ourselves involved in loyal commitments, not needing to force our way in life, able to marshal and direct our energies wisely.

²³⁻²⁴Legalism is helpless in bringing this about; it only gets in the way. Among those who belong to Christ, everything connected with getting our own way and mindlessly responding to what everyone else calls necessities is killed off for good—crucified. ²⁵⁻²⁶Since this is the kind of life we have chosen, the life of the Spirit, let us make sure that we do not just hold it as an idea in our heads or a sentiment in our hearts, but work out its implications in every detail of our lives. That means we will not compare ourselves with each other as if one of us were better and another worse. We have far more interesting things to do with our lives. Each of us is an original.

Galatians 6

Nothing but the Cross

¹⁻³Live creatively, friends. If someone falls into sin, forgivingly restore him, saving your critical comments for yourself. You might be needing forgiveness before the day's out. Stoop down and reach out to those who are oppressed. Share their burdens, and so complete Christ's law. If you think you are too good for that, you are badly deceived. ⁴⁻⁵Make a careful exploration of who you are and the work you have been given, and then sink yourself into that. Don't be impressed with yourself. Don't compare yourself with others. Each of you must take responsibility for doing the creative best you can with your own life. ⁶Be very sure now, you who have been trained to a self-sufficient maturity, that you enter into a generous common life with those who have trained you, sharing all the good things that you have and experience. ⁷⁻⁸Don't be misled: No one makes a fool of God. What a person plants, he will harvest. The person who plants selfishness, ignoring the needs of others—ignoring God!—harvests a crop of weeds. All he'll have to show for his life is weeds! But the one who plants in response to God, letting God's Spirit do the growth work in him, harvests a crop of real life, eternal life.

⁹⁻¹⁰So let's not allow ourselves to get fatigued doing good. At the right time we will harvest a good crop if we don't give up, or quit. Right now, therefore, every time we get the chance, let us work for the benefit of all, starting with the people closest to us in the community of faith.

The Message (MSG)

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So who and what is shaping and informing how you live? God is inviting us through Christ to come to the river of life – to be satisfied – to drink and have our thirsts not only quenched but then be one who can offer the living water to others – dying thirst to living fountain – this is what holiness is to me

We are not taken out of the place where sin is (the world) – we are given the resource of the River of Life to live life in spite of this place where sin is – there will be collisions but we overcome because we are present to God and God is present to us – we choose to continue to be present to God – this is our choice – this is not coerced – this is our response – God offers life – we are invited always to receive the life of God – so how will you live as an adult – how will you embody being adult – the choice will always be yours – being adult without an outside resource can lead to emptiness – you will continue to die in your thirst for life – for true life – for God-life

NOTE: Transcripts of all course sessions are available upon request at debbiet@sasktel.net.

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