YOUNG PEOPLE'S FAITH IN LATE MODERNITY

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This thesis is dedicated to my Nan.
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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores young people's faith in late modernity. The theoretical framework develops a concept of 'faith' informed by Luckmann's (1967) functional perspective of 'invisible' religion elaborated in terms of Giddens' (1991a, 1991b) analysis of trust, modernity and self-identity. Faith is defined herein as the organisation of trust which provides the individual with ontological security, that is, existential meaning, hope and purpose.

On the basis of a quantitative and qualitative analysis of a structured questionnaire completed by 1090 teenagers aged 13 to 16 years, and 36 semi-structured in-depth interviews with 15 and 16 year olds, I develop two models of faith: immanent and transcendent.

Immanent faith is the organization of trust around a basic structure of the reflexive self, family and close friends. This form of faith characterized most of the youngsters in this study. Transcendent religious referents, if used at all, were only of transitory significance and not a locus of faith per se. Scientific rationality was the basis for judging truth, but, again, was not a faith referent as such.

By way of contrast, a minority of young people did have a transcendent locus of faith in the form of Christianity. This incorporated an extra, permanent, dimension into the basic immanent faith structure. I refer to this whole structure as transcendent faith.

After highlighting the structures of immanent and transcendent faith, I consider faith processes in terms of the outworking of faith in lifestyle-decisions and influences which help or hinder youngsters to incorporate transcendent referents into their faith structure. I conclude this study by considering the significance of immanent and transcendent faith in relation to social theory and argue that the predominance of immanent faith amongst young people supports the secularization thesis. In this context, I look at some of the implications of young people's faith for the future of the Church.
Chapter One

RELIGION AND LATE MODERNITY

The end of a millennium is an interesting time for anyone concerned with religion and its place in society. We are used to thinking of contemporary Western society as essentially 'secular', that is to say, "religious institutions, actions and consciousness" have lost "their social significance" (Wilson 1982:149). Whereas in times past religion was bound up with life both on an individual and social level, today it has little impact on general daily living. Bruce (1996), for instance, documents evidence of the decline in Christian involvement by considering statistics on church membership, church attendance and the number of clergy being ordained. He acknowledges there are difficulties in interpreting some of the more historical data, nevertheless, they indicate a clear decline in many aspects of 'religious action' and suggest religious institutions have undergone a constricting sway of influence. Lest it be thought that declining church involvement does not necessarily mean a waning influence of Christianity he adds:

If it is the case that a large part of the unchurched retain a strong interest in religion despite losing interest in the churches, there ought to be some evidence of this apart from verbal assent to survey questions [about belief in God] (Bruce 1996:34).

In terms of other cultural expressions of Christianity, however, Bruce finds only more evidence of diminishing interest. For example, there are now fewer religious programmes on mainstream terrestrial television and fewer sales of religious books. Wilson also notes in terms of political significance, rulers and governments no longer "need the mandate of heaven to legitimize their existence" (1982:159). Science and technology have apparently demystified the world and now the only mandate that is really necessary is functional rationality.

Yet, despite this evidence of secularization, it is also clear that religion has not
disappeared from Western society either. In countries such as Northern Ireland and the United States of America, for instance, religion remains socially important. Moreover, in countries where the Church holds little significance there is some indication of renewed interest in different expressions of spirituality articulated through new religions, and Eastern and pagan philosophies which go to make the so-called 'New Age' movement. Indeed, we might even expect to see the emergence of a new religious awareness arise in the popular consciousness at the end of the 20th Century as the end of one millennium and the beginning of another signifies a more ultimate end and beginning.

Given this somewhat contradictory picture of the place of religion today, the broad aim of the current study was to find out what empirical form religion actually does take in late modernity. Since young people are usually at the forefront of innovation and new trends, their religiosity is particularly interesting in terms of understanding the current state of religion and also relevant for predicting the form/s religion might take in the 21st Century. Both 'religion' and 'late modernity', however, are contentious concepts and need to be defined before any sociological investigation can be made. The purpose of this chapter, therefore, is to set out my understanding of 'religion' and 'late modernity'. In so doing, I describe the theoretical perspective adopted in this research and detail the main sociological questions considered herein.

1.1 What Is Religion?

One of the most fundamental problems sociologists have in studying religion is defining the terms of reference, in other words, what is to 'count' as religion? It is a fundamental problem because until we have a working definition we cannot decide the sorts of phenomena we are interested in and begin to carry out research. There have been many attempts to specify what religion is but nobody has yet provided a definition that all can agree upon. The range of definitions can, however, be usefully divided into two broad categories: 'substantive' and 'functional' (Wallis and Bruce 1992). Substantive definitions focus on the content of a belief system and associated
practices. In contrast, functional definitions place the emphasis more on the sociological effect of religion than on the content of the belief system.

1.1.1 Substantive Definitions

Substantive definitions share a common emphasis on the content of religious belief which usually includes some mention of supernatural or transcendent referents. In this respect they tend to appeal to the 'common sense' view of religion and therefore the phenomena which they encompass are more readily recognised as 'religious'. For example, religion might be described as a belief system which includes some notion of God or a 'spiritual force'. It may also mention specific practices such as rituals and worship. One early substantive definition often quoted in the literature was supplied by Tylor (1871). He described religion simply as "belief in Spiritual Beings". Towler (1974), however, prefers Spiro's later definition where religion is "an institution consisting of cultural patterned interaction with culturally postulated superhuman beings" (1966:2).

Wallis and Bruce add their own substantive definition to the above selection. According to them religion refers to the:

... actions, beliefs, and institutions predicated upon the assumption of the existence of either supernatural entities with powers of agency, or impersonal powers or processes possessed of moral purpose, which have the capacity to set the conditions of, or to intervene in, human affairs. Further, the central claims to the operation of such entities or impersonal powers are either not susceptible to, or are systematically protected from, refutation (1992:10–11).

Various types of religious belief systems can be included under a general substantive heading. They include: conventional religion, common religion and customary religion:

*Conventional religion* is the most 'visible' form of religion. Its primary characteristics are its transcendent referent/s and some form of institutional organisation. Towler
simply defines this religious category as the one that includes all the "principal religions of the world and their long established sub-divisions" (Towler 1984:4). Thus Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism are all forms of 'conventional religion'. In this study conventional religion takes the form of orthodox Christianity and includes independent Free Churches (the Methodist Church, Community Churches, United Reformed Church, Pentecostal Churches, the Baptist Church, Evangelical Free Churches and the Brethren Church) as well as the established Churches of the Roman Catholic Church and Church of England.

Common religion is often that which conventional religious functionaries would see as heretical or pagan. Towler defined common religion as "those beliefs and practices of an overtly religious nature which are not under the domination of a prevailing religious institution" (Towler 1974:148). Badone defines 'popular' religion in a similar way: "those informal unofficial practices, beliefs and styles of religious expression that lack the formal sanction of established Church structures" (1990:4). They suggest a more private form of religiosity than that expressed in conventional religion.

Towler argues that common religion predates conventional religion but that some of its symbols were appropriated by conventional religious institutions, such as the Church. The supernatural beliefs and practices that were left untouched now form the content of today's common religion. They include superstitions, spiritualism, fortune-telling, astrology, etc. Common religion survives alongside conventional religion, according to Towler, not because it has an institution to prop it up but because it remains plausible to people in its own right and fills the gaps left by conventional religious institutions. In this respect Towler suggests that the Church does not always provide the degree of comfort people seek in their lives. Thus common beliefs are often utilized to provide a sense of security in times of crisis such as conception, birth, marriage, sickness and death. In particular, he argues, Protestant Christianity is unable to meet the need for assurance people require because its emphasis rests on a strong, quiet confidence in a beneficent God - such a degree of faith is lacking in the majority of people. They require something more tangible which in a sense does not render them so powerless. Thus comfort is sought elsewhere be it in terms of
common religion, for instance, or in the modern 'scientific' professions that characterize some forms of 'invisible' religion (see Section 1.1.2).

One of the criticisms that has been levelled at the concept of common religion is that it tends to suggest a second-rate religiosity compared with that of the elite institutional forms (Bailey 1990: 501–502). Badone (1990: 8) also makes the point that common religion has been portrayed as being practical and materialist in nature in contrast with the more ethical and spiritual nature of conventional religion. She suggests this is a misleading comparison for, whilst common religion may be pragmatic, the evidence also suggests it is ethically orientated.

**Customary religion** is a form of religion described by Hornsby-Smith (1991) and his colleagues. It bridges the gap between conventional Church religion and common religion. Customary religion relates to the religiosity of many 'ordinary Christians', perhaps even the majority. This is the Christianity of those who subscribe to some traditional Christian beliefs but do not belong to the Church in any active way. Davie (1990) describes this as 'believing without belonging'. Their faith has come to reside solely in the private sphere and for some may have little salience except in times of crisis or for *rites de passage* (or, of course, in response to an interviewer's questioning!). Hornsby-Smith's analysis of interviews with 'ordinary Catholics' led to the following definition of this form of religiosity. Customary religion is:

... derived from 'official' religion but without being under its continuing control ... the beliefs and practices that make up customary religion are the product of formal religious socialization but subject to trivialisation, conventionality, apathy, convenience and self-interest (1991:90).

It is partly because ordinary Christians do not attend church with much regularity and consequently receive little on-going socialization into orthodox beliefs that customary religion has come to be a selective, heterodox and personal form of religiosity.

Substantive definitions therefore provide a fairly straight-forward, common sense view of religion, but there are some drawbacks in adopting them for empirical research.
concerned with understanding religion at the end of the 20th Century. Wallis and Bruce (1992), for instance, note that the concept of the 'supernatural' is problematic in that what is counted as 'supernatural' is culturally bound. What might be regarded as 'supernatural' in Western culture may be quite ordinary and common place in other cultures. Luckmann (1967) and various other theorists have pointed to another problem with adopting this view on religion which is that it has de facto resulted in the sociology of religion being operationalized in terms of the sociology of the Christian Church. Church attendance, consent to doctrine and creeds, etc, are all relatively easy to measure objectively and hence facilitate the research process. However, this makes for a fairly narrow understanding of religion. By equating religion with the Church, research is blinded to other forms of religiosity and, as far as Luckmann is concerned, therefore fails to perceive the full nature of religion in contemporary society. In the light of these criticisms some theorists have adopted a functional perspective on religion.

1.1.2 Functional Definitions

Functional definitions help to avoid some of the problems associated with substantive ones. They shift the focus from the specific content of religion to what it is that religions actually do. Geertz offers a functional definition when he states religion is:

... a system of symbols which acts to establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing those conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic (1966:4).

Similarly, Berger (1969) suggests that religion is a means of legitimating the way society interprets the experiences of individuals, integrating them into a meaningful order (a 'nomos'). He argues that meaning is socially constructed but if those meanings can be shown to be inherent in the 'nature of things in general' or in the 'nature of humankind' (a 'cosmos'), the nomos faces fewer challenges, can be taken-for-granted, stabilized and established. Thus, according to Berger religion is:
the human enterprise by which a sacred cosmos is established. Put differently, religion is cosmization in a sacred mode (1969:26).

Functional definitions of this kind render religion a universal phenomenon. It is argued, for instance, that all societies need a legitimated meaning system to facilitate social interaction and maintain social order. Durkheim regarded religion in this light. For him:

... religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden – beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them (1976:47).

Given the broader perspective on religion that functional definitions allow, various overtly non-religious social phenomena (in substantive terms) which nevertheless serve a 'religious' function might also be regarded as religious. Since these phenomena would not ordinarily be recognized as religious in a common sense way they can be referred to as 'invisible' religion (Luckmann 1967) or 'implicit' religion (Bailey 1990). Examples of beliefs and practices which do not refer to a transcendent realm yet might still provide a coherent framework of meaning for a group of individuals include the ideals of humanism, communism, nationalism or other political allegiance, ecology groups, various forms of psycho-analysis and self-help groups like diet and fitness clubs aimed at achieving a form of 'salvation' in terms of good health (Hamilton 1994). Sometimes sports fanaticism is also equated with invisible religion. Anne Eyre (1996) provides an interesting analysis of the relationship between religion and football, for instance, and it is worth outlining her example in a little more detail in order to illustrate the potential overlap between 'secular' and 'religious' forms of belief and behaviour. Whilst acknowledging Davie's (1993) warning that it might be misleading to take the analogy between football and religion too far in that football often lies alongside Church religion rather than taking its
place¹, Eyre nevertheless argues that "there is mileage in exploring further the idea of football as religion" (1996:6). To this end she uses Glock and Stark's (1965) model of religion which defines religiosity according to five dimensions: belief, practice, experience, knowledge and consequences. Eyre regards the formal rules of the football as set out by the Football Association as an example of belief. They provide the 'theological outlook' and determine what is 'right and wrong' behaviour during a game. There is belief too in one's team or a player as being 'the best' regardless of what happens in a match. Secondly, the practice dimension clearly resonates with the football fan's weekly attendance at matches. The home ground might be regarded as a 'sacred' space, the ritualistic chants, adoption of club colours and matches of special significance equate to some extent with churches, liturgy, vestments and festival days as would be recognized in conventional Church religion. The experience (third dimension) of being in the crowd can be one of transcendence, taking the individual beyond themselves to an awareness of the crowd/society of which they are but a part. The fourth dimension, knowledge, is readily apparent in fans who know the most obscure facts and figures relating to their team. Finally, the consequences (fifth dimension) of football for some fans is apparent in that their everyday life revolves around the fortunes of their team. For them football forms a "very significant part of daily thought and conversation" (Eyre 1996:9).

Beyond these various forms of invisible religion, however, Luckmann argues that even the very process of becoming a socialized individual, which is the common experience of people in all societies, can be regarded as a religious phenomenon. In this sense he can be seen to agree with Lenski's proposition that:

¹ Martin (1967) in this respect notes how clergy pick up the importance of sport in our culture, especially to men:

... clergy feel the need to simulate a passionate concern in the major and minor festivals of the sporting year and its local patronal saints. A clergyman faced with one of those informal occasions where an event for children has induced wives to bring along their husbands will almost invariably refer to the sporting event of which they are being deprived, or pretend that he must close the meeting on time because he is himself desperate to watch the local team on television (Martin 1967:68-69).
... every normal adult member of any human society is religious (1963:331).

Since Luckmann's theory of invisible religion has strongly influenced the conception of this research it is worth outlining his perspective on religion in more detail.

Luckmann shares Durkheim's interest in the relationship between the individual and society and both of them see the relationship as fundamentally religious. They regard society as essentially religious in that they conceive of it as a 'moral entity', having a 'life of its own' transcending the individual and yet affecting his/her behaviour through a common set of norms, values and beliefs. Durkheim referred to this moral entity as the 'conscience collective' (1984) and Luckmann as a social 'worldview'. Behaviour becomes meaningful as it is interpreted through the worldview.

Luckmann describes the relationship between individuals and worldview as dialectical. Individuals are socialized into a worldview, its meanings precede and survive the individual. The individual is dependent upon its meanings if s/he is to become a reflexive self and to interpret and comprehend his/her existence. Yet these meanings only retain currency insofar as they are articulated by the individual because society is built up, modified and maintained through the interaction of individuals. Individuals externalize their thoughts through their actions and words; these then become an objective reality which can be appropriated by others who in turn internalize them (indeed the originator may re-internalize his/her own ideas too). In the internalization process ideas may be modified, re-expressed and so made available again to others. Luckmann argues that through this on-going process society and the individual mutually define and maintain each other. Society can be thought of as 'transcendent' in this respect because it has an existence and properties of its own which cannot be reduced to the individual. It is this transcendent, motivating characteristic of society which both Durkheim and Luckmann argue gives society or the worldview as a whole an essentially 'religious' nature. In this respect in a more recent work Luckmann (1990) distinguishes between different levels of transcendence. Firstly, 'little' transcendencies are the spatial and temporal transcendences of everyday
life. More specifically, they relate to a situation when something transcends the
experience of the moment, but nevertheless could be experienced directly in other
circumstances. Secondly, 'intermediate' transcendences are phenomena which cannot
be experienced directly but which can be experienced indirectly through something
that points to the phenomena. The example Luckmann gives here is that of the human
body. We cannot directly experience the 'inner life' of another human being but we
can experience his/her external body and behaviour. Political ideologies also can be
counted as intermediate transcendences. An ideology cannot be experienced directly,
but it is located in the material world and we can therefore experience the institutions
and material outworkings associated with it. Finally, Luckmann speaks of 'great'
transcendences. 'Great' transcendences again cannot be experienced directly, only
through something else, but in addition they are also part of a reality other than that
of the everyday world. Conventional religions like Christianity deal with 'great'
transcendences. Which reality is taken as being more 'real' – the everyday or the
transcendent – is, according to Luckmann, socially defined.

If society itself is religious then, at the individual level, Luckmann argues the
development of self-identity can also be thought of as a religious process. Through
social interaction the individual develops a self-concept which is located in society,
that is to say, the 'transcendent' worldview is internalized by the individual to give
meaning to the self and to behaviour. Consequently:

In so far as he belongs to society, the individual transcends himself,
both when he thinks and when he acts (Durkheim 1976: 16–17).

This processes of transcending oneself is taken by Luckmann to be a religious
phenomenon:

... it is in keeping with an elementary sense of the concept of religion
to call the transcendence of biological nature by the human organism
a religious phenomenon (Luckmann, 1967:49).

Luckmann models the worldview in terms of a hierarchical structure (Luckmann
1967:56-57). The lowest level of the hierarchy contains concepts relating to objects and events such as 'rock' or 'eating'. At this level the concepts do not contain any significance in themselves. As one moves up the hierarchy, however, significance and meaning are progressively added. Thus just above the lowest level comes 'interpretive schemes and rules for action' where meanings tend to be restricted to pragmatism and relate to specific moral events. Luckmann gives the example of knowing which plants to grow with which other plants for best effect as an illustration of an interpretative scheme or rule for action held at this level.

Moving up the hierarchy, the interpretative schemes become more generalized or abstract. Luckmann suggests that the maxim "early to bed and early to rise keeps a man healthy, wealth and wise" is an example of more generalized reasoning of this sort. From this, meaning becomes even more abstract by going beyond the individual to the social *per se*. For instance, ideas concerning "a just social order" would be found near the top of the hierarchy. Thus the worldview contains various levels of meaning ranging from the immediate, unreflective or pragmatic concerns of everyday living through to more abstract and reflective levels of meaning which are concerned with life in general.

Durkheim was less explicit than Luckmann with regard to concepts and meanings but he did refer to the fundamental categories of rational thought (such as time and space, cause and number) as being principal concepts of elementary religion and consequently suggested that they are "born in religion and of religion; they are a product of religious thought" (Durkheim 1976:10).

Superordinate to all Luckmann's levels of meaning is one which deals with meanings of 'ultimate' significance. This is what would ordinarily be recognised as a level of 'religious meaning' and is referred to as the 'sacred cosmos'. The sacred cosmos is the essence of the worldview. Its concepts and meanings express the contents of the worldview as a whole. It integrates the levels of meaning in the worldview by relating everyday events and meanings to an overarching system of significance which holds them all together. Thus, where meaning symbols of the worldview taken as a
whole can be regarded as religious in nature, the sacred cosmos is an explicit expression of its transcendent reality. It contains special symbols which are given sacred status and are referred to by Luckmann as 'religious representations'. They are experienced as somewhat 'different' or 'mysterious' compared with other symbols (Luckmann 1967:58) or as 'set apart and forbidden' (Durkheim 1976:47). Religious representations may be expressed in terms of language, icons or ritual.

The hierarchical nature of the worldview, according to Luckmann, is internalized by the individual during socialization. Individuals may not be consciously aware of the overarching system orientating their priorities; they may just be aware of the interpretative schemes they use in specific instances. Nevertheless, the system does form part of identity since it guides an individual's choices, gives meaning to his/her life and legitimates priorities. From time to time, however, individuals are inclined to raise questions of ultimate significance – "what's life all about?". Such questions become particularly pertinent when the everyday routines of life break down, for instance, at times of bereavement. Theoretically, when this happens the religious representations of the sacred cosmos provide answers to these questions, or at least solutions sufficient to prevent the individual collapsing into a state of anomie or meaningfulness.

In simple societies Luckmann argues that the sacred cosmos is shared more or less by all members of the society. However, in complex societies where institutional specialization has occurred the sacred cosmos is appropriated by a body of experts who then have the power and authority to articulate the sacred cosmos as they deem appropriate. The sacred cosmos consequently develops into an historically specific form which Luckmann calls a 'sacred universe'. It hardens into doctrine and the religious experts become responsible for socializing individuals into that doctrine. It is therefore a very visible form of religion. In Western Europe the sacred universe took the form of Christianity and the Christian Church defined what pertained to ultimate significance. The equivalent of this specialization of religion at the social level is a specifically Church-orientated religious consciousness at the individual level. In other words, when an individual is well socialized into the Church's worldview, the
religious nature of self-identity is expressed more specifically as a 'Christian' identity.

In principle, of course, any symbols could integrate an individual's worldview and provide them with ultimate meaning and purpose. They do not necessarily have to relate to conventional religion. Any of the types of invisible religion mentioned so far might fulfil such a role. Indeed, studies into secularization (see Section 1.2) suggest that in contemporary Western society conventional religious representations have for the most part been replaced by others. The Church has in effect lost control of the sacred universe to individuals who now, according to Luckmann, construct their own private systems of ultimate significance — religion has thus become a private affair. Consequently new religious themes have entered the sacred cosmos displacing the traditional deity. One of the new themes Luckmann suggests relates to the sanctity of the individual:

... dominant themes in the modern sacred cosmos bestow something like a sacred status upon the individual by articulating his 'autonomy' (Luckmann 1967:109).

As a result Luckmann therefore proposes that the inner self, social mobility, sexuality and familism are included in the new religious representations of the sacred cosmos. Traditional Christian themes linger on in the sacred cosmos, of course, due to their great historical importance, but their significance is waning.

The sanctity of the individual is also a theme developed by Durkheim in his analysis of the transition of society from mechanical to organic solidarity² (Durkheim, 1984). He argues that the only thing people share in common in organic societies is their humanity. Thus the new religion in society is:

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² Mechanical solidarity refers to a the social organisation of simple societies where social coherence is based on knowledge of a common existence, social order is rooted in shared experiences. Organic solidarity characterises more complex societies which have undergone a division of labour so that individuals no longer have common experiences. Under these circumstances social order is maintained on the basis of the interdependence of individuals.
... a religion of which man is, at the same time, both believer and God (Durkheim, 1969:22).

This should not be seen as a glorification of the self, but rather a form of humanism. Durkheim suggests that autonomy of reason and freedom of thought are the principal features of this 'cult of the individual'. Social order is maintained through reason, so that while people are free to develop their own ideas, they also will bow to the authority of experts who are more skilled or knowledgeable in a particular area than themselves. Organic solidarity is therefore based upon a mutual respect for individuals which is necessitated by the interdependence brought about by the division of labour. The resulting form of individualism, Durkheim argues, is a natural progression from Christianity developed in a form most suited to modern society:

It simply requires that we be kind to one another and be just and that we perform our duty well, and that we work to achieve a situation in which everyone will be called to the function that he can best perform, and receive a just price for his efforts (Durkheim 1902 in Lukes 1973: 157).

Traditional themes may therefore still be incorporated in the modern sacred cosmos or modifications and derivations from them. For instance, themes like 'getting along with others' might be important but they are no longer legitimated by recourse to a transcendent deity.

Luckmann's thesis of invisible religion is useful in that it broadens out the concept of religion. It allows researchers to explore beyond the Church and seek religious expression elsewhere. However, like substantive definitions, functional definitions are not without difficulties or criticism either. Melanie Cottrell's (1985) PhD thesis provides one of the most comprehensive critiques of Luckmann's theory based on empirical research. From his theory Cottrell draws out four hypotheses. Firstly, she suggests the theory implies that everyone should have a meaning system with some transcendent themes in a superordinate layer integrating and prioritising choices. Secondly, any secular superordinate layers would be functionally equivalent to conventional religion - providing meaning to life and integrating individuals into
society. Thirdly, there would be some form of alienation from public institutional life and a preoccupation with the self (identity, self-realization, autonomy, etc) as a result of the privatization of society. Finally, the theory suggests that meaning systems should vary according to biographical circumstances since these shape meaning in the reflexive social-individual interaction.

Cottrell concluded from her in-depth study of 34 unemployed middle class adults that none of these hypotheses were supported by her data. People do have meaning systems in that events and actions are given significance. But, Cottrell argues, there has to be something else involved, something unique to religion, in order to give the meaning system religious status. For Durkheim this was a sense of sacredness - "things set apart and forbidden" (Durkheim 1976:47). Cottrell also argues there must be something transcendent, that is, beyond everyday reality to make phenomena religious. Without such a quality the term 'religion' becomes redundant because everything then can be regarded as religious. Thus Cottrell finds Luckmann's assertion that the worldview and self-identity are 'religious' an unhelpfully broad and theoretically unfruitful proposition; it leaves no room for the possibility of a truly secular meaning system developing in late modernity. Bibby, like Cottrell, finds the concept of 'invisible religion' potentially confusing and would prefer the term 'meaning system' to be used instead (1983:103). Bibby also picks up Glock and Stark's (1965) distinction between religious and humanist perspectives, whereby the former is concerned with life's meaning and the later with making life meaningful. Towler (1974:141) is another who questions whether Luckmann's suggested themes contain a properly religious element apart from simply giving symbolic meaning to the lives of some individuals.

With this in mind Cottrell argues for a distinction to be made between 'general' and 'proximate' meanings. General meaning is defined as "the search for the general or real significance of human life and experience" (Cottrell 1985:90) in cosmic terms. This would include questions such as 'What is the meaning of life?', 'What is my purpose in life?', and issues such as mortality and morality in terms of good and evil. Proximate meanings "stem either from the immediate world of subjective life or from
the environs of the surrounding culture" (Cottrell 1985:97). Questions addressed at
the proximate level would then include questions such as 'What should I do today?',
'What does the other mean by what s/he said?' etc. For Cottrell, religions are
understood to provide meaning at the level of a general order of things. It is this
general level of meaning, according to Cottrell, that theorists such as Luckmann
believe is vital to the individual in orientating his/her life:

In essence, they argue that human beings cannot function adequately
without a cosmic referent which speaks to them of the overall
significance of human life and provides a context within which all the
various proximate meanings can take their place in a pattern (Cottrell
1985:98).

However, it was this general level of meaning that Cottrell found absent in her data.
The practicalities of everyday life were what concerned her respondents; abstract
general themes were unnecessary and impractical. Proximate meanings were not
integrated together by a great transcendent meaning system either and there was no
equivalent of religion in the sense of transcendent secular themes:

... no one element assumes overriding importance. Barring one
exceptional individual ... no one of the values in the meaning system
determines the pattern of priorities, they balance each other and
moreover they have no transcendent quality, they are rooted in the

Bibby (1983) also argues from his quantitative research in Canada that there is little
evidence of an identifiable form of 'invisible religion'. Where people have meaning
systems to integrate their lives and answer ultimate questions it tends to be
conventional religious beliefs which serve the purpose.

In addition, Cottrell did not find her respondents in an alienated relationship with
institutional society and forced to reside in the private sphere. Rather they were fully
integrated into society and taking an active part in it. Self-expression and self-
realisation ('finding' and becoming your 'true' self) were not found to be dominant
themes amongst her respondents either, although the closely related idea of self-
fulfilment in terms of using one's talents and opportunities to the full was important. This was to be achieved, according to her respondents, through the accumulation of wealth:

Economic security, comfort, material plenty and some luxuries such as rewarding leisure activity and travel are usually regarded as pre-requisites for self-fulfilment (1985:405).

There was not the introspective preoccupation expected by Luckmann but rather an outward focus towards expression in society. Indeed, one of the prominent themes Cottrell found was a longing for an 'idealized', nostalgic form of community. Finally, Cottrell also noted a consistency in the values expressed by her respondents, regardless of their different biographical backgrounds, which again she argues contradicts the hypothesis drawn from Luckmann's thesis.

Cottrell's study therefore seems to call into question the validity of Luckmann's notion of invisible religion. It appears that people do not necessarily need 'general' meaning in their lives, that they are not therefore inherently religious and that those who are, stick to conventional religious themes in their sacred cosmos. Yet, whilst this study makes some very important points and provides significant insights into the modern worldview, Cottrell's conclusion may be unduly negative towards the concept of invisible religion. For instance, Cottrell's contention that invisible religion unnecessarily labels 'secular' meaning systems 'religious' and therefore negates the concept of religion by virtue of its generality, is a contention which in some respects only arises if one conflates substantive with functional definitions. Indeed, in substantive terms invisible religion is 'secular' in the conventional sense since the sacred cosmos is not made up of conventional religious symbols – that is precisely what makes it 'invisible'. Nevertheless where such symbols perform the same function as conventional religious symbols it does not seem unreasonable to say that they are religious in functional terms. Luckmann's levels of transcendence mentioned above (and published after Cottrell's work was completed) might be useful here. Both intermediate and great transcendences can provide 'general' meaning. In Cottrell's substantive understanding, what makes a meaning system 'religious' is that it points
to another reality external to the everyday world (i.e., a divine reality). Invisible religion, however, suggests general meaning can be provided at the level of intermediate transcendence where an external 'other' reality beyond the everyday is unnecessary. In addition, one could argue that the nostalgia Cottrell's respondents felt for the ideal of community does not in fact negate the hypothesis that individuals are alienated from some aspects of society and introspective. Their yearning for community could in fact be taken as a sign of alienation—it is because their world is so private and introspective that they are made aware that the communal aspect is missing in their lives and hence feel alienated. Finally, the consensus amongst Cottrell's respondents' values does not undermine the importance of biographical determination of meaning systems in that her respondents did in fact share several influential life experiences in common—they were all middle class adults, they were mainly male and they had been employed in professions but had come to experience redundancy. One would expect a degree of consensus amongst such a sample population.

Given these reservations about Cottrell's analysis, the concept of 'invisible religion' may still remain a useful concept. It may, however, be more easily understood and integrated into a wider sociological perspective if it is interpreted in the context of the organisation of trust or 'faith' rather than religion per se. The term 'religion' could then be retained for those substantively religious beliefs to do with great transcendsences and faith can be understood in terms of the broader function of religion. Religion is therefore a particular articulation of faith.

Fowler's work on faith is helpful in this respect. He says that:

... faith is a verb; it is an active mode of being and committing, a way of moving into and giving shape to our experiences of life ... faith is always relational; there is always another in faith (Fowler 1981:16).

More formally, Fowler defines faith as:

People's evolved and evolving ways of experiencing self, others and the
Based on Fowler's description of faith, and Luckmann's notion of invisible religion, what is important about faith in the current context is not the form of the "ultimate conditions of existence" (which could take any form - 'God', 'the Self', 'the Party', 'the Football Team') but rather that whatever form these ultimate conditions do take, they provide the individual with a sense of self, meaningfully locate and integrate that self into the social and physical world, and in so doing give the individual purpose for today and hope for tomorrow. As such, faith requires emotional and well as cognitive commitment. In other words, faith provides what Giddens refers to as 'ontological security' or what Tillich (1962) calls 'the courage to be'. In this sense whilst all people might not be substantively religious, all people can be expected to have faith:

Whether we become [believers,] nonbelievers, agnostics or atheists, we are concerned with how to put our lives together and with what will make life worth living. Moreover, we look for something to love that loves us, something to value that gives us value, something to honour and respect that has the power to sustain our being. (Fowler 1981:5).

Giddens' (1991b) analysis of the ontological security of the self in late modernity would, in fact, appear to be a helpful way to a further understanding of the idea of invisible religion in terms of faith. Giddens argues that without ontological security the individual would be unable to function properly as a human being. He goes on to say (1991b:47) that ontological security entails having 'answers' at least on a practical\(^3\) or unconscious level to four fundamental existential questions. These questions, he argues, are universal to all people. In fact, they ask the same questions which conventional religion tries to answer at a more conscious and formal level.

\(^3\) Practical consciousness is the taken-for-granted reality we operate in. It is the type of consciousness involved in automatic action; it is not unconscious but is non-conscious where things are tacit and therefore require little overtly conscious thought.
They are firstly, that all individuals have to come to terms with 'being' as against 'non-being'. In other words individuals have to have an awareness that they exist and an 'answer' to what it means to exist. Giddens argues that this question is 'answered' through the activities people undertake because "existence is a mode of being in the world" (Giddens 1991b:48). In pre-modern times tradition guided these activities; people were restricted to doing in the future what they had done in the past. These activities had embedded in them a moral element: "The world is as it is because it is as it should be" (Giddens 1991b:48). Secondly, the individual must come to terms with human life in relation to the rest of nature and part of this is also to come to terms with the end of life, that is, death. Thirdly, each person has to learn about other people, gain an understanding of society and how s/he as an individual relates to society. Finally, the individual has to establish self-identity, an understanding of their own personhood, a narrative of him/herself which links past, present and future into a coherent whole. Giddens has summarized these existential issues as shown in the left column of Table 1.1. They can be linked with basic religious questions or questions of 'general' meanings as shown in the right column of the table.

Table 1.1: Summary of Giddens' (1991b:55) existential issues in relation to basic religious questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existential Issues</th>
<th>Religious Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Existence and being: the nature of existence, the identity of objects and events.</td>
<td>Why do I exist, ie what is the purpose of my life?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finitude and human life: the existential contradiction by means of which human beings are of nature yet set apart from it as sentient and reflexive creatures.</td>
<td>What happens when I die?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The experience of others: how individuals interpret the traits and actions of others</td>
<td>How should I relate to others?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The continuity of self-identity: the persistence of feelings of personhood in a continuous self and body</td>
<td>Who am I?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When an individual is ontologically secure s/he has an 'answer' at some level to these
existential questions and a fundamental sense of overall meaning, purpose and hope to his/her life. Answers to these questions form what Giddens describes as a 'protective cocoon' which allows the individual to screen out the anxieties which pervade life and which would otherwise undermine and paralyse the individual and prevent his/her normal functioning. The ontologically secure individual has the ability to go on living despite all that might persuade him/her to do otherwise:

The courage to be is the ethical act in which man affirms his own being in spite of those elements of his existence which conflict with his essential self-affirmation (Tillich 1962:15).

The resolution of existential questions, however, requires an element of trust on the part of the individual. Here Giddens draws upon the work of Erikson. To develop ontological security the individual has firstly to develop 'basic trust'. This is the trust the infant learns from the care-giver in the first years of life. It is the assurance of the continuity of persons and objects. The infant learns to trust that any absence of the care-giver is temporary and that they will not be left alone. S/he also learns that the object-world is essentially reliable. According to Erikson, basic trust is established by the sensitive care and the sense of personal trustworthiness the care-giver brings to the infant. Erikson suggests that parents must guide their infants using strategies of prohibitions and permissions but in addition they must also convey to the child "a deep, almost somatic conviction that there is a meaning to what they are doing" (Erikson 1959:63). In relation to the current argument that religion in substantive terms is a particular variant of faith, it is important to note Erikson's point that conventional religion too is bound up with trust. Erikson argues that religion has been used to reinforce a sense of the world's trustworthiness in the sense that it portrays the world as being under the control of a trusted Provider:

... it seems worthwhile to speculate on the fact that religion through the centuries has served to restore a sense of trust at regular intervals in the form of faith while giving tangible form to a sense of evil which it promises to ban. All religions share in common the periodical childlike surrender to a Provider or providers who dispense earthly fortune as well as spiritual health; the demonstration of one's smallness and dependence through the medium of reduced posture and humble
gesture; ... the need for clearer self-delineation and self-restriction and finally, the insight that individual trust must become a common faith, individual mistrust a commonly formulated evil, while the individual's need for restoration must become part of the ritual practice of many, and must become a sign of trustworthiness in the community (Erikson 1959:65).

Erikson goes on to conclude that whosoever:

... says he has religion must derive a faith from it which is transmitted to infants in the form of basic trust; whosoever claims that he does not need religion must derive such basic faith from elsewhere (Erikson 1959:65).

This view, then, accords with Luckmann's perspective in that some form of religion – conventional, invisible or otherwise – is essential for a healthy personality. Basic trust provides a sense of stability and security, a sense that basically things are alright, and counteracts fears of chaos and abandonment. Thus, according to Erikson, should the care-giver fail to communicate basic trust to the infant, the child is likely to develop basic mistrust which will leave him/her insecure and afraid and will adversely affect his/her development and relationships later on. S/he is likely to experience a profound sense of dread (Giddens 1991b:37).

Once basic trust has been established it can be built on to provide general trust and so maintain ontological security throughout childhood and adult life. General trust Giddens defines as:

... the vesting of confidence in persons or in abstract systems, made on the basis of a 'leap into faith' which brackets ignorance or lack of information (Giddens 1991b:244).

More specifically Giddens defines trust as:

... confidence in the reliability of a person or system, regarding a given set of outcomes or events, where that confidence expresses a faith in the probity or love of another, or in the correctness of abstract
Thus we can say that the answers to Giddens' existential questions require an element of faith; faith is the basis of ontological security. Accordingly, for the purposes of the current research project, invisible religion is therefore defined in terms of faith, where faith is the organisation of trust which sustains ontological security, that is to say, which provides the individual with existential meaning, hope and purpose. As such the referents of faith may or may not be set at the level of great transcendences. In fact Giddens argues that the organisation of trust changes over time and consequently faith today is likely to be different from that in pre-modern times or at the early stages of the modern era. Since the purpose of this study is to find out about faith amongst young people in late modernity it is important to consider these changes. This should help locate the study historically and provide a broader theoretical foundation by which to frame more specific research questions, and analyze and interpret the results. Hornsby-Smith, Fulton and Norris make a similar point:

We hold that it is better to understand 'spirituality' [faith] as having both cultural and organisational dimensions. It also involves facing up to the kind of social world we inhabit and taking decisions and action in its regard (1995:27).

It is to these changes and the characteristics of late modernity that I now turn.

1.2 Modernization And The Reorganization Of Faith

'Modernization' is the process which reorganized society from traditional agrarian based communities to modern industrial based nations. Hornsby-Smith, Fulton and Norris (1995) provide a very helpful summary of the modernization process. They date traditional, pre-modern social organisation from the 4th to the early 16th Century. The period from the 16th to the 19th Century is identified as one of transition from pre-modern to modern society, and the 20th Century is seen as the emergence of modernity in its fullest expression. The end of this century, however,
once again appears to be a period of transition, this time from modernity to a new era. Walker dates the beginning of this latter transition from the 1950s and the advent of mass consumption and electronic media of communication. Just how far advanced the transition is has been the source of much debate. Theorists such as Lyotard (1984) and Lyon (1996), for instance, argue that today's society is already so different from the social organisation of modernity at the beginning of the century that we should think of it as being 'post-modern'. On the other hand, theorists like Giddens (1991a) argue that whilst contemporary society is indeed different in many ways from earlier decades, there nevertheless remains enough continuity with the past to suggest that a new social era has not yet arrived; the current period should therefore be regarded as an expression of 'high' or 'late' modernity instead. The latter would seem to be the more accurate description of contemporary society; hence its adoption in this study.

The sequence of events associated with the modernization process would seem to be directly associated with a reorganization of trust. Pre-modern societies were relatively stable local communities organized around a feudal social system. Their economic production was largely agricultural and political power resided with an elite group in terms of the monarchy. Within this pre-modern social organisation the individual was very much a part of the community. Under these conditions the individual's role in life was largely prescribed by external factors such as tradition and normative control. There was no separation of public and private realms as we know them today, and consequently individuals could be known as 'total persons' (Wilson 1982) – those who worked together also played and lived together. As a result of this organisation, kinship loyalties were strong since family members knew each other well and depended upon one another for their day-to-day existence. Kinship therefore provided the main mechanism by which social ties could be stabilised across time and space (Giddens 1991a:102). Conventional religion (Christianity and the Church) was well suited to this social order. It provided a means whereby common life experiences shared within the community could be understood and related to a cosmic order. It gave people a "providential interpretation to life and nature" (Giddens 1991a:102). Moral behaviour was tied in with this understanding of life and provided a
transcendent legitimation for social order. The four 'environments of trust' Giddens therefore identifies as characterising pre-modern societies are kinship relations, local community, conventional religion and tradition. These were the contexts which enabled individuals to establish and maintain ontological security. They 'bracketed out' the risks inherent in pre-modern life that were potential causes of existential angst. Risks such as those arising from the unpredictability of nature and disease, and threats in terms of violence ("marauding armies, local warlords, brigands or robbers"; Giddens 1991a:102). There were also risks, as well as trust, associated with religion in terms of falling from "religious grace" or being the target of "malicious magical influence" (Giddens 1991a:102).

However, things were not to stay this way for ever. In this respect Hornsby-Smith, Fulton and Norris (1995) identify several events and social movements which contributed to modernization and the transformation of the environments of trust. The historical developments which they regard as significant include: the Renaissance of the 14th and 15th Centuries, the Reformation in the 16th Century, the Enlightenment and Industrial Revolution of the 18th Century, and French and North American political revolutions of the 18th Century.

The Renaissance, Reformation and Enlightenment all contributed to the demystification of society and the development of humanism and individualism. Thus they helped to undermine conventional religion and tradition as 'environments of trust'. The Renaissance brought about a renewed interest in ancient philosophical thought which extolled the human spirit and so laid the foundations of modern humanism. The Reformation, according to Walker (1996), drove the Renaissance underground, but, ironically, also contributed to the demystification process through its condemnation of local 'pagan' gods and rituals ('common religion') and its attack on the decadence that the medieval Church had begun to show. Walker therefore argues that for Christianity the Reformation was both good and bad news:

It is good news, because it rescued the [Christian] story from pagan oblivion, and arguably led to the internal reforms of Catholicism after 1563. It is bad news, because it broke the bonds of catholicity and
community that inhered in the grand narrative itself. ...

The banishing of images from churches ... reintroduced a lofty God secure in his heaven, but lost the intimacy of medieval communion and immanent presence. The Protestant solution to this lack was to substitute for it the religion of the heart, the religion of experience and spiritual assurance, initially through German and Moravian pietism, and later through Methodism and the Evangelical revivals. (Walker 1996:39).

The Protestant teaching of an individual conscience alone before God was another contributing factor to the weakening authority of the Church over the individual, and further fuelled the move towards modern individualism and what Amber identifies as a "new attitude of human self-assertion" (1996:138). In addition, the Church's supremacy was attenuated by the Protestant understanding that "this-worldly ascetism and secular activity" were valid expressions of the outworking of a religious 'calling' (Hornsby-Smith, Fulton & Norris 1995:36). Pre-Reformation thought tended to regard life as a religious or clerical functionary as a higher form of a life of faith. In this respect, Weber (1930) famously regards the Protestant ethic as a contributing factor to the development of the spirit of capitalism which is now synonymous with Western modernity. The acceptance of 'secular' work in Protestant thinking included approval of science as a means of understanding God's creation and taking dominion over it. The Reformation unwittingly, therefore, "opened the door to the philosophical Enlightenment" (Walker 1996:45).

The Enlightenment contributed to the secularization process by upholding 'reason' as the ultimate good and it criticised religious thinking as naive and primitive. Scientific, rational thought was seen as the way to unlock the secrets of the universe; recourse to the supernatural realm gradually lost its relevance and largely came to be seen as misleading. The Enlightenment instilled the notion of a future marked by continual progress through technological and scientific advance in the wake of increased human autonomy. It therefore questioned the plausibility and adequacy of the conventional religious understanding. Thus there were in essence two conflicting worldviews, the beginnings of pluralism. More importantly as far as Bruce (1996) is concerned, however, was the Industrial Revolution which took hold of the scientific and
technological developments of the 17th Century and embedded the ideals of utility and reason in popular consciousness. Three important structural changes resulted from this: the separation of daily life into two separate spheres of the public and private realms, specialization of institutional functions and societalization. These not only undermined the plausibility of conventional religion and tradition, but also the relevance of local community and kinship as the other two environments of trust.

In the interests of functional rationality urban industrial centres, machines and factory systems took over from rural communities, small holdings and hand-crafted production as a way of life for most people. As a result the private world of home and family life became separated from the public world of work. The move away from production at the level of local community began the trend towards social organization at a national level. Social life was then no longer bound by place but the familiarity and trust which existed between people who spent most of their time together was weakened as a result. Technological advances increased the possibility for geographical mobility further so that eventually local community could no longer act as a main basis for the organization of trust. Similarly, kinship ties weakened where contact with family members was reduced. This reorganization of the economic basis of society also meant that the Church lost many of its functions. Rationality indicated that it was more efficient for institutions to have specialized functions. Thus the Church lost much of its significance in terms of education, health and welfare provision to specialized state institutions. Also, the process of societalization lessened the need for the Church to act as a unifying institution in the local community:

Local life now needs no celebration: what is there to celebrate when the community that sleeps together is not the community that works together or plays together ...

If the stable community declines because of the common pattern of diurnal mobility in the world of commuters; because of annual migrations, and tourism; because of the frequency with which careers demand that families move house; because of the separation of school from home, indeed the separation of everything which people now call 'life' from work; then what need is there for a child to be publicly received and initiated? What indeed, would he be initiated into, and what would be the effective way of doing it? (Wilson 1982:160).
Conventional religion therefore came to be more associated with the private sphere and the public sphere was left to be governed by the precepts of functional rationality. The place of tradition in this respect was undermined too. Where efficiency and utility are the basis for determining action traditional ways of doing things cannot claim a privileged status. The place of the individual was also called into question with the loss of community in that people no longer could find their identity within the prescribed roles of traditional communities. According to Giddens, the self has therefore become a 'reflexive project' in late modernity whereby the individual has to determine his/her own identity.

From the above, the process of modernization seems to have undermined religion, tradition, kinship and local community as the basis for organizing trust and the means of maintaining ontological security. Moreover, the modernization process apparently has intensified since the 1950s with the advancement of electronic communications technology and the development of consumerism. Electronic media have facilitated to an even greater extent the separation of time and space such that now society is no longer located just at a national level, but rather at a global one. The rapid exchange of ideas and information has contributed further to a fragmentation of society in terms of functional specialization since it is impossible for any one individual to keep abreast of advances in all areas of life. Each individual therefore can only be selective in their knowledge base and has to trust others for specialist advice in other spheres. Technological advances in terms of communication and transport also contribute to the pluralistic nature of modern society as cultures can easily cross each other and provide different experiences and interpretations of the world. Consumerism has effectively heightened individualism. The "rights of the human individual and the empowerment of humanity to shape the economic and political sphere" (Hornsby-Smith, Fulton and Norris 1995:37) which were particularly asserted in events such as the North American and French Revolutions, apparently now have greatest effect in the world of consumer rights. Consumerism, according to Giddens, is an important aspect in the process of establishing identity in late modernity. Products are now bought and sold not just for their use-value but because of the ideas that are associated with them. Thus the market in late modernity sells 'lifestyles' which
individuals use to construct their self-identity:

To a greater or lesser degree, the project of the self becomes translated into one of the possession of desired goods\(^4\) and the pursuit of artificially framed styles of life ... The consumption of ever-novel goods becomes in some part a substitute for the genuine development of self (Giddens 1991b:198).

Given the above social changes, Giddens therefore suggests that the environments of trust in late modern society have been reorganized to take the form of 'abstract systems', 'future orientated counter-factual thought' and 'pure relationships'. By 'abstract systems' Giddens means the organisation of trust around the use of both 'symbolic tokens' and 'expert systems'. Giddens defines symbolic tokens as "media of exchange which have standard value, and thus are interchangeable across a plurality of contexts" (Giddens 1991b:18). Money is an obvious example here. A common understanding that money has universal value although itself having no intrinsic worth apart from what it represents, enables economic interaction to occur between individuals across indefinite spans of time and space. Expert systems are "modes of technical knowledge" which have "validity independent of the practitioners and clients who make use of them" (Giddens 1991b:18)\(^5\). Under these conditions of technical expertise there is no room in modernity for religious cosmologies to provide life with meaning. Instead we have:

... reflexively organised knowledge, governed by empirical observation and logical thought, and focused upon material technology and socially applied codes (Giddens 1991a:109).

The social and natural world come under the control of human calculation rather than a divinity. Tradition has consequently been replaced by "future orientated

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\(^4\) It might be noted here that the term 'goods' almost expresses a moral imperative to consume!

\(^5\) Giddens does note, however, that in practice trust is also invested in the individual who fronts the expert system.
counterfactual thought" (Giddens 1991a:102) as the means by which past, present and future are connected.

'Pure relationships' are, in the Weberian sense, ideal–typical relationships. Unlike kinship ties, 'pure relationships' are internally referential relationships; they are not externally prescribed or bound together by social norms of tradition. Rather, they are entered into because of the mutual satisfaction they bring to the partners involved, and they are maintained purely through the partners' conscious commitment to each other and to the relationship per se. This requires the partners to develop trust towards each other. That trust has to be won through mutual self-disclosure and is associated with a high degree of self-understanding and intimacy. Storkey describes 'intimacy' as a reciprocal experience of 'knowing' and caring for others:

Intimacy is the sharing of closeness, of bonding, of reciprocation. It is the engulfing of warmth and care. It is the experiencing of Another (Storkey 1995:4).

Intimacy can take different forms – intimacy with family and friends, for instance, or intimacy with the self in terms of self-knowledge (ie "an awareness of who we are and what matters to us", Storkey 1995:6) – but sexuality, Giddens suggests, takes on extra significance in late modernity because it can offer an intense form of intimacy. The reciprocity of intimacy enables individuals to find out about each other and also find out about themselves as part of the reflexive process of developing identity. Thus sexuality in late modernity is not just about procreation or even hedonistic pleasure; it is also about identity and establishing a sense of belonging via relationships with others. In other words, it is about the development of ontological security.

The above describes some of the social and historical theory regarding the move from pre-modern to late modern society and it would seem to accord very much with the secularization thesis in that conventional religion is apparently replaced by other environments of trust. However, as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, despite all the trends to the contrary, religion has still not disappeared from society. Indeed there is some evidence to suggest a new religious consciousness is appearing in the
form of a growing interest in conservative forms of conventional religion on the one hand and New Age or pagan beliefs on the other. Following Giddens, this interest might in part be a reaction to some of the new risks associated with late modernity. The adequacy of functional rationality and of science and technology as a basis for ontological security has been called into question over the last 50 years by the risks associated with them. Science and technology, whilst recognized as bringing security benefits to society, are also recognized as increasing risks and anxieties in other ways, for example, through their capacity to bring about environmental disaster or global destruction through nuclear war. Thus late modernity has raised an awareness of some moral and ethical questions which were suppressed in the early part of the modern period. Early modernity, Giddens suggests, was associated with the politics of emancipation — freedom was sought from the bonds of nature and from the inequalities in society; hence the rise of democracy and an awareness of the rights of the individual. In late modernity, however, Giddens suggests emancipatory politics has been replaced by 'life politics' which is concerned with the political implications of the project of self-actualization. It considers how the individual is affected by global changes and how, in turn, the individual's life choices affect those same global processes. In terms of faith this is again important because it draws attention to a change in the moral area of late modern life. Life politics in effect would seem to break down the structural division between the public and private realms established in early modernity, by taking the private personal world into the public domain.

Life-political issues place a question mark against the internally referential systems of modernity. Produced by the emancipatory impact of modern institutions, the life-political agenda exposes the limits of decision-making governed purely by internal criteria. For life politics brings back to prominence precisely those moral and existential questions repressed by the core institutions of modernity (Giddens 1991b:223).

Moreover, Giddens also suggests that life based on the principles of functional rationality cannot provide a sense of meaning and purpose, especially when some of the limitations of scientific advance are recognized. Progress in and of itself is no longer guaranteed or even necessarily desirable. Science and technology cannot
therefore offer the assurances and hope they once did in earlier modern times. Thus late modernity, according to both Giddens (1991b) and Tillich (1962), becomes a period marked by radical doubt. In this context religious meaning might be rediscovered as a source of ontological security. Indeed some writers have argued that young people in particular are reassessing the religious realm. George Carey, the current Archbishop of Canterbury, writes:

... despite what some social commentators have said, young people are not unspiritual. It is true that many of them have turned away from institutional forms of Christianity [conventional religion]. Ours is a culture where, as many have pointed out, belief is often kept separate from the question of belonging to a Church [customary religion]. Yet the quest for spiritual realities, particularly those rooted in experience is common to many. Such a quest sometimes expresses itself in mysticism or in a fascination with anything supernatural [common religion]. Sometimes too it focuses on issues to do with justice, human rights or concern for the environment [invisible religion], for others their searching takes them to Taize or Greenbelt. But what all these have in common is that they lead out of, or into, profoundly spiritual questions (Carey 1996: vii–viii).

1.3 The Research Questions And Thesis Outline

In the light of the above developments I seek to address the following questions in this thesis:

(a) Given the apparent historical decline in the significance of Christianity and the Church, what role, if any, does Christianity retain in the faith organisation of young people today? Is denomination a significant variable in this respect?

(b) Are there any alternative forms of transcendent religious themes (forms of common religion) incorporated into the faith of young people today, or is rationality (in terms of science and technology) the basis of their faith?

(c) Are there any other 'invisible' referents of faith which do not come under the
headings of 'conventional' or 'common religion' or 'scientific rationality'? If so what are they?

(d) How does the organisation of young people's faith affect their moral outlook on life?

(e) What influences the structure of young people's faith?

Each of these questions is addressed in turn: Chapter 3 considers the place of Christianity and Chapter 4 the role of common religion and science in young people's faith. Chapter 5 explores invisible religion and concludes by describing two models of the organization of faith. Chapter 6 examines the relationship between faith and morality and Chapter 7 considers young people's perception of influences on their faith. Along side the analysis in these chapters I also ask a subsidiary question relating to the significance of gender in terms of faith. Generally studies of religiosity have shown that women tend to be more 'religious' than men. However, in a period supposedly marked by radical doubt and rapid social change it might be that these gender differences are no longer so apparent. In this respect, for instance, Giddens suggests relationships between men and women as expressed in terms of 'pure relationships' are much more democratic, so causing a 'transformation of intimacy' (Giddens 1992). This may well be reflected in the organization of faith amongst girls and boys. Similarly, if the private realm usually associated with women and with religion, is breaking into the public realm that has traditionally been the province of men, then notions of transcendence might also become as appealing to boys as they are to girls. An analysis of gender differences should therefore provide interesting supplementary information which may help increase our understanding of religion in late modernity. Chapter 8 concludes this study by summarizing the models of faith developed in this thesis and considering the implications of the results for social theory and for the Church as it approaches the 21st Century. Before moving on to these questions, however, I set out in Chapter 2 how the research was conducted, in other words the 'method to my madness'!
Chapter Two

'IN THE FIELD BUT NOT OF IT'

Some Christian groups like to describe themselves as 'in the world but not of it'. As a sociologist conducting fieldwork in schools, the sentiments behind this statement had some resonance. Research very often involves entering into unknown territory yet at the same time retaining a detached, objective stance, hence the title for this chapter. In Chapter 1 I set out the broad theoretical perspective which informed the research. The purpose of the current chapter is to describe how the research was conducted and consider some of its limitations, since inevitably the current study, like all research, was constrained by the methods adopted. Furthermore, with the benefit of hindsight one can always think of things that might have been done differently. Methodological reflection is, therefore, an important part of any research project both in terms of considering the validity of the current work and in terms of doing further studies in the future.

2.1 Research Design

The aim of this study was to consider young people's faith in late modernity, to consider whether Christianity had any role to play in providing young people with ontological security or whether faith was located elsewhere and, if so, where that might be. A design was therefore needed which would allow comparison to be made between young people for whom Christianity was an important element of their faith and young people for whom it was of little or no consequence. Such a comparison should give an insight into how young people construct Christianity, what makes it relevant to some individuals but not to others, and provide some indication of what young people use in place of Christianity to establish and maintain ontological security. The design, therefore, had to be structured enough to yield information on young people's views in relation to Christianity, but had to be flexible enough to allow
the youngsters to define their faith, as far as possible, in their own terms. To meet these criteria a two-stage strategy was adopted. The first stage of the research involved the construction and administration of a questionnaire designed to measure young people's Christian commitment. Thirty-six young people aged 15 and 16 years were then selected according to their responses to the questionnaire and invited to take part in the second stage of the project. This consisted of semi-structured qualitative interviews carried out on a one-to-one basis which allowed the faith of the young people to be explored in more depth. My analysis of young people's faith in late modernity is therefore based on both quantitative and qualitative data sets.

In the rest of this chapter I describe the data collection and analysis process and consider how successful the methodological strategy was.

### 2.2 Gaining Access

All of the research in this project took place within a school setting. The pilot study for the questionnaire was conducted in an independent boys school in the South of England (Section 2.3.1). The main study took place in three mixed sex, comprehensive secondary schools in the South of England. One was a Church of England aided school with a student population of approximately 1200 young people in Years 7 to 13 inclusive; the second was a Roman Catholic aided school with a student population of around 800; and the third a County comprehensive school with no religious affiliation. This school accommodated approximately 600 young people. Access to the two church schools was negotiated through personal contacts with the Heads of the Religious Education (RE) Departments. Access to the County school was gained after a speculative letter was sent to the school's Headmaster. In each case the research was co-ordinated through the RE Departments.

The main reason the young people were contacted through schools rather than through youth groups or other youth venues (nightclubs, pubs, etc) was that it seemed the most straightforward way of contacting a large number of teenagers within the budget and
time available for the project. One thousand and ninety young people took part in the survey which would not have been possible had I tried to contact them elsewhere. The schools in this study also gave me access to teenagers from a wide range of backgrounds. Certainly they provided a more heterogeneous group of young people than other 'voluntary' venues could offer since there the clientele would have been much more self-selecting. Not all young people, for instance, go to nightclubs or youth groups. The other advantage of conducting the study in school lesson time was that when it came to arranging the interviews the young people were more likely to keep the appointment. With the permission of the teacher, I met each young person in the classroom and asked them to attend the interview there and then; the schools in each case made available rooms where the interviews could be conducted in private. This may not have been possible had I attempted to interview the young people in their homes. The rooms were also quiet enough to tape-record the interviews.

There were, however, some disadvantages in using a school setting which need to be taken into account. One was that the teenagers might have felt they had little choice in whether or not they took part in the study. The completion of the survey questionnaire, for instance, formed part of an RE or Personal and Social Education (PSE) lesson. This made it difficult for the young people to refuse to take part even if they did not want to be involved, and could have affected their responses to the questionnaire if they wanted to rebel. Another potential disadvantage of conducting the research in schools was that my own position as a researcher was ambiguous to the young people. As an adult introduced to them by a teacher I was potentially being labelled as an 'authority figure' of some sort. Since the role of researcher or PhD student was unfamiliar to many of the young people, some of them seemed to regard my role as somewhere between that of a teacher and a social worker. In order that the young people would feel relaxed and able to express themselves freely I wanted to avoid being seen as an authority figure as far as possible. For this reason I dressed casually and asked to be introduced by my first name. In the event, most of the

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1 Letters were sent out to the parents/guardians of the young people in the County school so that they could withdraw their children from the study if they wished to do so. In the event, permission to take part was only refused by the parents of two teenagers.
young people did seem fairly relaxed both when they took part in the survey and the interviews, although it has to be acknowledged that there is always going to be a limit to what a young person (or indeed anybody) is willing to say to a complete stranger about him/herself. In this respect Kitwood, who also conducted a study on the values of young people, characterised teenagers' responses in the interview setting as 'disclosures to a stranger'. He argues that there are:

... some topics that a person is prepared to talk about with a stranger, whose possession of highly personal information will not become an embarrassment at a later stage; [but] it is also the case that there are certain aspects of life that are too delicate or too difficult to explain to someone who is virtually unknown (Kitwood 1980:5–6).

Other limitations of conducting the research in schools are discussed below. On the whole, however, I believe the schools provided the best possible setting for the current project.

2.3 Surveying The Scene

2.3.1 Constructing The Questionnaire

The questionnaire was designed to cover basic demographic information, religious practice and beliefs, moral attitudes and influences on faith (see Appendix 1 for a copy of the final questionnaire). The questionnaire comprised mainly closed questions some of which were taken from other published sources (European Values Survey 1990, Francis 1982, Francis 1984, Hornsby-Smith & Lee 1979) and used directly or in a modified form (Appendix 1 gives details in this respect). This meant that the data from the current project could be compared with other research to help validate the findings herein.

A structured questionnaire with closed questions was chosen as the most appropriate instrument for measuring Christian commitment because it allows relatively straight-
forward administration to large numbers of people and facilitates comparative analysis through the standardisation of questions. However, structured questionnaires are limited by their predetermined questions. It is up to the researcher rather than the respondent to decide what is relevant to the research and what questions to include or omit. Closed questions put further constraints on the respondent in that they limit his/her choice of answer. Consequently they can be frustrating both to respondents who feel unable to express themselves properly, and to the researcher who is limited by the type of information they provide. For this reason space was made available on the questionnaire for the young people to make additional comments if they wished to do so. They were also encouraged to clarify their responses where they felt it appropriate.

Before the final version of the questionnaire was settled upon, a preliminary draft was piloted. First of all several children and adults were asked for their comments on the questionnaire, then a main pilot study was carried out in an independent boys' school in the South of England. Seventy-six young people took part in this pilot study from Year 9 through to Year 12 (an age range of 13 to 17 years). The school was selected on pragmatic grounds in that access was readily available through a personal contact and the Head of the Religious Education Department was supportive of the research. The pilot population, however, was not equivalent to the population in the main research. The young people in the pilot study were nearly all boys (the exceptions were two girls in the lower sixth form group). The young people were also mainly middle class and very articulate, being selected into the school through an entrance exam. This contrasts with the teenagers taking part in the main research who were mixed in terms of sex, ability and class. Although the pilot population was not representative it did nevertheless prove very useful. The responses to the questionnaire were thoughtful and the young people had enough confidence to make constructive comments in relation to the questionnaire's design. This meant that modifications could be made in response to clearly stated criticisms rather than second guessing on the basis of mistakes and omissions. The young people pointed out, for instance, the things they found unhelpful and questions which could be more appropriately worded.
With regard to rewording, some of the questions taken from other studies had to be altered to make them easier to understand. Direct comparison of the results with other studies was then made more difficult in that the wording was no longer exactly the same. Comparison in some instances could therefore only be made in terms of the sense of the question. The results of this study, however, produced statistics which were in fact very similar to those from elsewhere, which suggests that they are valid and generalisable to the wider population of youth in contemporary Britain.

After the questionnaire had been altered in the light of the pilot study, it was submitted to some of the Religious Education teachers whose schools were participating in the main project. One or two minor changes were made as a result of their comments, mainly in terms of wording or spelling alterations, again to make the questions easier to understand.

Having decided on the substantive content of the questionnaire its layout needed careful consideration. To recap, one of the purposes of the survey was to identify young people for interview according to their degree of Christian commitment. In this respect the questions were used to construct a Christian Religiosity (CR) scale (Section 2.3.3) which in turn gave each young person a CR score. However, there also had to be some way of matching each CR score with the young person who had completed the questionnaire so they could be called back for interview. This meant that, contrary to standard practice, the questionnaires could not be left anonymous. If anonymity encourages respondents to be honest in their replies, identification potentially threatens the truthfulness of the answers gained from the questionnaire. Respondents might, for instance, be tempted to try and provide a 'right' or 'approved' answer rather than record their real opinions. The layout of the questionnaire therefore had to be such that the young people would feel comfortable answering it and that confidentiality could be maintained as far as possible. After much thought it was apparent that the only feasible way to match each young person to their CR score was to ask them to write their names on the questionnaire when filling it in. The questionnaire was therefore designed in a booklet format and the young person's name, age, school class and sex asked for on the front page. The more sensitive material
was then kept inside the booklet. This format seemed the most appropriate too in that the youngsters were used to writing their names on the front of school work, for instance, and they were also less likely to omit this information in error if it was the first thing they were asked to write. In addition, such demographic information provided a straightforward entry into the questionnaire which hopefully helped it to appear less intimidating.

The question of anonymity was in fact also raised with the pupils who took part in the pilot study. They were told that they did not have to put their names on the questionnaire since I did not need to come back to them at a later date. Most of them chose not to do so. Nevertheless, the majority of the young people in the pilot study did say that if they had been specifically asked to put their names on the questionnaire they would not have objected. Only one person said that the possibility of identification might alter his response. Lack of anonymity did not therefore seem to be too much of a problem for the teenagers. In addition, I also felt that the young people's responses were more likely to be altered by other factors, such as peer pressure, than by the possibility of identification. Moreover, there were potentially positive effects of the pupils naming the questionnaires in that the young people then had to 'own' their answers. The knowledge that they might be invited to attended an interview later on may have encouraged some of the teenagers to take the whole exercise more seriously than they might otherwise have done. In this respect identification may have actually contributed to the validity of the study.

2.3.2 Administering The Questionnaire

The questionnaires were administered by myself and class teachers and completed during Religious Education (RE) and Personal and Social Education (PSE) lessons in the three participating schools. To a certain degree the questionnaire actually constituted an educational tool in its own right since it encouraged the young people to think about their own religious beliefs. It was apparent from some of the comments on the questionnaires that some of the young people welcomed the opportunity to express their beliefs in this way:
I thought this was a good questionnaire because I was allowed to express my feelings towards religion.

I think the questionnaire is good because you can show your real feelings about God and ethical questions. The questions are good because they make you think about what you are writing on the paper.

This is not to say, of course, that they all enjoyed the questionnaire:

I didn't like the questionnaire because I am not religious and want to make the point that I do not believe in God.

RE is too boring, just like this questionnaire.

On each occasion the questionnaire was given out, several points were emphasized to the young people. The instruction sheet the teachers were asked to refer to is given in Appendix 2. The young people were reassured that although they were being asked to put their names on the questionnaire its contents would remain confidential in that their teachers would not see what they had written and they could therefore feel free to write exactly what they liked. They were also encouraged to make any notes or comments on the questionnaire to clarify their answers if they wanted to. The young people were asked to concentrate on their own work and to respect their neighbour's privacy. They were also told that although the questionnaire should be taken seriously it was not a test and that there were no 'right' or 'wrong' answers – they had only to answer as honestly as they could. The young people were also asked to read the questions carefully but not to be afraid to ask for help if they needed anything clarified. Finally, they were told that the questionnaire did focus on Christian beliefs and an apology was given to members of other world religions. These young people were still asked to complete the questions as best they could. In the end there were only 11 teenagers who fell into this category and they were dropped from the analysis to avoid conflating forms of conventional religion.

Some of the advantages and disadvantages of using a school setting for the research have already been mentioned. Specifically in terms of administering the questionnaire during class time, the main advantage was the high response rate – of the 1100
questionnaires given out to pupils in Years 9, 10 and 11, only 10 were returned in an unusable condition. The total sample size was therefore 1090 young people which covered about 80% of the pupils at the schools aged between 13 and 16 years (the others were unavailable for various reasons such as being away on work placements). This was important for the project design in that the survey needed to provide an accurate profile of all the young people within the schools so that the pupils could be selected for interview. Classroom administration also meant that somebody was always on hand to help the young people should anything need clarifying. Another advantage to classroom administration was that the young people could be observed as they filled in the questionnaire. This proved informative as it gave an indication of the social aspects of religious beliefs which are explored further in later chapters.

The disadvantages of classroom administration were that the social aspects of beliefs could possibly crowd out the personal beliefs of the young people. It was almost impossible to stop the youngsters looking over each other's shoulders and discussing their answers once they had completed the questionnaire. Indeed, one person suggested in her comments that it would have been useful to discuss their ideas as a formal part of the completion process. Discussion did not necessarily result in changes of opinion. In this respect, for example, my field-notes describe an unsuccessful attack on the beliefs of one girl:

One girl in the class had made it clear to those on her table that she did not believe in God, yet she still answered the question about heaven by saying that there was such a place. A boy on her table picked up on what appeared to him to be a contradiction of belief: "You believe in heaven?" he queried, to which the girl replied defiantly "'Course I do, but there ain't no God up there!"

Whenever there were 'discussions' of this kind (and there were in fact remarkably few of them given the classroom context) the young people tended to adopt a defensive tone when they were challenged by each other; they did not want to look stupid in front of friends or be ridiculed. It was also noted that most of these 'discussions' took place in the County school which did not give as much emphasis to religion as the Roman Catholic and Church of England schools did. These pupils seemed less
inhibited in publically expressing their opinions. The young people from the church schools were more restrained in expressing their opinions to the rest of the class.

The main problem, however, in administering the questionnaire in class was that some of the youngsters' immediate reaction when given a questionnaire about religion was to anticipate that it would be boring. Whether or not they would have found any questionnaire on any topic (religious or otherwise) boring I do not know. Nevertheless, the young people did cooperate and filled in the questionnaire as best they could. The comments they wrote indicated that on the whole they took it seriously, expressed their own opinion and were not greatly inhibited by the fact that they could be identified.

2.3.3 Constructing The Christian Religiosity Scale

Once the questionnaires had been completed and returned the responses were entered into SPSS² for analysis, the first part of which was to select items to include in a Christian Religiosity (CR) scale. This was done through factor analyzing Questions 7, 8 and 9 and 12 to 49 on the questionnaire (see Appendix 1) to find out which items clustered together and appeared to be tapping into the same belief structure. These were to be used to create the CR scale, a measure of the young person's commitment to the validity of certain traditional orthodox Christian beliefs. In carrying out the factor analysis where question (or 'item') values were missing on any of the individual cases the population mean for that item was substituted. The correlation matrix from the first run of the factor analysis was then examined for the strength of correlations between items. This indicated that 14 of the original questions had correlations with the other items of 0.3 or less. Because these are particularly low measures of association they were discarded from further analysis and the factor analysis re-run (Norusis 1985:127).

² Statistical Package for the Social Sciences.
The second attempt produced two factors with an eigenvalue greater than 1. Twenty-three of the 27 items came together under a 'general Christian religiosity' factor. Two of the remaining items formed the second factor which corresponded to a 'school influence' factor (TEACHER and REBELIEF). Table 2.1 shows which items were included in the two factors and the questions which the item codes refer to on the questionnaire. Two other items (REINC and DEVIL) were shown on the factor analysis to be independent and not related to the two main factors.

Since the items in the first factor all appeared to be tapping into general Christian religiosity these were the items (with the exception of VICARS, PARENTS, LESSON and HELL) that were retained for the CR scale and the other items were dropped. PARENTS and VICARS were excluded from the scale because these variables related to an influence on the creation of religiosity rather than the individual's religiosity itself. LESSONS was omitted because after a varimax rotation to extract orthogonal factors, it seemed that it was more closely linked with religious socialisation at school than religious beliefs per se. Similarly HELL was dropped from the scale because after the rotation it was found to be most closely correlated with the DEVIL which, as just stated, the initial analysis suggested should be excluded from the scale. Nineteen items were therefore included in the CR scale as highlighted in Table 2.1.

Using the formula supplied by McKennell (1970) the alpha test for reliability indicated that the CR scale was quite reliable – the alpha score was around 0.9 (where unity indicates total reliability). The scale also seemed to have good construct validity.

Having selected the items for inclusion in the scale the mean score for each young person over the 19 items was then calculated\(^3\). A score of 1 indicated a very strong degree of Christian religiosity (ie the youngster accepted traditional orthodox Christian beliefs) and 5 a very weak Christian religiosity (ie the young person did not accept traditional Christian beliefs at all). For the purposes of reporting the survey results the 1–5 range of scores was divided into thirds so that the young people with a score

\(^3\) HEAVEN, CHURCH and RHUSE were recoded so that they operated in the same direction as the other items.
of 1.00 to 2.32 were classified as having a 'high' CR score, those with a mean between 2.33 and 3.66 counted as having a 'medium' CR score and those between 3.67 and 5.00 were regarded as having a 'low' CR score. For each of the three schools the Year 10 pupils (aged 15 and 16 years) were then listed in rank order and four young people identified (two girls and two boys) from the top, middle and bottom of the range were invited for interview. Unfortunately the County school only had three pupils with high CR scores. The youngster with the highest medium CR score was therefore asked to take part in the interviews instead (score 2.47). This method meant that thirty-six pupils were interviewed, twelve from each school (six boys and six girls). Of these, 12 were young people for whom Christianity seemed to be an important aspect of their faith, 12 for whom it was only moderately or nominally important and 12 for whom Christianity did not appear to be of any significance at all. The CR scores for each of the interviewees is given in Table 2.3.

The questionnaire was then analyzed mainly using cross-tabulations to shed further light on the young people's beliefs. The results of this further analysis are discussed throughout the following chapters. Cramér's V was selected as the appropriate correlation statistic to give measures of association in the analysis.
Table 2.1: Constructing the Christian Religiosity Scale - Factor loadings after maximum likelihood extraction. (Items marked with an asterix were included in the final CR scale).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>Factor Loading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor 1</strong></td>
<td>General Christian Religiosity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GODIMP*</td>
<td>God is important to me</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELIMP*</td>
<td>Religion is important to me</td>
<td>.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RESURREC*</td>
<td>Jesus really rose from the dead</td>
<td>.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WATER*</td>
<td>Jesus really did walk on water</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SONGOD*</td>
<td>Jesus Christ is the Son of God</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMFORT*</td>
<td>It is comforting at times to believe there is a God</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRAY*</td>
<td>Frequency of prayer</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHURCH*</td>
<td>Frequency of church attendance</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBGUIDE*</td>
<td>I use the Bible to guide the way I live my life</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CREATE*</td>
<td>God really did make the world in six days and rested on the seventh</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLE*</td>
<td>Frequency of Bible reading</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEAVEN*</td>
<td>Heaven is just an imaginary place</td>
<td>-.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VICARS</td>
<td>Religious leaders (eg vicars) have been a great help in forming my religious beliefs</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBUSE*</td>
<td>The Bible seems useless for life today</td>
<td>-.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHURUSE*</td>
<td>The Church seems useless for life today</td>
<td>-.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JGOD*</td>
<td>Jesus Christ is God</td>
<td>.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARENTS</td>
<td>My parents have been a great help in forming my religious beliefs</td>
<td>.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LESSON</td>
<td>Lessons in school about religion are usually interesting</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEATH*</td>
<td>There is life after death</td>
<td>.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHOPPING*</td>
<td>Shopping on Sunday is wrong</td>
<td>.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRUE*</td>
<td>Christianity is the only true religion</td>
<td>.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEXREL*</td>
<td>It's wrong to have sexual intercourse outside marriage</td>
<td>.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HELL</td>
<td>Hell is a real place</td>
<td>.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor 2</strong></td>
<td>School Influence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REBELIEF</td>
<td>Lessons in school about religion help me form my religious beliefs</td>
<td>.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEACHER</td>
<td>Some school teachers have been a great help in forming my religious beliefs</td>
<td>.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor 3</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEVIL</td>
<td>The Devil is just an imaginary person</td>
<td>-.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor 4</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REINC</td>
<td>When people die they come back to life again as someone or something else</td>
<td>-.45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.4 Exploring Faith In The Interviews

Thirty-six young people had therefore been selected and invited to attend an interview which would allow a more in-depth exploration of their faith. As mentioned in Section 2.1, during the interviews I wanted to identify other sources of faith which the youngsters might have in addition to Christianity. I therefore adopted a style of interviewing which was semi-structured. Fielding describes semi-structured interviewing as follows:

... the interviewer asks certain, major questions the same way each time, but is free to alter their sequence and to probe for more information. The interviewer is thus able to adapt the research instrument to the level of comprehension and articulacy of the respondent, and to handle the fact that in responding to a question, people often also provide answers to questions we were going to ask later (Fielding 1993:136)

I went into the interviews with a list of questions to ask the young people, covering a range of different topics which I felt would be pertinent to uncovering faith. These topics were (1) the self; (2) personal values; (3) beliefs; (4) influences on faith; (5) social goals and (6) personal morality. The final list of questions included in the interview guide was arrived at after conducting 10 pilot interviews with young people from Year 11 in the County School and Church of England school. As a result of the pilot interviews some of the original questions were modified and extra ones included so that there was more room for the themes of invisible religion to emerge during the course of the discussion. A copy of the final interview guide is given in Appendix 3.

My approach to asking the questions, however, was slightly more flexible than Fielding's description given above as I wanted to be free to pursue interesting topics raised by the young people. This meant that whilst the main topics were covered in each interview, no two interviews were exactly the same. The interviews could not have been as totally free-wheeling as one might find in a focused interview where the researcher approaches the interviewee armed only with a list of topics to be covered
and a series of prompts and probes to be used as and when necessary. This was partly because of the time constraints of the interviews. Focused interviews can take a very long time as interviewees tend to talk around the issues rather than address specific questions. One of the drawbacks of conducting the research in the school in this respect was that the interviews had to fit in with the school timetable. The interviews each lasted approximately one hour which accorded with a double lesson time. In some cases it was clear that the interviews could have gone on a little longer, but in the majority of cases the youngsters were beginning to tire by the end of session. The length of the interviews were therefore about right for this study and yielded a lot of information, but it did mean that the interview had to be more directed than a focused interview suggests. In deciding upon semi-structured interviews I also took seriously Martin and Pluck's comment that:

Non-directive interviewing calls for a rare skill and sensitivity and even at its best depends heavily on the self-confidence and articulate spontaneity of the respondent (Martin & Pluck 1977:3).

In the event, this was a helpful comment. Whilst the majority of young people did speak freely and fully when asked questions, the semi-structured approach meant that the onus was not entirely on them to do all the work. As a researcher I also felt more confident armed with a few questions to fall back on which hopefully helped instil some confidence in the young person too. In this respect Fielding explains that the manner of the interviewer is important for a good interview:

A relaxed and unselfconscious interviewer puts the respondents at ease (Fielding 1993:139).

The interviews began with a brief introduction as to who I was and what I was doing. The interviewees were reassured that the interview was being conducted in confidence. They were also told that there was no special reason why they had been invited for interview (they were not, for instance, particularly 'bad' or 'good') and that others in their school and elsewhere were also taking part. The interviews were tape recorded with the young person's permission in each case and transcribed in full before analysis.
The first questions the young people were asked were of a general nature about their hobbies and interests. Only later on in the interviews were matters more specifically related to belief and faith considered. General questions were asked in the first instance in order to put the youngsters at ease and hopefully provide a non-threatening introduction. Towler (1974) also makes the point that it is helpful to begin with general questions since questions relating specifically to conventional religion can predefine 'religion' for the interviewees. In this study, of course, the young people had already completed a questionnaire relating to Christianity which may have predefined their approach anyway. However, there was a gap of several months between the survey and the interviews and some of the young people had therefore forgotten about the questionnaire by the time of interview. Where they had remembered, I tried to make it clear that I was interested in finding out about all aspects of beliefs and that I wanted to find out a little bit more about their other interests and what was most important to them in life. They were reassured that they did not have to remember what they had written on the questionnaire.

It was almost inevitable that once one of the young people had been interviewed they would talk to their friends about the experience. On a couple of occasions the youngsters indicated that they had 'heard about' certain questions. However, since the interviews were tailored to each individual I do not believe this anticipation had much affect on the validity of the data collected from the later interviews. Indeed, in some cases it might have prompted a more reasoned answer given extra time to think about things.

I enjoyed carrying out the interviews and on the whole I think the young people enjoyed taking part. As mentioned above, I tried to make the interviews as relaxed and informal as possible (a 'guided conversation' to use Lofland's (1971) terminology). In this respect it may have helped that I was a female interviewer. Finch (1984) argues that woman-to-woman interviews have a special character which encourages female interviewees to provide a lot of information about themselves partly because their shared gender breaks down the hierarchical relationship between interviewer and interviewee:
However effective a male interviewer might be at getting women interviewees to talk, there is still necessarily an additional dimension when the interviewer is also a woman, because both parties share a subordinate structural position by virtue of their gender. This creates the possibility that a particular kind of identification will develop. (Finch 1984:76).

As mentioned above, my role as interviewer was ambiguous to some of the young people and no doubt the interviewer-interviewee hierarchy was in place for those who labelled me as some sort of 'authority' figure. Nevertheless, I think the situation would have been exaggerated if I had been a male interviewer. I was also pleasantly surprised in this respect that the boys seemed just as willing to talk about themselves and their beliefs as the girls. Prior to starting the interviews I was slightly concerned that they might have difficulty talking to a female interviewer. As it turned out they did not seem to mind. Indeed, it might have given them more leeway to talk, in that they may not have felt under so much pressure to 'prove' themselves part of male culture as they might have done with a male interviewer. At a more general level, Towler (1974) in this respect points out that many people, especially men and those from working class backgrounds, find it very embarrassing to talk about religion. Indeed, one of the interesting findings in this research was the extent to which young people also found religious beliefs socially unacceptable or embarrassing. In terms of conducting the research this meant that some the young people may well have initially been reticent about saying too much. One boy, for instance, during the course of the interview stopped to check that his friends in the classroom next-door could not hear the conversation he was having with me. I assured him that they could not and he relaxed a little. In some cases it also seemed appropriate to show some empathy towards the young people in line with feminist critiques of interviewing styles. For instance, where it appeared that a young person with a strong Christian commitment was reluctant to talk about their faith for fear of being regarded as 'odd', I disclosed to them, albeit subtly, that I was also a fellow believer. This seemed to help put the young person more at ease. The disadvantage with this approach, of course, was that it might have led the young person to give a more 'religious' answer than they otherwise would have done. Either way, however, the interviewees were likely to make assumptions about what I believed whether I disclosed me beliefs or
not, and make their response accordingly (in this respect, for instance, Chapter 7 indicates that the young people expected religious education teachers to be religious themselves). By identifying with the youngsters in the couple of cases where I felt it appropriate to do so, at least the young people could base their assumptions on a true situation rather than a supposed one.

In terms of conducting research with young people, one has to remember that they form a particularly vulnerable group of subjects. In the interview situation, for instance, they might easily feel pressurised into saying more than they feel comfortable with. They are also likely to be anxious about their self-presentation. With regard to the latter, however, several of the young people commented that taking part in the interview and survey was actually quite helpful to them in that it helped them to clarify their ideas and therefore part of their identity. It also gave them an opportunity to be listened to which seemed valuable for some. For example, one of the girls taking part in the survey wrote the following:

My view of God as a forgiving, ever loving father, has been marred recently by my Church of England youth leaders insisting that all those who don't live their lives for God, no matter how much good they do for others, will be punished when they die and are judged. This has made me fear God and I have been unable to pray and relate to him recently. I am afraid of God because this shows him as cruel and unjust. I wish someone could just have all the answers and tell me the truth. I cannot have a relationship with him whilst he feels so distant and unreachable and unwilling to reveal himself. Thanks for listening.

In terms of the vulnerability of the young people I was also anxious prior to interviewing that some of the youngsters might raise issues which were beyond my role as interviewer (e.g. report an unhappy home situation which really needed professional intervention). Fortunately this did not occur. However, the nature of the research subject raises existential questions which can be upsetting to interviewees

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4 Should such instances arise the researcher is in a difficult position because all the information given by the young person is in confidence. Had such a case presented itself, I would have suggested to the interviewee that they talk to somebody in a position to help.
and therefore questioning had to be handled as sensitively as possible. For example, the young people were asked about their beliefs in relation to life after death. Sadly, two of the young people had been bereaved of a parent and though both seemed to have come to terms with their loss to a large extent, nevertheless, I was very much aware that probing too deeply may raise questions and memories for them which might be very difficult to handle. Under the circumstances I asked the youngsters if they minded talking about the issues before proceeding with questions and did not press for extended answers. Less obviously, questions relating to morality such as those concerning marriage also were potentially difficult areas for some of the young people. Several, for instance, referred to acrimonious relationships between their own parents which had resulted in divorce. Witnessing their family relationships break down had clearly been very upsetting for the youngsters. As with the bereaved young people, I erred on the side of caution and tried not to make unreasonable demands on the youngsters. This may have led to a certain degree of timidity in the interviewing style that consequently could have resulted in the omission of some data which a more experienced or forthright interviewer may have elicited. I do not believe that the interviews were greatly hampered in this respect, however, and in any case the current project could not justify on ethical grounds a different approach from the one I adopted.

Despite the potential limitations of the research strategy, the interviews were quite successful for my purposes and produced a lot of data for analysis. Originally, at the start of the project, the data analysis was going to be approached from a grounded theory perspective as described by Glaser and Strauss (1967), Charmaz (1990) and Strauss and Corbin (1990). Their rigorous method is designed to allow categories and theories to 'emerge' from the data. I felt this would be an ideal way of examining the data for themes of invisible religion. However, by the time I had gathered the data, I already had in place some questions I wanted to address which had been drawn from the theoretical literature as set out in Chapter 1. So, to a certain degree, I had a theoretical framework in place before the analysis began. Consequently, my approach to the analysis was more focused than it might otherwise have been, although the data were not used to test hypotheses in a positivistic way. Nevertheless, the analysis did
reveal themes and concepts in the data its own right which were then used to reflect and elaborate upon the theories described in Chapter 1 and to develop an understanding of young people's faith in late modernity. One might say in this case that my analytic technique was 'semi-grounded'. The qualitative analysis of the interview and questionnaire comments began by transcribing the interview recordings in full, the transcripts were then read through several times and each comment in the text was coded according to its substantive content. Next, the comments in each substantive topic area were grouped together into more abstract categories by mapping links between substantive topics on a chart. Each individual comment was indexed by the young person's pseudonym and its line number in the original transcript text. This allowed the young people's comments to be identified in relation to the different categories. The comments were then analyzed in relation to the pre-set interests of the study in terms of beliefs relating to Christianity, common religion, science, morality and influences on belief. The qualitative data was used to elaborate on the quantitative results from the survey. This analysis forms the basis of Chapters 3, 4, 6 and 7. The categories from the transcripts were then re-examined to see what other themes had more unexpectedly 'emerged' from the data in a 'grounded theory' way. These were the additional themes the youngsters themselves thought were important and this analysis forms the basis of Chapter 5.

2.5 With The Benefit Of Hindsight

Before going on to provide a profile of the young people who took part in this study and presenting the results of the analysis, it is worthwhile considering some general problems associated with researching religion and other techniques which might have been adopted to meet the research aims. Apart from the limitations imposed by the application of my chosen methods as discussed above, surveys and interviews have inherent difficulties even under ideal conditions, especially when it comes to researching religious beliefs. Language in religious research, for example, can be very ambiguous especially when trying to communicate about a transcendent reality which, by definition, is beyond everyday experience and words. Theologians and artists alike
have tried with great difficulty to express what religious meaning is for them. One should not be surprised, therefore, if young people also have trouble articulating matters of ultimate significance, especially when they have not given such issues a great deal of thought before. In this respect Towler (1974) warns:

When you ask the question "Do you believe in an afterlife?" what you may actually be asking is "When you stop and consider it, even though you have never done so before, do you believe in any sort of afterlife?" And that is an entirely different matter (Towler 1974:159).

Clarification of young people's understandings of religious concepts and their salience in everyday life was, of course, one of the research questions this study was concerned to address, but in the light of the above it has to be recognized that the young people's comments might be slightly ambiguous when it comes to analysis. A teenager might, for instance, respond to the questionnaire item: "Heaven is just an imaginary place" with "not certain". Their uncertainty may stem from the pluralism characteristic of modernity. Faced with many options from the different worldviews on offer, the young person may be saying s/he cannot make up his/her mind as to what to believe. Alternatively, it could simply mean that the youngster has never thought about the question before, that s/he does not know the options and therefore is not in a position to decide. In this respect, the interviews were particularly helpful as they provided an opportunity to clarify what the young people meant by their responses to questions on the questionnaire.

Beyond these criticisms, there is also the claim made by those who adopt a more symbolic interactionist approach to sociological study that interviews and questionnaire responses are the product of the research context and do not shed light on the underlying beliefs which form the content of the interview or survey response. Moreover, there is evidence to suggest that what a person says in an interview or when responding to a questionnaire does not necessarily accord with how s/he acts in everyday life. Indeed, the young people themselves in this study talk about the discrepancies which they are aware of between what they believe and do. Methodologies based on observation are therefore often recommended as an
appropriate check on respondents' spoken attitudes. In this respect Paul Willis' (1977) study of working class youth is exemplary. He in effect became part of a group of young people and could observe their day-to-day life and meanings in a social setting. Unfortunately, however, ethnography is time consuming and has to be limited to small in-depth studies. Much social research, therefore, has to rely on what people say about themselves rather than on observation if the results are going to be generalized to the wider population. I do not, however, believe these survey and interview studies are invalid, especially when they are concerned with understanding subjective meanings. After all, if language bore no relation to action, organized social life on a daily basis would not be possible.

In terms of the present study an ethnographic strategy was considered as a methodological option. Indeed, part of the process of gaining access and becoming familiar with young people in the school setting resulted in some classroom observation. However, to have carried out a proper ethnographic study would have required attending other youth venues - nightclubs, pubs, youth groups, or just 'hanging out' with young people in town centres or at home. Gaining access to young people in this way is extremely difficult since they tend to form closed peer groups. Moreover, ethnographic research does not only require very specialized observational skills it also requires a degree of 'social affinity' with the people under study. By 'social affinity' I mean that the researcher must be able to fit in with the social setting and feel fairly comfortable in it if s/he is going to conduct the research properly. When deciding which research methods to use I knew I would have been very much out of place and uncomfortable in most youth venues, nor did I have the 'acting' skills to become accepted as part of the scene. I was therefore unlikely to have gained much data through ethnographic methodology and, indeed, may even have altered the social setting quite significantly by my presence as a 'stranger' in their world.

Ethnographic research can also raise ethical questions for the researcher personally. Even in the schools where I carried out a little observation there were some difficulties in this respect. Taking a participant observer role at the end of term Holy Communion service in the Church of England school, for instance, was problematic.
for me as a Christian believer since I felt not only that was I intruding on what was for other people a sacred moment, but what was in fact a sacred time for me as well. Any researcher whose subject matter impinges upon them personally is likely to face similar dilemmas of this kind. It is also the case, of course, that very often it is precisely because of a personal interest in a subject that a research project is begun in the first place. As a sociologist, therefore, it is important to bear in mind, not only the limitations of research instruments and the ethics of research strategies in terms of the people under investigation, but also one's own limitations in terms of circumstance and temperament. When it came to conducting the questionnaire, interviewing and analyzing the data I did not have a problem and was able to maintain an objective stance in relation to what the young people were saying. For these reasons, therefore, an ethnographic design was rejected in favour of survey and interview techniques for the purposes of this study.

2.6 Profile Of The Participants In This Study

Table 2.2 provides an overall profile of the young people who took part in the survey and Table 2.3 a profile of the interviewees. From Table 2.2 it can be seen that the age range of the young people covered 13 to 16 years (with one 17 year old) – this related to school Years 9, 10 and 11. The young people were divided almost equally between boys and girls. The largest number of young people came from the Church of England school and the smallest number from the County school. Most of the young people fell into the medium category on the CR scale, followed by the low category. The high CR scorers formed the smallest group.

Tables 2.2 and 2.3 also mention the 'religious identity' of the young people. These were the denominations the young people identified themselves as being affiliated to on the basis of Questions 5 and 6 on the questionnaire. The 'Christian' youngsters were those that indicated in Question 5 that they were of the Christian religion and then went on to give their denomination as Roman Catholic, Church of England, or
identified themselves as belonging to an independent Free Church. There were also some Christians who did not know which denomination they identified with and so are referred to hereafter as 'Non-Denominational Christians'. Agnostics and Atheists relate to those individuals who identified themselves as such in Question 5 (some of these youngsters still went on to tick a Christian denomination as well, which indicates a degree of nominal affiliation; nevertheless these teenagers were classified according to their answer to Question 5). The 'Uncertains' refer to the young people who did not know which religion they belonged to in Question 5 (again regardless of their response to Question 6). As mentioned above, the few young people from other world faiths were dropped from the analysis since I wanted to restrict the concept of conventional religion in this study to Christianity.

The following chapters consider the results of the study. Where appropriate for the purposes of illustration I have quoted verbatim from the transcripts of the taped recorded interviews and from the comments the young people wrote on the questionnaires. Each quotation is followed by the young person's pseudonym used in the process of analysis, their religious identity and their CR score according to whether it was high, medium or low.

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Free Church denominations included the United Reformed Church, Methodist, Community Church, Pentecostal, Baptist, Evangelical and Brethren. A dozen young people were dropped from the analysis of religious identity because they had returned spoiled questionnaires or belonged to less 'mainstream' denominations such as the Jehovah's Witnesses, the Mormons and an Icelandic Church.

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5
Table 2.2  Profile of the young people taking part in this study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Number of Young People</th>
<th>Percentage of Sample Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>12</td>
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<td>– 15</td>
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<td>– 16</td>
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<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– 17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School Year</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>– 9</td>
<td>414</td>
<td>38</td>
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<tr>
<td>– 10</td>
<td>354</td>
<td>33</td>
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<tr>
<td>– 11</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>30</td>
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<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Female</td>
<td>554</td>
<td>51</td>
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<td>– Roman Catholic</td>
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<td>– County</td>
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<td>– Agnostic</td>
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<td>– Atheist</td>
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<td>– Uncertain</td>
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<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>– High</td>
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<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Medium</td>
<td>629</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Low</td>
<td>292</td>
<td>27</td>
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* Missings values n = 46
Table 2.3: Profile of interviewees.

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<th>Sex</th>
<th>School</th>
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<td>Church of England</td>
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<td>Sharon</td>
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<td>Church of England</td>
</tr>
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<td>Martin</td>
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</tr>
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</tr>
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<td>Uncertain</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Male</td>
<td>County</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Geoffrey refused to self-select one of the religious identity categories provided in the questionnaire. His response has therefore been left as he wrote it.
In Chapter 1 I suggested that all people have some sort of faith by which they maintain ontological security. That is to say, every person trusts and commits him/herself to something which gives him/her the 'courage to be', a reason to live. In Chapter 1 I also explained that, according to several social theorists, the organisation of trust is historically specific and changes over time. In this respect one of the 'environments of trust' that Giddens identifies in pre-modern Western Europe is conventional religion in the form of Christianity. The modernization process, however, was accompanied by secularisation such that Christian notions of transcendence generally lost their significance, and gave way to empirical rationality in the form of science and technology as the basis of trust. In late modernity, according to Giddens, the organization of trust changes once again as the limitations of technological advance are recognized. He argues that disillusionment with science and technology has rendered late modernity a period of 'radical doubt' and 'alienation' with no other socially shared meta-narrative to take its place. Such a scenario suggests that young people might be searching for their ontological security but that such a search will be subjective and reflexive in nature since there is apparently no one 'true' locus of faith. Ironically, this search for ontological security may have provided an opportunity in late modern culture for the re-emergence of the transcendent, both in terms of conventional and common religion. That is not to say, of course, that society has turned its back completely on rationality (Giddens still identifies 'abstract systems' as an important 'environment of trust'). Nevertheless the familiar rational worldview of early modernity may have to actively vie with transcendent concepts if youngsters are to look to the future with existential meaning, hope and purpose. From a theoretical point of view the key point to note is that it is up to the individual to decide for him/herself which interpretation of reality to believe and decide where ontological security is to be found.
Given this picture of late modernity the first question I wanted to address in this study was 'What role, if any, does Christianity have in the faith of young people today?'. In other words, has a re-emergence of the transcendent in late modernity led young people to consider conventional Christianity as a source of ontological security in their daily lives? This was followed by a subsidiary question: 'Is denominational affiliation associated with any differences there might be in the significance of Christianity to young people?'

3.1 Conventional Religious Beliefs

During the survey and interviews the young people were asked about their beliefs in relation to various conventional Christian concepts. Table 3.1 summarizes some of the results of the survey.

From Table 3.1 it seems that overall the young people had a relatively high level of conventional belief as compared with national figures. By way of comparison, for instance, 45% of the teenagers in this study believed in some sort of God compared to 39% in Francis and Kay's (1995:137) Teenage Values and Religion Survey. Similarly, 58% agreed with the statement "Jesus is the Son of God", compared to 47% in Francis and Kay's study. In terms of belief in the Devil the young people in Francis and Kay's (1995:152) research were again much more sceptical than the young people here. Fifty-three percent of them did not believe in the Devil compared to only 26% in this study who dismissed the Devil as "just imaginary". The relatively higher figures obtained herein might be expected given that most of the young people taking part attended church schools and that the questionnaire was administered in a school setting where religious ideas might be deemed 'appropriate' responses to the questionnaire (see Chapter 2). These figures do not, however, necessarily imply

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1 The Teenage Religion and Values Survey covers a broad spectrum of attitude items. Thirteen thousand young people from England and Wales, aged between 13 and 15 years, took part in the survey. It is a study which is nationally representative and therefore a useful comparison for the results of this study.
Christian commitment and certainly some of the young people exhibited a degree of nominalism in their belief. In this respect only 30% of the teenagers said that religion (which in the first instance was understood as Christianity by the youngsters) was important to them, and only 37% that God was important to them. Moreover, the young people here were actually less inclined than teenagers nationally to claim that Christianity was the only source of divine revelation. Only 10% of the teenagers agreed that "Christianity is the only true religion" compared with 16% nationally (Francis and Kay 1995:137).

The influence of the young people's Christian environment at school also no doubt contributed to the fact that most of them had access to fairly traditional representations of Christianity, even if those concepts were underdeveloped for the majority of youngsters. So, although most of the young people did not know what to believe about God, of those that did, the overall tendency was to think in terms of a personal God (26%) rather than an impersonal Higher Power or Life Force (19%). The traditional image was also apparent in that there was no indication from the young people that God was thought of or spoken about in anything other than male terms. Even those who were unsure about their belief in God or were inclined to think of God as a Higher Power or Life Force nevertheless spoke about "him" during the interviews. Wendy Collins' comment that "even the god we no longer believe in is still envisaged as male" (Collins 1978) has some resonance here. It seems that feminist calls for inclusive language have not filtered through to young people's concepts of God and altered this traditional image. The young people also retained the traditional dichotomy between God and the Devil. They therefore saw God as somebody or something who was supposed to do and be good, where 'good' was generally thought of as being nice, helpful, caring of others and not doing anything maliciously. For this reason God was expected to help people in difficult situations. The Devil on the other hand was understood by the youngsters as representing evil, evil being associated with cruelty and hatred. The young people were also familiar

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2 This could have implications later on, if not now, for young people should they become aligned to feminist ideals. Studies suggest that feminists reared in a patriarchal religion feel less close to God than non-feminists (Steiner-Aeschliman and Mauss 1996).
with the idea that 'Jesus is the Son of God', that he was supposed to have performed miracles during his life, and that he rose from the dead. Very few, however, actually believed Jesus was God.

Table 3.1: Young people's beliefs in relation to conventional Christian concepts.

| Belief |
|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| I believe in a God who is someone I can know personally | 26 | 1025 |
| I believe in some sort of Higher Power or Life Force, but not in a personal God | 19 | |
| I don't really know what to think | 43 | |
| I don't think there is any sort of God, Higher Power or Life Force | 13 | |
| God is important to me | 37 | 28 | 35 | 1082 |
| It is comforting at times to believe there is a God | 60 | 20 | 20 | 1088 |
| Jesus Christ is the Son of God | 58 | 29 | 12 | 1078 |
| Jesus Christ is God | 18 | 40 | 42 | 1083 |
| The Devil is just an imaginary person | 26 | 45 | 29 | 1087 |
| There is life after death | 43 | 44 | 14 | 1087 |
| Heaven is just an imaginary place | 15 | 43 | 42 | 1080 |
| Hell is a real place | 22 | 46 | 32 | 1087 |
| Religion is important to me | 30 | 33 | 37 | 1087 |
| Christianity is the only true religion | 10 | 26 | 64 | 1082 |

The young people therefore had a general awareness of traditional Christian concepts. The significance these referents had for their faith, however, varied as indicated by their CR scores. Table 3.2 sets out some of those differences.
Table 3.2: Young people's beliefs in relation to conventional Christian concepts by CR Score – % agree (n=100%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Belief</th>
<th>CR Score</th>
<th>Cramer's V (p&lt;0.01)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe in a God who is someone I can know personally</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe in some sort of Higher Power or Life Force, but not in a</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>personal God</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don't really know what to think</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don't think there is any sort of God, Higher Power or Life Force</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(162)</td>
<td>(602)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God is important to me</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(168)</td>
<td>(624)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is comforting at times to believe there is a God</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(169)</td>
<td>(628)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesus Christ is the Son of God</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(169)</td>
<td>(622)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesus Christ is God</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(168)</td>
<td>(624)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Devil is just an imaginary person</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(169)</td>
<td>(626)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is life after death</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(169)</td>
<td>(627)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heaven is just an imaginary place</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(168)</td>
<td>(625)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hell is a real place</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(167)</td>
<td>(628)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion is important to me</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(168)</td>
<td>(627)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christianity is the only true religion</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(166)</td>
<td>(626)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.1.1 Christianity In Relation To Young People With Low CR Scores

Twenty-seven percent of the young people in the survey fell within the low CR score bracket. These were youngsters who had rejected most of the Christian belief and
practice statements on the questionnaire and for whom it seemed to have little, if any, significance. Forty-one percent of the teenagers in this group, for instance, completely rejected belief in God, 40% of them did not believe the Devil was real and 69% rejected the divinity of Jesus. The majority of the remaining youngsters in this group were uncertain of their beliefs. The interviews suggested that the young people who rejected Christianity as a source of faith, tended to be influenced by two factors. Primarily they were concerned about the irrationality of Christian belief as they perceived it. That is to say, they simply found aspects of Christianity implausible, especially stories about miracles and the biblical account of the creation of the universe. The perceived implausibility of these aspects of traditional Christian teaching when taken literally undermined the validity of Christian belief for them altogether. The young people's views regarding the creation and miracles in relation to science are considered in the next chapter, but it is worth just noting here the rationalization that some of the youngsters engaged in when constructing their understanding of Christian concepts. Some teenagers, for example, questioned whether Jesus was actually an historical figure. They felt it was more likely that the stories about him were entirely fictional. Others argued that Jesus had lived and possibly was a person of some standing at the time, but that the stories surrounding him had been elaborated and exaggerated the truth beyond belief. Geoffrey with a low religiosity score, for instance, explained that Jesus:

... could have just been someone like Martin Luther King, or, you know, someone who had strong ideas and wanted to change the world. You never know, they could have been smoking some weird stuff back then! [Geoffrey, 'Butterfly', Low].

Martin and Pluck's study in the 1970s also indicated that it was not uncommon for young people to liken Jesus to a modern spiritual leader such as Martin Luther King Jnr, especially where the religious education curriculum requires young people to learn about such figures, as it did in the participating schools. One boy, however, chose a somewhat less orthodox 'spiritual leader' for his analogy when he likened Jesus to David Icke! Even amongst some of the young people with higher CR scores the nature of Jesus was in some cases a little uncertain and vague. Jesus was:
... some kind of messenger influenced by God [Chris, Roman Catholic, High].

Another example of this rationalization process was expressed by Geoffrey in relation to his, now lack of, belief in the Devil. Geoffrey was familiar with Satanic culture through his interest in heavy metal music, but whilst he was still enthusiastic about the music he no longer had any interest in the Devil because he had come to the opinion that it was:

... all a load of rubbish. It's an escapism without doubt. It is all a load of nonsense really if you bring it all down to face value [Geoffrey, 'Butterfly', Low].

It seems that for these young people a rational, materialistic faith was preferred to the organisation of trust around transcendent referents.

The secondary reason for rejecting Christian belief was irrelevance. That is to say, there was a perceived mismatch between the young people's image of the Christian God and their experience of everyday life. So, for example, the teenagers had an image of God which suggests he is good and therefore should be in a position to put the world to rights. However, they were also aware of suffering around them, both in terms of their own life experiences and in a wider social context. To resolve this dissonance they concluded that God for all practical purposes does not exist. The following quotation illustrates the point:

Well, if there was a God then all the things that are happening at the moment wouldn't happen would they.
Like? Can you give me an example?
All the wars.
Why don't you think they would happen?
Well, ... God's supposed to be a person who changes [things] and makes everybody happy and that. There's not a lot of happy people around here [Berni, Uncertain, Medium].

Irrelevance can be regarded as a secondary reason for rejecting belief because, on the
whole, it was associated with uncertainty rather than out-right rejection of
Christianity. If Christianity is seen simply as irrelevant it is left unexplored
and therefore the young people do not think through Christian teaching at all.
Consequently it remains a collection of vague and uncertain concepts, but these
concepts are not dismissed altogether. From Table 3.1 it can be seen that uncertainty
is a prominent feature in the majority of youngsters' attitudes towards Christianity.

3.1.2 Christianity In Relation To Young People With Medium CR Scores

As with low scoring teenagers, the young people in this group were affected by the
irrationality of Christian belief and its irrelevance, although they were less inclined to
commit themselves to non-belief on that basis. In fact, their embodiment of
Christianity seems very much akin to Hornsby-Smith's (1991) description of
'customary religion'. To recap on the definition given in Chapter 1, customary
Christianity is a nominal form of conventional Christian belief. It is derived from
official Church teaching but is no longer under its control. Consequently traditional
religious concepts become subjectively altered to suit the individual's own self-interest
and convenience. In the process they tend to become trivialized and lose their claim
to ultimate truth and reality. Expressed in these terms, customary Christianity seems
well suited to the reflexive, consumer orientated culture of late modernity. It places
the individual at the centre of the universe and God becomes subject to individual
interpretation and re-interpretation in accordance with the individual's changing whims
and preferences. Louise sums up the majority view of the teenagers in this category
in that she was inclined to believe in the existence of God (at least, she was not
prepared to say she did not believe) and she felt it important to learn about
Christianity in religious education lessons at school. However, her belief in
Christianity did not have anything to do with her day-to-day existence at all. For
example, she said:

I'm not sure whether it's true, but they say people that come last in this
life go first in the Kingdom of God, and things like that. But I
wouldn't say it had much affect on me [Louise, Roman Catholic,
Medium].
The nominal status of belief was also apparent in the young people's attitudes towards Jesus. In all three groups (high, medium and low scorers) more of the teenagers agreed with the statement 'Jesus is the Son of God' than actually believed in God. Francis and Kay (1995) found the same. However, the difference was greatest amongst the medium CR group. Whilst 44% of them believed in a God of some sort and 14% believed 'Jesus is God', as many as 66% agreed that 'Jesus is the Son of God'. This suggests many of the young people agreed with the latter statement not because they believed in the divinity of Jesus but because they recognized that he is traditionally given the title 'Son of God'. This corresponds with Martin and Pluck's finding that belief in Jesus' divinity was "more restricted than some vague belief in God" (1977:21). In this light, Day and May's warning also needs to be taken seriously when trying to gauge how young people understand traditional Christian themes. They write:

...sometimes the impeccably sound reply gave the impression of being a nod in the direction of orthodoxy rather than a heartfelt conviction. They accept the belief as part of the Christian package; they had not yet made it their own (Day and May 1991:42).

The subjective nature of customary religion was apparent amongst the young people in that where they did express an opinion (ie when they moved beyond their uncertainty) they were selective in their acceptance of Christian concepts or reinterpreted them into their own preferred understanding. The subjectivity of belief varied according to where the teenager fell on the continuum between high and low Christian commitment. Those with the highest and lowest CR scores tended to have a traditional understanding of Christian concepts but were selective in their acceptance of them. For example, the young people with high CR scores, or on the border between the high and medium CR scores, had a traditional understanding of Christian referents but were more inclined to accept the comforting aspects (a personal God and heaven) than the less comfortable ones (the Devil and hell, for instance). The young people with low CR scores were more materialistic and, overall, they were more likely to reject transcendent beliefs (as traditionally understood) rather than bother to reinterpret them. Hence only 15% certainly believed in heaven or hell. Interestingly,
however, where they did show selective belief in relation to God and the Devil the low CR scorers showed the reverse trend to the other two groups in that they were more likely to say they believed in the Devil (26%) than in some sort of God (15%). One explanation for this might lie in a rebellious attitude whilst completing the questionnaire. (It is worth noting here too, however, that concepts of God and the Devil are not necessarily linked, as indicated by the factor analysis discussed in Chapter 2.).

The young people with medium CR scores were more subjective in their interpretation of concepts. Not only were they selective, they were also more likely to reinterpret conventional concepts to suit themselves rather than hold to the Church's understanding. Thus, whilst more medium scorers believed in some sort of God (44%) than the Devil (21%) (selection), they were also more likely to see God as a Higher Power (24%) than as a personal God (20%) (interpretation). Similarly they were more inclined to believe in life after death (41%) than reject it as a possibility (6%), and were more likely to see this in terms of some sort of heaven (40%) than hell (16%). What was understood by 'heaven' and 'hell', however, was down to individual understanding. By way of illustration, the following quotations contrast the views of two youngsters with high CR scores, who included traditional ideas in their construction of heaven and hell, as against two teenagers with medium CR scores whose concepts were much more their own ideas:

[Hell is like a] fire lake with the Devil ... and pain and gnashing of teeth ... [Heaven is probably a place of] loads of happiness and joy and rivers and lakes and countryside [Rebecca, Free Church, High].

Heaven's a lovely place of white clouds and angels, all for the good people [Anne, Free Church, High].

I think you can either go to a good place or a bad place. I don't believe in ... heaven or hell - the heaven where you're all dressed up and hell where you're getting burnt - I don't believe in that. I think there's a nicer place and not so nice a place [Penelope, Roman Catholic, Medium].
I've always really thought, like, this [the world as it is] is hell and you go to heaven when you die [Helen, Agnostic, Medium].

Overall, it seems that those young people with medium CR scores in particular felt free to use conventional religious concepts as and when they chose, reinterpreting them as they felt was appropriate to their own life circumstances, but otherwise ignored them altogether. The following two comments illustrate this rather calculating approach to conventional religious ideas:

Some people believe in it [God] and like that helps them through life. If someone's going through a 'down patch' and they suddenly find God and it helps them get back on their feet and that, then good luck to them! Let them believe in God as much as they like. [Simon, Agnostic, Medium].

I believe that there is a God and when my family die they go in peace to live in heaven. I can say I believe in God when it suits my purpose [Audrey, Agnostic, Medium].

Belief used in this way renders the individual very much in control. There is no sense here in which belief involves submitting authority to a transcendent power. This same attitude was carried into the practice of prayer sometimes adopted by this group of youngsters. Twenty-eight percent of medium scorers claimed to pray at least once a week. In this respect Bruce (1995:217) argues that many young people do not pray partly because it involves self-discipline which they are only just beginning to learn, but also because prayer implies a helplessness which is contrary to how teenagers want to feel and the cultural messages they have received that they have the power to do anything they want to. Francis and Brown (1991) also note that the importance of prayer tends to decline in adolescence. Thus some young people only prayed as a 'last resort':

Might [pray] if it was me in a car crash [or if I was ill], or if one of my family was in a car crash or something ... only if it was really a major one ... but not if it was a minor incident.

What do you think would prompt you to pray do you think?
As a last resort I think. If a person was going to die or something [Godfrey, Roman Catholic, Medium].
Prayer used in this way accords with Loukcs' conclusion from his interviews with 14 year olds in the 1950s that:

... the tone of four fifths of the comments would support the claim that 'man is a praying animal'. Repeatedly we are given the impression that here is something primal, a spontaneous activity carrying comfort and reassurance to which man turns in his need (Loukes 1961:71).

He goes on to say, however, that:

... none of this amounts to a view of prayer as a relationship with God, or an integral part of a whole way of life. It remains an almost instinctive activity, performed in certain moods and for certain ends, but always intermittent, deliberate, ultimately utilitarian (Loukes 1961:73).

His young interviewees suggested that prayers were answered, though not in the way a magic formula would be, and sometimes the answer to a prayer for somebody else was more in terms of helping the person praying to feel at peace or more hopeful. Phyllis in the current study describes quite clearly this 'instinctive' attitude to prayer which relieves a sense of helplessness in difficult situations and restores her sense of ontological security, even though she was unsure about the existence of God:

... if I know people who are ill or they've been in an accident or something, I do [pray] then ... I think everyone does in a way, even though they don't refer to it as praying. They sort of wish in a way ... "Oh, I wish so and so would get better" or whatever. ... Even though some people wouldn't admit it, everyone does. So, yeah, I do sometimes. I don't sort of like clasp my hands or anything, you know, kneel before my bed or anything, but, you know, in your head you just think sometimes.

*And does that help?*

In a way I suppose it does because you feel better because you think "Well, at least I've thought it", you know, and can't be ... knocked back for not doing anything, because I've thought about my feelings and all the rest. ... In a way you feel much better about thinking over it in your head because you think "Oh well, if someone is there listening then they've heard me saying [a prayer]" or whatever. Even though I don't believe in God a lot you still have that in the back of your mind. It's strange really [Phyllis Non-Denominational, Medium].
Loukes' research also identified the importance of authenticity in relation to belief and practice which was apparent amongst the young people in this study too. For prayer to be effective, for example, it had to be "from the heart" (Loukes 1961:63) and the person praying should be persistent in his/her prayers and pray in good times as well as bad. According to the young people in the current study there was also an implication amongst some of the young people that prayer should not be selfish. Sally, for instance, implied that she would expect prayers to be answered if they were offered for her siblings rather than herself. Similarly, Bianca (who was uncertain of her faith and scored low on the CR scale) frowned on what she saw as 'selfish' prayer where the individual praying did not believe in God, even though she did admit to sometimes praying herself.

The trivialization of belief brought about by the subjectivity of customary Christianity was another element apparent in the attitudes of the young people in this study. There was, as it were, a 'domestication' of God. Attributes which have traditionally been associated with God's sacred status were not present in these teenagers' beliefs. In accordance with Day and May's (1991) research, the characteristics of awesome power and might, for instance, were hardly apparent in the young people's ideas of God at all. Only a couple scoring highly on the CR scale directly attributed God with power when they contrasted his supremacy over the weaker forces of Satan. There was little indication, however, that this power was to be approached with the utmost reverence – God was more friend than King. Even where the young people indicated that God was a Higher Power or Life Force per se, the impression gained from the questionnaire comments and interviews was that they thought of this in the same way that they might think of the 'force of gravity' or the 'power of magnetism'. It was without intelligence, all around them and taken for granted. It was definitely not awe inspiring. Devoid of sacred status in this way there was no imperative to see God as the source of universal meaning, ultimate truth or hope. Belief in God was therefore regarded as optional and a matter of opinion. It was something a person took an interest in if they felt inclined to do so. How others conceived of God was entirely up to them and nobody else's business as far as the young people were concerned. It was not a matter of life and death importance.
Given this 'take it or leave it' view of Christianity amongst medium scorers it was not surprising to find that the main feature of young people's attitudes in relation to conventional religion was apathy. It seems that the large degree of uncertainty expressed by the youngsters with medium CR scores was less to do with problems of irrationality or even irrelevance, than it was to do with indifference. In other words, there was very little evidence to suggest that their uncertainty was the result of an unfinished spiritual quest whereby they were still weighing up the merits of Christianity vis a vis other sacred universes. Rather, for the majority of young people in this study uncertainty stemmed from the fact that God, and in particular Christianity, had very little salience in their minds at all. Consequently they had not given these matters much thought and so had to remain undecided. Martin, for instance, when asked if he believed in God said:

I don't know. I haven't really given it that much thought or, you know, importance. You know, I haven't really thought about it at all [Martin, Church of England, Medium].

Phyllis and Peter make similar points, in that lack of religious involvement leaves 'beliefs' and concepts largely undefined:

I do believe in him in a way, but because I'm not really into a religion or anything ... it's hard to ... believe in something which you're not really involved in and don't know much about [Phyllis, Non-Denominational Christian, Medium].

I don't know if I believe in God. That's partly why I don't go to church, because I don't know whether or not to believe, or believe in something else. But I don't really have a clue. Have you thought about it before? No. [Peter, Uncertain, Low].

So, many of the young people were willing to accept that God might exist, but implicitly followed this with the statement (more than question) "So what?!". For the bulk of the young people, Christianity lacked significance and therefore was not interesting or worth bothering about.
Yet despite all this apathy an interesting and important finding was the resistance the young people showed towards rejecting Christian beliefs altogether. Whilst their attitudes to Christianity were marked by nominal commitment, subjectivity and trivialization of belief and indifference to Christian referents on an everyday basis, they nevertheless remained remarkably reluctant to commit themselves to jettisoning the Christian sacred universe altogether. This reaction suggests that centuries of Christianity in the West has left conventional religiosity too deeply rooted in the social psyche to be easily brushed aside. Thus the possibility, albeit an uncertain and dwindling one, that life may be imbued with transcendent meaning and purpose after all was retained; along with this possibility was the idea that Christianity might be an appropriate expression of this ultimate reality. In other words, it seems the young people did not want to risk rejecting a possible source of hope and comfort which might be true, but nor did they want to take up any of the demands or responsibilities (such as going to church) that such beliefs might put upon them. 'Customary religion' was therefore a useful description of the 'beliefs' held by the young people who wanted to associate undemanding transcendent referents with their faith structure 'just in case'. The transcendent was thus retained in the back of the youngsters' minds but for the most part ignored on a daily basis.

3.1.3 Christianity In Relation To Young People With High CR Scores

In contrast to the customary Christianity of young people with medium CR scores, the young people with high CR scores by definition showed a strong commitment to the Christian sacred universe. Twenty-seven percent of young people fell into this category on the CR scale. For those with the highest scores Christianity very definitely provided faith referents that contributed to their ontological security. The key feature of this faith was its relational nature, both in terms of relationships with other people and relationship with a personal God. The high CR scorers overwhelmingly conceived of God as a personality to whom they could relate. Thus 88% said God was a person compared to 9% who saw him as Higher Power. Jesus was also a figure whom these committed youngsters felt they could talk to and have
a relationship with, especially those from Protestant backgrounds.

God was regarded by the high scorers as good, helpful and loving towards them. Consequently, through prayer they sought God's help in many areas of life. He was thought to guide them as they made decisions and help them live as near 'holy' a lifestyle as possible, which included reading and understanding the Bible and eradicating 'undesirable' behaviours from their life. In this respect judgement and forgiveness were mentioned (particularly in relation to life after death) by several of the young people. The young people in this group, as Day and May found in their study of young Christians, were very much impressed with Jesus as Saviour. Jesus was someone who loved them enough to go through the agony of crucifixion:

[Jesus is] probably the best friend that I've got really, because he's always there for me and he always listens and he died for me, which is an amazing thing. Even if I'd been the only person on earth he still would have died for me [Julie, Free Church, High].

God was also recognized as helping individuals increase their confidence and courage to enable them to overcome fears and difficulties. He was thought by some of the teenagers to bring about physical healing and help them gain good grades in their school work. Most importantly of all, however, God or Jesus was somebody they felt they could trust and somebody they could confide in about anything that was troubling them – friends, worries, family events, etc. For example:

I talk to him [God] about a lot of things. I talk to him about arguments with friends, my boyfriend when we have arguments, and things that are worrying me ... When my sister went to Australia she was going by herself for nine months, and so [I spoke to him] about that, to sort of keep her safe and things like that [Pam, Free Church, High].

Prayer was important in this respect to high CR scorers and 95% said that they engaged in prayer at least once a week compared to 28% of medium and 3% (Cramer's V = 0.55, p<0.01) of lower scorers. The data in the current study had much
in common with Day and May's finding that amongst young Christians three aspects of prayer could be identified. Firstly prayer was seen as a way of encountering God and receiving his peace. Secondly it was someone to share problems with. Thirdly it was a way of gaining insight in terms of self-awareness and into problems. Day and May (1991) note that most of the prayers youngsters talked about were focused on local issues rather than global ones. In terms of the present study this meant overcoming bullying (or 'persecution'), bad habits (eg smoking, swearing), problems with relationships, 'winning friends to Christ' etc. The activity of prayer was, however, slightly marred by a sense of obligation the young people had associated with it. Day and May also found that young Christians were aware of some sort of expectation that they 'should' pray daily. Ward (1996) identifies the notion of a daily 'quiet time' as an important part of the evangelical subculture. The young people were not always successful at meeting this obligation, although they did try.

Relationships, however, require two-way communication. In this respect prayer for the high CR scorers was more than a means of the self achieving a sense of inner peace or regaining control as it was with some of the medium CR scorers. Several of the high scoring youngsters felt that God responded to them, not only circumstantially through the help he gave them on a daily basis, but also by direct communication. They suggested this might occur in several ways. For example, they might read a Bible passage that appeared to be especially pertinent to their situation and therefore was taken to be God's word to them personally:

... when you're closer to God more things in your Bible reading ... jump out at you. Like ... some people read their stars and they think "Gosh! This is so significant", you know, "It does happen". I find in my Bible reading ... the promises that God has put there really do happen to me. [Rebecca, Free Church, High].

In this respect Day and May note that the Bible was mainly approached devotionally by young Christians rather than analytically. The young people's attitudes towards the Bible are considered more fully in Chapter 4. Alternatively, God was thought to speak through other people. Pam, for instance, felt that God spoke to her through her
mother:

I think he sort of tells her ... when I'm upset or when I need to talk, or whatever ... like, if I said something [to God] (I usually say it when I'm lying alone in bed or whatever) the next morning she'll [mother] be like 'Oh, are you alright?' and everything like that [Pam, Free Church, High].

Two other young people described more dramatic experiences, which they interpreted as direct encounters with God mediated by the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit, as the Third Person in the Christian concept of God as Trinity, received little attention in the interviews and no mention was made in the survey questions. However, the importance of the Holy Spirit to the youngsters who mentioned this aspect of God should not be underestimated. Julie, for instance, said that on 'becoming a Christian' the Holy Spirit enters into the individual and helps them to live "a new life; it changes everyone's life when they do it". The changes she identified were a keener moral conscience, the ability to understand and so 'hear' God through the Bible, and a more 'Christian lifestyle'. The Holy Spirit was therefore understood as the mediator whereby the individual could communicate with God and live according to his will. For Rebecca and Brian communication through the Holy Spirit was identified and described in terms of a dramatic physical encounter with God. These young people were from different churches but both had experienced what they referred to as a 'move' or 'wave' of the Holy Spirit that apparently was

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At the time of questionnaire construction it was felt that teaching on the Holy Spirit in non-charismatic churches and schools was likely to be minimal and, therefore, it was difficult to think of an appropriate question to ask the young people in this respect. The assumption was perhaps justified in that, during the interviews, the Holy Spirit was only mentioned by three young people and they had all had some sort of contact with the charismatic churches (although, interestingly, John who had been brought up in a Pentecostal Church, was not one of those who referred directly to the Holy Spirit). However, on reflection this might have been an important oversight. Young people's attitudes to the Holy Spirit is perhaps one of the most understudied areas in the literature and further empirical data on what the Holy Spirit actually means to them would have been valuable. This is especially so, bearing in mind that overall the Pentecostal church is one of the few denominations increasing in number (although the 15-19 age group still suffered a decrease in numbers from 1979-1987. Brierley 1991:88-89). Moreover, during the current study a charismatic revival (the 'Toronto Blessing') was experienced country-wide and had received a degree of media attention.
going on in various churches at the time of the study. Rebecca, for instance, described her charismatic experience. She explained that the experience had caused her to fall over and shake. She went on:

I was just really calm and I was aware that the Holy Spirit was giving me a blessing, if you like. You know, trying to build up my relationship with God and, you know, working for better in my life. [Rebecca, Free Church, High].

Brian also said that during his charismatic experience he fell over and had "funny feelings". "You do funny things; it's quite good", he said, and went on to say that the experience confirmed his faith:

It makes you feel good. It makes you feel, I don't know, wanted, if you see what I mean, because you know there is something up there. Before the 'move of the Spirit' everyone said there's something up there so you believe that. But now you know that God is there. There's nothing else could have done it [Brian, Free Church, High].

Brian's experience led him to believe that the Holy Spirit would help him live out a Christian life, especially in his thinking and speaking. However, these young people also noted that there was a negative force which would equally try to prevent them living as they believed a Christian should – that is, the Devil.

If God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit were more directly relevant to youngsters with high CR scores than to those with low to medium scores, so too was the Devil. Amongst those of strong Christian religiosity the Devil was regarded as a reality who had an effect on their lives that had to be negotiated. He was portrayed as an irritant who would try to 'trip people up' or try to 'catch them out' so that they did not follow Jesus and a Christian lifestyle as well as they might. He was blamed for tempting people to hate others, lie and swear, and was thought to put obstacles in the way of individuals achieving their goals. Some of these young people, therefore, saw themselves as being caught in a war between God and the Devil. Thus, when God

\[4\] Like God, the Devil was always described in masculine terms.
'blessed' them, the Devil was expected to counteract with a retaliatory attack of unpleasant experiences. Rebecca, for instance, explained how her charismatic experience of God was quickly followed by misfortunes brought about by the Devil:

But as soon as something like that happens [the blessing], you know, the Devil comes and attacks it and tries to take it away. I had a really bad week after that and believe that was why [Rebecca, Free Church, High].

Nevertheless, as mentioned earlier, God was thought to be more powerful than the Devil and praying against the Devil was regarded as an appropriate way of overcoming the difficulties he was supposed to cause. For Julie 'the world' was also associated with the Devil and contrasted with God. Thus Julie drew a distinction between those people who were associated with God (ie other 'born-again' Christians) and the rest of humankind who were associated with the Devil and 'the world'. Julie explained that, before 'becoming a Christian':

I was actually not his [God's] child, so I was like going along with the Devil and the world [Julie, Free Church, High].

For the young people with high CR scores, Christianity therefore gave them an identity and gave their life significance in that it located their existence in a relationship with God and interpreted their life's circumstances in terms of the implications of that relationship. Thus, for them God was a referent of faith because he gave them existential meaning, hope and purpose. Indeed, several of the youngsters were very explicit about this. David, for instance, said that faith was the most important thing in life, since it gave him the power to try and help others and gave him the courage to face his own fears and difficulties. Keith suggested that God was a 'target' and life was all about trying to reach that target:

... without faith we have nothing ... and I suppose that the only way we can ever carry on is to keep faith [Keith, Church of England, High].

Faith organised around trust in God provided the motivation to live, the 'courage to
be'. For John, too, God was the ultimate source of hope which enabled him to get through difficult times. "Faith", he argued, "pushes you forward":

*What do you mean by faith?*
Faith is having the hope. You've got a hope in you that you can do it. So you just push yourself forward ... If, in this world, you haven't got hope there's nothing, ... there's no point in living because you've got to have hope [John, Free Church, High].

John went on to say that hope is tested through the course of life, but God helped him through the obstacles:

One thing ... that really helped me by being a Christian is, you know, you go through a lot of tests and as you fast and pray a lot you really begin to understand what being a Christian is. As you pray and ask what you are going to do the Lord gives it [the answer] to you [John, Free Church, High].

Even really difficult situations could be interpreted by reference to this transcendent perspective. Julie, for example, was bullied for being a Christian. This was interpreted as 'persecution' which enabled her to equate her position with that of the early Christian martyrs. This not only served to put her experience in context, but also reaffirmed her Christian identity (Christians suffer, she was suffering, therefore she must be a Christian):

I've experienced a lot of persecution, especially here [in school] for being a Christian. ... threats to be beaten up and stuff like that ... But you know in the end that ... as a Christian ... I'm supposed to suffer persecution. It's part of what God⁵ wants for me, and ... through that hopefully these people [the persecutors] might be saved [Julie, Free Church, High].

Rebecca also explained that her Christian faith had helped her come to terms with her father's death:

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⁵ Julie still had a concept of God as someone who loved her and died for her. The suffering was apparently worth enduring because it meant she was working with God to 'save' others.
... my dad had died of cancer and that really shook me up and I kept asking God "Why? Why?"; and I went to Spring Harvest (that's a Christian camp), and I went to this lecture about suffering ... the message that came across to me was that suffering was meant to bring you closer to God. ... I just found that hard to believe but gradually, you know, I came to accept it and saw other people suffering and they were getting closer to God and I realized [it was true] [Rebecca, Free Church, High].

The significance of Christian beliefs on the young people's decision making and lifestyle are considered in more detail in Chapter 6. For the moment suffice it to say that the Christian sacred universe for some teenagers, albeit a minority, still provided faith referents. It gave them ontological security by providing existential meaning, hope and purpose.

Before going on to consider the implications of the above results from the theoretical perspective set out in Chapter 1, the results of the survey also indicated variations in the importance of Christian concepts for young people's faith according to gender and religious identity. It is to these two variables that I now turn.

3.2 Christianity According To Gender And Religious Identity

3.2.1 Gender

The levels of association for all the variables cross-tabulated with gender were low, the Cramer's V score usually being between 0.1 and 0.2. Nevertheless, the correlations were significant and yielded some interesting results.
Table 3.3: Conventional Christian concepts by gender – % agree (n = 100%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Belief</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Cramer's V (p&lt;0.01)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I believe in a God who is someone I can know personally</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe in some sort of Higher Power or Life Force, but not in a personal God</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don't really know what to think</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>47</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don't think there is any sort of God, Higher Power or Life Force</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God is important to me</td>
<td>35 (532)</td>
<td>38 (550)</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is comforting at times to believe there is a God</td>
<td>57 (526)</td>
<td>64 (552)</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesus Christ is the Son of God</td>
<td>55 (527)</td>
<td>62 (551)</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesus Christ is God</td>
<td>18 (531)</td>
<td>19 (552)</td>
<td>0.09*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Devil is just an imaginary person</td>
<td>31 (534)</td>
<td>20 (553)</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is life after death</td>
<td>40 (534)</td>
<td>45 (553)</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heaven is just an imaginary place</td>
<td>20 (530)</td>
<td>10 (550)</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hell is a real place</td>
<td>26 (534)</td>
<td>19 (553)</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion is important to me</td>
<td>28 (533)</td>
<td>32 (554)</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christianity is the only true religion</td>
<td>12 (532)</td>
<td>9 (550)</td>
<td>0.04*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Not significant at the p<0.01 level.

The first point to note is that the girls tended to score more highly on the CR scale than the boys. Thus 13% of boys had a high CR score (53% a medium score and 34% a low score) compared to 18% of girls with a high CR score (62% with a medium score and 20% with a low score) (Cramer's V = 0.16, p<0.01). Table 3.3 shows that the girls attached slightly more importance to religion than the boys and were more likely than the boys to say God is important to them. These results correspond with a standard finding in the literature that women on the whole are more religiously orientated than men (Brierley 1991:79ff). Davie indicates that women's perception of God differs from men's perception too. Women:

... concentrate rather more on the God of love, comfort and forgiveness than on the God of power, planning and control. Men, it seems, do the

Similarly Greeley (1981) notes that young women are more likely to portray favourable images on his 'grace scale'. The grace scale:

... combine measures which indicate a very warm, positive, gracious view of the story of the relationship between God and the individual human person – warmth, gentleness, comfort, patience, tender, maternal love and a figure of action and pleasure which improves upon but does not negate our present life. It is a 'story of God' which is benign and attractive (Greeley 1981:29).

The data set out in Table 3.3 suggest that girls in this current study also have a slightly different view of God than boys. The girls were generally more open to agreeing with traditional Christian understandings of God. In accordance with Davie's observations, they were more likely to conceive of God in personal terms than think of him as an impersonal Higher Power. Boys, however, were just as likely to conceive of God as a Higher Power as they were to see him in personal terms. In addition, girls were slightly more willing to admit to drawing comfort from God on occasions than the boys. The girls were, however, a little hesitant in choosing to accept the more 'negative' Christian concepts, and in this respect they would often remain undecided. Boys were more decided in their response. For example, whilst only 20% of girls thought the Devil was 'just imaginary', 53% were uncertain and only 27% actually implied the Devil was real. This compared to 31% of boys who thought the Devil to be imaginary, 38% who were uncertain and 31% who were prepared to think of the Devil as real. Regarding Jesus, again the girls were more orthodox than the boys and more readily agreed that 'Jesus is the Son of God'. Interestingly, however, there was very little gender difference when it came to believing 'Jesus is God'. Both girls and boys on the whole were unsure or reluctant to agree with this statement. Just as the girls were less willing to affirm belief in the Devil, so they also opted for a more comforting idea about an afterlife than the boys. They were more likely to believe in life after death and in heaven than the boys, but were less likely to believe in hell. So, although the girls generally appeared to be more open to Christian concepts than the boys, when it came to the less agreeable
ideas it seems that they were slightly more selective in what they chose to believe.

Davie mentions one possible explanation as to why women in general are more religious than men, which links religiosity to the proximity of women to the processes of birth and death in their role as mothers and carers. These events, she argues, tend to:

... evoke echoes of the sacred ... questions about the reasons for existence and about the meaning of life itself (1994:120).

However, this explanation is less applicable to young people who have relatively little experience of these processes. Rather than the experience of birth and death themselves being significant perhaps it is, therefore, enough that the general socialisation processes prepare girls for the nurturing roles, as opposed to the more independent masculine roles that the boys are encouraged to adopt. Craib notes in this respect that the old masculine and feminine stereotypes are still very much in evidence and individuals are inclined to adopt them to a greater or lesser extent. For example, it is women rather than men who are seen as being:

... responsible for emotional working relationships, [and as being] more aware of relationships and emotional connectedness (1995:154).

These masculine and feminine stereotypes can then be extended into religiosity. Christianity in general may be more appealing to girls than boys, in that it tends to be associated with the private, emotional side of life and with relationships and community, often invoking the dominant theme of family. All of this falls within the traditional female province. Connecting this with the concept of God, it might be expected that girls operating within the realm of femininity would be more open to conceiving of God as a person with whom a close relationship is possible than would be the case for boys. Girls are, as it were, on 'home territory' and dealing with familiar ideas. (The correlation between prayer and gender in this respect was small but significant – Cramer's $V = 0.14$, $p<0.01$ – 34% of boys prayed monthly compared to 45% of girls). Boys, on the other hand, are perhaps less expert in relational and
emotional matters and, to a certain extent, such expertise might be shunned insofar as it is seen as a 'feminine' concern and therefore a threat to their masculine identity. This may be especially so when such a relationship implies dependency, as noted by Bruce above. Dependency operates on two levels within Christianity. At the immanent, human level there is the interdependency of people upon one another that comes with the ideal of a church community. On the transcendent, supernatural level there is the idea of dependency on God. This can be held in contrast with Luckmann's suggested dominant themes of the modern sacred cosmos, that of independence and autonomy. Whilst independence and autonomy are valued by boys and girls alike, it nevertheless still seems to be the case, that it is more acceptable for girls to be dependent on someone or something outside of themselves than it is for boys. For boys the stereotype links dependency and the need for comfort and support with weakness. In this respect some of the young people did suggest Christianity was for weak people:

God is a cop out. It is a source from which people find answers for unanswerable questions [Billy, Atheist, Low].

I think life is here for us to live and make the best out of it that we can, and to me God is seen as an escape goat for less stronger people (this is not wrong). God is what you make him, her, it [Frank, Agnostic, Medium].

In terms of socialization, it perhaps is also the case that girls are taught to accept authority and please others to a greater extent than boys such that they are encouraged to give the 'right' or traditional, orthodox answers to a greater extent than boys are. Consequently they may appear to be more conventionally religious than they actually are.

3.2.2 Religious Identity

When the young people were compared according to religious identity, it was very apparent that those who identified themselves as Free Church members were more
orthodox in their beliefs than the other groups. From Table 3.4 it can be seen that Free Church members were more likely to score highly on the CR scale compared to the other denominations.

Table 3.5 shows that Free Church members were more likely to think religion important than were the other identity groups. Moreover, Free Church youngsters stood out as the most exclusive group, insofar as 47% of them held that 'Christianity is the only true religion'. With regard to God, the Free Church members were less selective in their beliefs than the other groups. They believed in God but they also tended to believe in the reality of the Devil. In addition, these young people were more likely to regard Jesus not only as 'the Son of God' but as divine in his own right too (although even amongst this group 20% did not believe him to be God).

Looking at the other identity groups, the data show that Agnostics, Atheists and Uncertains scored relatively highly on belief in the Devil compared to the Roman Catholic and Church of England youngsters. It was particularly noteworthy that as many as 25% of Atheists believed in the Devil. From the data it seems that some of the young people who thought of themselves as Atheists nevertheless believed that it was comforting at times to choose to believe in God (10%).

Table 3.4 CR score by religious identity - % (Cramer's V = 0.52 p<0.01)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CR Score</th>
<th>Religious Identity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: RC = Roman Catholic; FC = Free Church; CoE = Church of England; Non-Denom = Non-Denominational Christian; Ag = Agnostic; Ath = Atheist; Uncert = Uncertain.

When it came to the possibility of an afterlife surprisingly few of the young people were sure of life after death, most of the young people were uncertain. With the
exception of the Free Church young people, the percentages for the Christian groups who positively believed in life after death was between 53% and 35% (79% of Free Church youngsters believed in life after death). For the other identity groups positive belief was even less common, only 38% of the Uncertains, 29% of the Atheists and 27% of the Agnostics believed in an afterlife. It was also surprising to find amongst the Christian groups, a greater number of young people believed in heaven than believed in life after death. This suggests some confusion in relation to traditional beliefs. Interestingly, 14% of Atheists believed in heaven and 14% in hell. This again testifies to the subjective nature of belief and indicates how concepts can be removed from their original context, reinterpreted and used by young people as a possible source of meaning. However, the ambiguous nature of such belief suggests that these concepts do not actually form the basis of faith as understood herein.

Why should the Free Church young people come across as so much more religiously orientated and traditional in their beliefs than the other Christian groups? Part of the answer may lie in where the different denominations have traditionally placed their teaching emphasis. The Free Churches have tended to place more authority on the Bible as a source of revealed knowledge than the Roman Catholic Church or Church of England. Consequently young people from these traditions are perhaps more likely to read, be familiar with the Bible and hold to its literal truth and so be less selective in what they choose to believe from it. Free Church members might also have greater 'plausibility structures' in place in terms of family and other individuals who support young people's faith (see Chapter 7). Another important difference between the Free Church, Roman Catholic Church and Church of England lies in the notion of membership. With the Roman Catholic Church and Church of England there has developed over time a sense whereby denominational affiliation is perceived almost as an ascribed identity, regardless of belief. An individual is 'born' into the family's religious tradition (communal belonging). Later on the individual is likely to retain their affiliation, regardless of whether or not they adhere, or even know about, the teachings of the Church, because it is part of who they are. Actual participation in the Church may only be in the context of births, deaths and marriages, although the strength of feeling should not be under-estimated here (Ahern 1987). In these
circumstances, where the individual retains denominational association but withdraws from institutional support and control, there is room to be selective in belief and develop unorthodox ideas. This situation does not seem to apply to the same extent amongst the Free Church denominations. They have not had so long to develop the circumstances conducive to such practices. In addition, Free Church membership appears to be much more voluntaristic in the sense that people have to consciously 'opt in' (associational belonging) whereas, with the Roman Catholic Church and Church of England, it is more the case that individuals have to consciously 'opt out'. In other words, with the established Churches people are assumed to belong unless they choose not to, while with the Free Churches they are assumed not to belong unless they actually choose to do so. In consciously choosing to be part of a denomination the individual is more likely to acquiesce with the whole sacred universe and also be more actively involved with the Church. Consequently their beliefs are reinforced. For the second and third generation who ascribe to the same faith as their parents, the worldview is also strengthened by the active religious participation of significant others, thereby leaving little room for innovation and the individualization of beliefs.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Belief</th>
<th>Religious Identity</th>
<th>RC</th>
<th>FC</th>
<th>CoE</th>
<th>Non-Denom</th>
<th>Ag</th>
<th>Ath</th>
<th>Uncert</th>
<th>Cramer's V (p&lt;0.01)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I believe in a God who is someone I can know personally</td>
<td></td>
<td>38</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe in some sort of Higher Power or Life Force, but not in a personal God</td>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don't really know what to think</td>
<td></td>
<td>37</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don't think there is any sort of God, Higher Power or Life Force</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God is important to me</td>
<td></td>
<td>63</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is comforting at times to believe there is a God</td>
<td></td>
<td>84</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>0.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesus Christ is the Son of God</td>
<td></td>
<td>81</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesus Christ is God</td>
<td></td>
<td>29</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Devil is just an imaginary person</td>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>0.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is life after death</td>
<td></td>
<td>53</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>0.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heaven is just an imaginary place</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hell is a real place</td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion is important to me</td>
<td></td>
<td>49</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christianity is the only true religion</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: RC = Roman Catholic; FC = Free Church; CoE = Church of England; Non-Denom = Non-Denominational Christian; Ag = Agnostic; Ath = Atheist; Uncert = Uncertain.
3.3 Christianity In Late Modernity

The purpose of this chapter was to find out if Christianity has any significance for young people as they try to make sense of their world today. In other words, is their faith based on Christian referents in late modernity? In terms of faith as understood in this study, and on the basis of the above data, the answer in the majority of cases appears to be 'no'. That is to say, only a small minority of the young people seemed to organise trust around Christian referents and derive existential meaning, hope and purpose from them. The young people were, however, aware of the traditional concepts of God, Jesus, the Devil, heaven and hell; indeed 'religion' was equated by most of the teenagers with 'Christianity'. In addition, relatively few of the young people actually rejected Christian belief outright. For those who did the major objection to it was its perceived irrationality. These young people appeared to be investing trust in science, in that they wanted a rational basis for their faith (see Chapter 4). The majority of the young people in this study, however, could be characterised as 'customary Christians' as defined by Hornsby-Smith (1991). In the main these young people were indifferent or apathetic towards Christian beliefs. They regarded such concepts as irrelevant to their everyday lives. Nevertheless, since Christianity was part of their upbringing (see Chapter 7) and might possibly have some element of truth in it (in the main they were not sure), the youngsters retained nominal belief without incurring any cost to themselves and therefore could subjectively interpret and utilize these transcendent referents if necessary.

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, customary Christianity seems to fit in well with the characteristics of late modernity suggested in Chapter 1, because it relies on a high degree of reflexivity and autonomy. Under customary Christianity, belief is subjective - parts of the Christian sacred universe are selected as best suits the individual. They may also be subjected to on-going reinterpretation so that they continue to fit individual requirements. However, because Christian concepts are rendered 'uncertain' through continual change and through apathy towards exploring and understanding them properly, they are an unsuitable basis for faith when used in this way. Faith is about providing the individual with ontological security and an
uncertain set of transcendent referents cannot provide the assurance or stability individuals need in this respect. Christian concepts for the majority of young people in this study were at best, therefore, only a potential source of faith rather than a realised one.

The smallest group of young people were the committed Christians. Those individuals with the highest CR scores were the young people for whom faith was genuinely expressed through Christianity. The crucial aspect of Christianity for these young people was relationship. In the context of this chapter the young people's relationship with God and/or Jesus was vital, but as I shall show in Chapters 5 and 7, relationships with family, close friends and the Church community were also very important. God for these young people was interpreted in a traditional way as a transcendent 'person'. Because they had a clear and stable understanding of Christian ideas reinforced through the family and the Church, their Christian concepts had a stability about them which meant that they could be used as the basis for the organisation of trust. Thus God was somebody they could trust and who could be their 'best friend'. Several of the young people noted the intimacy of their relationship with God. He was not only somebody they could confide in with confidence, but was also somebody they could be 'at one with'. In this sense God affirmed their significance. God had created them, God loved them, God had a purpose for them and would help them through life's difficulties. They were not alone in the world. This contrasted markedly with the young people whose Christianity was of a customary nature. Those young people did not feel they could trust God (God lets suffering occur, for instance).

Given the central importance of the personal relationship between the individual and God in the organisation of faith, it was not surprising to find that most of the young people who scored highly on the CR scale came from Protestant Free Churches whose teaching emphasis tends to focus on this aspect of Christianity. It is important to note here that it is these church denominations which attract young people the most. Indeed, whilst most churches have declining teenage attendance, Brierley (1991:88-89) indicates that independent churches actually increased their teenage population for the period 1979 to 1989. The above would seem to suggest that faith in God is
possible only when the young people have an understanding which indicates a loving and reliable God. Those churches which are able to emphasize this both in terms of teaching and practice (see Chapter 7) are most likely to attract young people. That faith is based on relationships is also important from the point of view of gender. Relationships tend to fall into the private sphere, which is traditionally the realm of women. If boys are less skilled at negotiating relationships due to their lack of socialization it might be that they are less able to place their faith in God. However, if, as late modernity presses on towards a post-modern era, the nature of relationships changes between the genders such that they become more equal (Giddens 1992), then we might expect to see changes in the gendered nature of faith too. The importance of trustworthy relationships as a basis of faith is developed in the next two chapters.
Chapter Four

ALTERNATIVE FAITHS:
COMMON RELIGION AND SCIENTIFIC RATIONALITY

In Chapter 3 I argued that Christianity is the basis of faith for only a minority of young people. Very few teenagers organise their trust around the Christian God. For the majority, Christianity remains the main or most obvious expression of conventional religion, but they themselves are not certain of the validity of Christian ideas, or how Christianity relates to their world and their own personal situation. The next research question then to be addressed was: What do young people put their faith in if they do not derive their ontological security from Christianity? Is the transcendent realm re-emerging in alternative forms as people in late modernity become disillusioned with science and rationality; or is it the case that the rational scientific worldview of early modernity has been so thoroughly engrained in the Western conscience collective that it still provides the only credible source of meaning for young people today?

The first part of this chapter considers alternative sources of faith in terms of common religious beliefs and the second part looks at the role of science as a basis for young people's ontological security.

4.1 Common Religion

In Chapter 1 common religion was substantively defined in terms of practices and beliefs associated with a transcendent realm but which are not organised into a formal body of doctrine and not under the jurisdiction of the Church or any other conventionally religious institution. Common religion therefore consists of those
beliefs and practices which are sometimes referred to as 'folk lore' or 'occult' spirituality. They include superstitions and concepts of luck, fate and fortune telling (including, for example, the use of astrology, tarot cards, ouija boards, palmistry), notions of witchcraft and magic, and other elements of the supernatural (such as spiritualism).

It only takes a quick glance at the popular media to see that some of the above beliefs and practices have widespread, and perhaps even growing, appeal. Horoscopes have a regular place in newspapers, magazines and on television. The National Lottery, popular 'scratch cards', etc, draw on notions of luck and fortune-telling as part of their commercial image. ('Lady Luck', 'the hand of fortune', for instance, have featured in the television advertising campaigns of these lotteries; and the logo for the National Lottery is a hand with fingers crossed). Shops sell 'good luck' cards and increasingly cater to customers' interests in occult literature. Bruce (1995), for instance, notes that the:

... fourth best-selling book of 1993, behind three novels, was 1994 Horoscopes, which sold 480,000 copies in the United Kingdom, which is about one for every 100 adults (Bruce 1995:106).

The New Age movement, which covers a diverse combination of Eastern philosophies and occult practices, is another growth area in common religion. Again, looking at publications, Bruce comments on the increasing amount of shelf space given over to New Age publications in bookshops and points out that a number of publishing houses have developed specialist labels devoted to New Age literature in order to accommodate the demand. This, of course, does not indicate how seriously people take these beliefs, but it does show there is considerable interest in the whole area.

1 Boyd, following the Encyclopedia Britannica defines the occult as "theories, practices and rituals based on esoteric knowledge, especially alleged knowledge about the world of spirits and unknown forces of the universe". He goes on to quote the three characteristics of occultism given by Enroth: "(1) the disclosure and communication of information unavailable to humans through normal means (beyond the five senses); (2) the placing of persons in contact with supernatural powers, paranormal energies or demonic forces; (3) the acquisition and mastery of power in order to manipulate or influence other people in certain actions" (1996:9).
covered by common religion.

Towler indicates, as stated in Chapter 1, that common religion survives alongside conventional religion because it provides a 'protective cocoon' against anxiety in its own right, or fills the gaps left in the conventional religious beliefs held by individuals. Thus, he suggests that common religious beliefs are utilized to provide a sense of security in times of crisis such as conception, birth, marriage, sickness and death. Stevens (1988) also notes that throughout history occult practices have been around, but:

What is significant is that today, in an era of unparalleled scientific discovery, occult interest seems to be moving from the fringe to the mainstream and seems now to be attracting, possibly, a majority of the people. (Stevens 1988:379).

He goes on to quote some figures from the United States which indicated that in 1984 55% of teenagers (13–18 years) believed that astrology works, which was an increase of 15% from 1978. Francis and Kay's (1995) *Teenage Religion and Values* survey also questioned young people on various beliefs falling into the 'common religion' category, but their study showed that black magic and the authenticity of fortune-tellers was only believed in by 18% and 19% of British young people respectively (51% in both instances disagreed and the remainder were uncertain). As many as 31%, however, believed it was "possible to contact the spirits of the dead" (37% disagreed), 35% believed in their horoscope (34% did not) and 37% believed in ghosts (34% did not). Boyd (1996) found similar figures in his survey of teenage involvement with the occult2. Boyd's survey looked not only at occult belief, but also occult practice amongst young people. In this respect he found, for instance, 56% of young people read their horoscopes at least once a week, 21% had at sometime used

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2 Boyd's survey was aimed at gauging teenager's interest in the occult. The survey was drawn up and carried out in conjunction with Leslie Francis. It covers "509 Year 10 pupils in 5 state secondary schools in England and Northern Ireland" (Boyd 1996:221). The figures from the survey were only slightly different from the *Teenage Religion and Values* survey. Thirty-eight percent of young people believed in their horoscope, 23% that fortune-tellers could tell the future, 41% believed it was possible to contact spirits of the dead, 51% believed in ghosts and 21% believed in black magic (Boyd 1996:233–235).
a ouija board and 10% had consulted tarot cards in order to tell their future. Bruce (1995:104) suggests that rather fewer teenagers have been involved in practices more specifically associated with the New Age movement (eg 5% had been involved in hypnosis, 3% in crystalogy, 3% in reflexology, 3% in channeling and 2% in I Ching), but this is perhaps to be expected in view of the professionalization of these practices which usually require fee-paying consultations, thereby limiting direct access by young people on the basis of cost. Nevertheless the very fact that some, albeit a small minority, of young people are actively involved in these practices indicates that a greater number might be interested in them.

The survey questionnaire in this present study was more concerned with Christian beliefs than beliefs associated with common religion, since its main purpose was to gauge each young person's place on the Christian Religiosity scale. Consequently, only three items were included in the questionnaire which are pertinent to this section - belief in luck, horoscopes and reincarnation. Table 4.1 shows the results of the survey. During the interviews, however, the young people were asked about various common beliefs and practices to try and find out just how seriously such ideas were taken.

Table 4.1 Common religious beliefs by CR score - % agree (n=100%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Belief</th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>CR Score</th>
<th>Cramer's V (p&lt;0.01)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There really is no such a thing as luck</td>
<td>15 (1082)</td>
<td>24 (167)</td>
<td>10 (625)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe in my horoscope</td>
<td>32 (1088)</td>
<td>15 (169)</td>
<td>36 (627)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When people die they come back to life again as someone or something else</td>
<td>20 (1088)</td>
<td>13 (168)</td>
<td>23 (628)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 Figures from the United States suggest that New Agers tend to be middle class and in their mid to late thirties (Hess 1993:5).
Luck is an important concept to consider when trying to understand faith in late modernity because, as Giddens argues, luck links the notion of 'risk' with 'fatefulness'. Fate as such is traditionally concerned with a power which determines the future. It specifies what the future will be, an individual's destiny, and therefore ties in with common religion. Superstitious or fortune telling practices are often concerned with what Fate (the god of fortune or Fortuna) has in store. Giddens argues that in late modernity this traditional notion of fate has been replaced by 'risk'. The future is seen as 'open' and determined by human choice rather than tradition or outside intervention. Consequently, the future is uncertain and problematic. Every effort is then made to try and work out what the future is likely to be by thinking through possible scenarios and calculating risks associated with choices as far as is possible. Giddens refers to this as the 'colonisation of the future'. Late modernity, according to Giddens, is therefore characterised by an obsessive awareness of risk. In this respect expert knowledge becomes important, especially when important decisions are being made, the consequences of which will be significant for an individual's or society's future. Decisions of this kind, or events which impinge on the individual in such a way as to significantly affect his/her future, Giddens refers to as 'fateful moments'. Examples of fateful moments in the lives of the young people in this study included deciding which examinations to take, the results of those exams, and parental divorce; these all had a significant effect on the young people's future. Risks, however, can never be entirely assessed and there will always be unforeseen consequences to actions. It is at this point that luck comes in. Luck is the ordering of events such that they operate in one's favour (good luck) or against one's interests (bad luck). As such, luck can be understood as a concept, midway between Fate as a power which determines the future, and risk as purely random chance events, which have no ordering principle behind them other than the laws of probability. Thus wishing somebody 'good luck' implies that some other factor in addition to chance can be invoked to work in conjunction with the individual's choice to help events reach a desired outcome (the future in this sense is not predetermined and immutable). Luck therefore implies some sort of 'X-factor', something extra to mechanistic probability but less deterministic than Fortuna. The young people in this respect were asked whether or not they believed in the reality of luck.
The results of the survey showed that most (63%) of the young people in this study believed luck was a real element of life. Only 15% agreed with the statement "There is really no such thing as luck". The young people who were most likely to believe in luck were those who were in the medium CR group. Seventy-one percent of those teenagers disagreed with the idea that 'there really is no such thing as luck' compared to 59% of those with low CR scores and 37% of those with high scores. Giddens argues that an awareness of risk is a potential source of existential anxiety. The greater the risk the greater the reliance on luck. In terms of common religion, superstitious practices have traditionally been used in this respect to manipulate luck. Without faith in conventional religion, or enough self-assurance to forego transcendent referents altogether, it could perhaps be expected that young people with medium CR scores are the most likely youngsters to look elsewhere for another potential source of ontological security. In other words, these results are consistent with the idea that this group is the most likely one to contain 'seekers' of alternative transcendent faith referents, and be most open to common religious ideas. During the interviews the young people were asked if they were superstitious or open to alternative means of 'controlling' the future.

Of the 21 interviewees who spoke about superstitions, only 5 actually described themselves as being superstitious. Their acceptance of superstitious practices did seem to be a way of taking control of the future and reducing anxieties about future events. In particular, practices were aimed at avoiding bad luck rather than ensuring good luck. Thus they tried to avoid 'courting bad luck' or 'tempting Fate':

I won't walk under a ladder, and if I walk under scaffolding I'll hold my collar ... because it's unlucky if you don't. ... If my mum's going on holiday and ... we flew on Friday the 13th, I wouldn't go. *What do you think might happen?*  
We would crash [Helen, Agnostic, Medium].

I have quite strong feelings about that, black cats and magpies, ... I suppose I don't want to wish anything bad on me. If you don't really believe in it and say "It's not going to happen to me" then it always does. So it's best to believe in it [Bianca, Uncertain, Low].
Most of the interviewees, however, claimed not to be superstitious. Several of the young people, for instance, dismissed superstitious practices on the same grounds that they dismissed Christian belief; that is, they had no proof of them working, or they could explain incidents associated with superstition rationally, therefore, they were not true. Ben, for instance, made reference to a psychological explanation for good luck charms 'working':

*Do you think good luck charms work?*

Not really. They just make you more confident. I don't know, perhaps make you more confident. So in some ways they might work, in that sense. They don't have any powers or anything [Ben, Atheist, Low].

Alternatively, some of the young people simply preferred to minimize risk and so avoid having to deal with luck at all, especially in relation to fateful moments. The minimizing of risk in this way accords with Giddens' ideas of the reflexive use of abstract systems to colonise the future. Mark was one of the young people who sought to minimize risk. In relation to examinations, for example, he thought that it was better to work to achieve good exams results rather than rely on luck:

I think lucky charms are not needed [in exams]. I mean, it's upon yourself, what you're thinking. It's whether you know the answer or not, just put down what you can. I mean lucky charms won't help you, it's not the lucky charms that's helping, it's yourself. You've got to revise for the exam and work for it yourself. You don't need a lucky charm to help it. It's your personal feelings and writing what you know about the subject really [Mark, Roman Catholic, Medium].

However, despite this recourse to rationality the young people did nevertheless have a stock of superstitious knowledge to hand, just as Christian themes were available to them. And, just as the young people were reluctant to dismiss conventional religion out of hand, they did not completely reject superstitions either, despite seeing the incompatibility of superstition with a rational worldview:

I suppose I am quite superstitious, but you know, when you think about it rationally, there's not much in it [Martin, Church of England, Medium].
Indeed, some of the young people engaged in superstitious action 'just in case', and resolved the conflict between the rational and irrational by providing a sensible explanation of their behaviour:

*Can you tell me, do you have any superstitions?*
No, not really.
*So things like walking under a ladder wouldn't bother you?*
I don't walk under them anyway!
*Why not, if they're there would you not –*
No.
*Would you go out of your way to walk around them?*
Even if I had to walk on the road I would because I just don't like walking under them because I'm frightened something's going to fall down [Ann, Free Church, Medium].

*What about superstitions and stuff? Have you got any superstitions?*
Not really. I mean, I don't think if you walk under a ladder something's going to happen because, I mean, it's only just walking under a ladder, it can't do anything to you. But, I mean, if you're waiting for something to happen and you're hoping for something – I do, sort of, do the crossed fingers thing. But I think that's sort of when you're hoping for something. It makes you all tense and it's sort of just something you do, [but] not ... believing that if you don't cross your fingers it won't happen. I do tend to do things like make a wish when I'm stirring a cake or something ... They don't always come true, but it's something you really hope for so it's an extra thing saying that you're hoping for it [Sharon, Church of England, High].

Sharon was unusual amongst the young people with high CR scores in that she was prepared to retain some superstitious inclination alongside her Christian referents. For her, Towler's (1974) point seemed to ring true that confidence in God is not always easy to achieve even when one has a relatively high degree of Christian faith. From the above it therefore appears to be the case that risk and uncertainty in relation to the future does hold a threat for ontological security and does prompt young people to look for a source of security, especially where conventional beliefs seem implausible.

The young people were also asked in this respect about horoscopes. Just as some superstitions are concerned with omens of future fortune, so horoscopes are designed
to foretell an individual's destiny. According to the current survey, as many as a third of the young people said that they believed in their horoscope. Boyd argues in accordance with this relatively high figure, that the:

... widespread popularity of 'your stars' means astrology is most people's first point of contact with the occult (Boyd, 1996:20).

Again, Table 4.1 shows that it was the youngsters with medium CR scores who were the group most open to believe in their horoscope. Amongst the young people interviewed, however, the reaction tended to be quite sceptical, or at least they wanted to present themselves as rational individuals just as they did when asked about superstitious practices. Several of the youngsters in this respect suggested horoscopes and fortune-telling were nonsense or 'just a bit of harmless fun':

... you shouldn't put your life around it as if: "I've got to read my horoscope this morning, I've got to" ... I think it's a bit of fun as long as you don't take it seriously ...

Well, if you read your horoscope in the newspaper in the morning do you think about it at all during the day?

No, you think about it at the time. I usually read it afterwards [at the end of the day] ... You sort of tend to match it up with things in your day, but I think they're a load of cobbler. Somebody just sits down and writes them. [Pam, Free Church, High].

Others rationalised reading them:

While I don't agree with horoscopes, if you are in a particular situation which may be spoken of in your horoscopes, they can give good, practical advice [Joan, Free Church, High].

Some of the young people went a little further in their evaluation and thought there might possibly be 'something in them' but also indicated during the interview that their belief in astrology was somewhat akin to their belief in God, that is to say, an interesting idea but not something to base life decisions on. Thus Phyllis suggested there might be some truth in horoscopes because she is quite 'true' to her star sign, but also implied that her interest was really out of curiosity rather than conviction and/or
practical application:

_Do you ever read your horoscope?_
Yeah, ... in my magazines and things. I mean sometimes ... you do read it and in the back of your mind you think "Oh perhaps that will happen. I'll watch out and see what does happen". But I'm not like an addict ... I mean the Daily Mail did like a horoscope thing about ... love and friendship in life and that. And you do read it because you're quite interested really to see what it says ... I'm quite true to my star sign, so it's nice to read up about it [Phyllis, Non-Denominational Christian, Medium].

In the above comment Phyllis also points to another significant aspect of belief in horoscopes and luck, that is the connection they have with relationships. In the last chapter I argued that a very important part of the Christian faith for the young people with high CR scores was its relational nature. That is to say, God as a trustworthy, intimate friend was significant for the young people with high CR scores. In terms of common religion, it appears that one of the main functions of belief and practice was also relational, in that common religious referents could serve as a tool to establish whether or not future relationships were worth investing trust in. A recent edition of a popular magazine aimed at teenage girls provided further evidence of this interest in securing successful relationships through mystical practices (see Chapter 7). The young people also tended to relate luck to relational contexts. A good luck charm, for instance, was significant to Alison not because it had any special powers, but because it was from a friend and acted as a memento of that friendship. One could almost say a part of that friend was there with her when she was carrying the charm. Another example of luck being defined in relationship terms was suggested by Keith who said that bad luck was meeting people he did not like. The relational aspect of luck also came through in terms of moral responsibilities in that the young people suggested that there was an obligation to help people who had suffered from bad luck (see Chapter 6).

Much of common religion was therefore about relationships. It was also concerned, however, with the self as well. Various practices such as astrology and palmistry claim to provide insight into the young person's personality and identity. In being
'true' to her star sign Phyllis was aware of certain personality characteristics which were supposed to describe her zodiac sign. She could use this information to build up more of her own self-knowledge. Such self-understanding is not only important in terms of the reflexive construction of identity in late modernity, but according to Giddens is also vital for the establishment of 'pure relationships'. However, some of the young people indicated concern over the validity of mystical practices for accurate self-knowledge. In this respect they were more inclined to trust in the expert systems which relied on 'scientific' authority. Sally's comment below suggests that if scientists (ie the 'experts') cannot read the stars then what hope has anyone else got? Pam on the other hand, draws attention to the dangers of taking the advice of unqualified (ie non-expert) advisors:

Oh I don't believe in them [horoscopes] at all ... I think it's just the things people make up. I mean ... nobody, whether they're scientists or anything, nobody can read from the stars and say how people's lives are going to be [Sally, Agnostic, Medium].

I was watching a programme on it [astrology] the other day ... I don't know, they [some people] depend their whole life on words or sort of a chart or something, and their whole life revolves around it. But what happens if it's something really bad, like: "Go out and jump over a cliff"? Would they do it? It's dangerous if someone who isn't necessarily qualified or whatever is telling someone how to run their life. [Pam, Free Church, High].

Expert systems, as Giddens argues, are therefore important in terms of organising trust in late modernity, and science would certainly still seem to be more plausible than common religious ideas in the eyes of the young people.

The final survey question that was relevant to common religion, related to 'reincarnation'. Reincarnation is perhaps a little different from the beliefs discussed so far, in that it is a belief which seems to have become detached from its base in Eastern forms of conventional religion and adopted by individuals on its own as an explanation of what happens after death. This in itself testifies to the subjective nature of belief in late modernity and also to the influence of globalisation on faith. Just as Christian concepts could be disembodied and reinterpreted to suit the individual so
too could those of other world religions (religions which until relatively recently would not have been available to people in the West). From the current survey only 20% of young people believed that 'when people die they come back to life again as someone or something else'. Most of the teenagers were uncertain as to whether or not they believed this statement whilst the remaining 31% did not agree. Compared to Boyd's survey the proportion of young people believing in reincarnation was quite low. His survey suggested that as many as 35% of young people held this view of life after death. However, the current results are in line with Francis' (1984) survey of church-going youth (aged 13 to 15) where 24% said that they believed in reincarnation. The discrepancy between the current survey and Boyd's study might well lie in the high proportion of young people herein having an awareness of Christian beliefs (however nominally they believed them) through their attendance at a church school. Again, it was the youngsters with medium CR scores who were most likely to believe in reincarnation (23% compared to 13% of high CR scorers and 17% of low CR scorers).

During the interviews several of the young people spoke about why they believed in reincarnation. Much of their opinion was based on 'evidence' from popular television programmes which documented instances of past-life regressions (ie under hypnosis an individual recounts in detail the life of another historical person). Keith, who was in the process of questioning his Christian faith, had begun to consider the possibility of reincarnation and drew upon 'scientific' principles by way of evidence:

> It seems logical to me. I mean the scientific viewpoint, we've just being doing the universe and everything basically, science and the big bang and the big crunch and everything, and how they reckon that it just goes round in circles. I mean if that's the case then why shouldn't everything go round in circles? I mean, it sure as hell seems like it most of the time [Keith, Free Church, High].

By way of contrast, Martin did not believe in reincarnation, but also on the basis of rational grounds. He could not reconcile this with a growing world population – if souls were simply being recycled how could they increase in number?
Another alternative explanation to what happens after death was the possibility of remaining in this world as a ghost or spirit. Francis and Kay (1995) found that 37% of the young people in their survey believed that ghosts existed. The current survey did not ask the teenagers' opinion in this respect, but during the interviews twelve of the youngsters did talk about ghosts. Amongst these young people uncertainty was again evident. In trying to overcome the uncertainty the young people once more spoke about 'scientific evidence':

I've never seen one [a ghost] so I don't know whether to believe in them or not, but I don't know really. ... I sort of do believe in them. I know I've never seen one but there's quite a lot of evidence and things like that, that sort of relate, you know, shows that perhaps there is [Phyllis, Non-Denominational Christian, Medium].

Other young people who more certainly believed in ghosts gained their evidence from personal or a friend's experiences, or via newspapers and television. Mark, for instance, had experienced paranormal phenomena in his own home and his grandparents' house. He hoped they related to his mother (who had died of cancer) watching over him:

*Do you believe in ghosts and things?*

Yeah, I do actually. It sounds a bit stupid but we've had our ghostly events in our family. In my house we'd be sitting downstairs and you'd hear the floorboards creak upstairs and we'd be wondering "Who's that, who's that?" I mean, it isn't my dog, it isn't my gerbils because they just can't get out of their bed or their cage and walk. I think it could be, I mean, it sounds silly, but your mum; you never know who's looking at you. It could be your mum, like my mum could be looking over me. Or someone else could be looking over you who's lived in the house before, because there has been evidence of Victorians hanging around the area because of coins being found in the ground. And there's also one event at my grandparents' house when the radio automatically switched on whilst they were in bed. There was no timer on it or anything, and of course one of the pictures had been turned around without no-one knowing [Mark, Roman Catholic, Medium].

Mark, whilst apparently somebody who believed in ghosts and indeed derived a degree of comfort from the thought that his mother might still be watching over him and
caring for him, nevertheless used the disclaimer in the above comment that 'it sounds a bit stupid'. As with superstition and horoscopes this again indicates a hesitancy to believe in something beyond the material world. In this respect, however, two young people suggested that belief in ghosts was more plausible than belief in God precisely because they were more materialistically based. Susan, for instance, pointed out that ghosts are at least people who have actually lived before:

... if you've not seen ghosts, can you tell me why that sounds more plausible than belief in God?
Well, because for a start you know these people have actually lived, because they're supposed to be people that have died and they've sort of come back to haunt people, or have sort of hung around their house or something. I don't know. Well God, he just, nobody sees him do they. And people claim they've heard him, but I mean there's so few people that have actually heard the voice of God that it just doesn't seem really realistic, whereas quite a few people have had experiences with ghosts, you know, sort of presences in the house and just things like that [Susan, Atheist, Low].

Belief in ghostly existence after death, however, did not necessarily bring a sense of security to the young people since horror stories had tended to label this as a threatening area. Indeed, they had seen enough horror films to be wary of more involved occult practices such as spiritualism:

I can't prove that there's anything on the other side so I'm not going to try it just in case it's not very nice [Simon, Agnostic, Medium].

One final suggestion put forward by two young people in relation to the possibility of life after death very much reflected an individual, autonomous sacred cosmos. They suggested that the experience of death or 'out of body' experiences depended on what the individual believed. That is to say, death is what you want to make it:

I think it's really, you know, what you want to believe is going to happen. I mean if you want to believe that you are going to go and join your family, then [when you die] you're going to see your family there waiting for you and stuff, you know. I think, I don't know, I just reckon it's just all in the mind [Alison, Atheist, Low].
I think it's how the person was, what religion they were brought up in. Say they were to believe in God and everything, they'd think they'd be going up some stairs going to heaven [Mike, Atheist, Low].

It is important to note here too that, as mentioned above, it was the medium CR scorers who were the most open to believing in common religious themes. Christianity had been pushed to the side as irrelevant and these young people were prepared to consider alternative sources of transcendent referents – the elusive 'X-factor'. The teenagers with low CR scores were slightly more inclined to stay within a rational worldview, though again not all were. The high CR scorers were the least likely to accept common religious beliefs. Indeed, some of them seemed to perceive these referents as a threat to their Christian faith and, therefore, to include such items in their sacred cosmos could undermine rather than support their ontological security.

Luck, for instance, suggests there is an element of life which is not under God's control. Thus the idea of an omnipotent God is called into question, thereby weakening his ability to act as an effective 'protective cocoon'. Horoscopes and reincarnation again suggest alternative explanations for events which do not tie in with traditional Christian thought and, if accepted, could destroy the certainty afforded by the Christian sacred universe. Faced with the plurality of views available to young people in late modernity, the young Christians had to find a way to reassure themselves that their chosen truth was 'the Truth'. This was accomplished by some by rationalising superstitious practice in terms of harmless behaviour, as in Sharon's case above, or by explaining alternative beliefs as evil and therefore part of the non-trustworthy realm of Satan:

And also like the star signs and that, I don't believe them simply because I know that Jesus holds my future and only he knows what's going to happen to me, no one else. I mean sometimes like the Devil can foresee the future but only so far [Julie, Free Church, High].

I do not read horoscopes therefore I cannot say whether they are true. ... I do not like to get involved because I do not want to know my future and it is against God. I believe horoscopes do speak truth but it is a message from the Devil [Polly, Free Church, High].

Some religions are very dark and dangerous because they have spiritual
influences that are evil – eg Buddhism, spiritual churches, cults ... This is why I don't read my horoscope [Ruth, Free Church, High].

On the whole, however, the young people's attitudes towards common religion were similar to their attitudes towards Christianity. They were familiar with aspects of common religious beliefs but were uncertain as to whether or not they believed them. At the same time they were also reluctant to dismiss supernatural ideas as untrue, the common religious 'X-factor' was always a possibility in the back of their minds. Before committing themselves to a definite acceptance of belief the young people called for 'evidence' of validity just as they did in relation to the Christian sacred universe. Given the importance of rational evidence in this respect, both in terms of conventional Christianity and common religion, science was therefore considered as another possible basis for faith amongst young people today.

4.2 Scientific Rationality

In Chapter 1 I argued that various social theorists saw the onset of the Enlightenment and the move into modernity as a potential threat to the Christian sacred universe in that it brought into operation a rational scientific paradigm which had no need of a transcendent deity to explain how the world operated and the place of humankind in that world. Human rationality would explain all. Social theory therefore predicted that religious beliefs of various sorts would become increasingly redundant. To a certain extent the sociological literature supports that prediction and, from the data presented in Chapter 3, it was evident that for most of the young people taking part in this study Christian symbolism was largely irrelevant on a day-to-day basis. Similarly, whilst interest in the supernatural ideas of common religion were available and quite interesting to young people (especially when compared to conventional religion), the teenagers nevertheless did not really put their faith in them. In fact, it seems that rather than take a 'leap of faith' the young people preferred to weigh up any ideas of a religious or supernatural nature against experience, be that personal experience or the experience of other trusted individuals, and consider them in relation
to rational, materialistic principles. In other words, the young people seemed to be well established in a version of the early modern paradigm of rational empiricism where, in the end, it is scientific experts who have authority, they decide what is to count as 'truth', what it is admissible to believe and what is not:

I'm not sure in what to believe. I feel more confident in the scientific theories rather than religious ones [Harold, Uncertain, Medium].

In this respect it should be noted, however, that the young people's experience and understanding of the scientific enterprise was somewhat restricted. They were seeking certainty in their beliefs and science seemed to provide it because usually it was the least controversial aspects of science which were taught in school and through the media. Consequently the dynamic nature of science was obscured. Moreover, because science was seen as providing 'facts' it was thought to be a good basis on which to judge the validity of ideas relating to transcendent referents, be that in terms of Christian or common religious concepts. The young people understood science as being able to 'prove' things rather than just providing theories which would be retained until experience disproved them. Where belief could not be proven correct some of the young people saw ideas relating to transcendent referents as childish wishful thinking:

I know a lot about God through RE, you know, and things like that ... I mean I sit down and do the work. I mean, because like it's what I've got to do. ... The lessons are OK, the teacher's alright. I don't ever contradict what he has to say ... if I say "Well hang on a minute, how can you prove that's true?", ... he'll say "Well you're right, you can't prove that's true, but it's what I believe". And so, I mean it's just like a kid who believes there's a ghost in the house. Do you believe in ghosts? No. they're just a figment of someone's imagination. [Maggie, Agnostic, Low].

The need for scientific proof was no more so evident than when the young people discussed their attitudes towards the Bible. With the exception of some of those who scored highly on the CR scale, most of the young people did not read the Bible let
alone see it as authoritative. Only 16% of the young people in this study read the Bible at least once a month of their own choosing. Instead, they tended to subject the contents of the Bible to the authority of science in order to decide whether or not it was true. That is not to say that they necessarily thought the Bible was useless for life today (only 26% of the youngsters thought this) but the usefulness was more in terms of guiding moral behaviour than finding 'truth'. Where rational, natural explanations could be provided for events described in the Bible, the whole basis of Christianity was then open to question as far as some of the young people were concerned; particularly if they had little commitment to the Christian faith in the first place. This finding is entirely in accordance with Martin and Pluck's study in the 1970s.

4 The correlation in terms of CR score was quite strong here as one would expect. 71% of young people with high CR scores read the Bible at least once a month compared to 10% of medium scorers and 1% of low scorers. In this respect, Francis records in his study of church-going youth that:

... daily Bible reading is not an activity much enjoyed or practised by ... thirteen to fifteen year old church-goers. Just 2% of the Roman Catholics, 6% of the Anglicans and 13% of the Free Church members of this age group read the Bible for themselves every day (Francis 1984:66).

By way of comparison with an adult population, Fisher et al (1992) surveyed 445 adults aged 15 and over (45% were over 60 years old) who could mainly be classified as educationally well-qualified. This population it was felt might be relatively well disposed towards reading the Bible, yet it was found that only 18% claimed to read it daily and only a further 17% on a weekly basis. It seems that Bible reading is not much enjoyed by any age group.
From Table 4.2, for instance, it can be seen that very few of the medium to low scoring young people believed in a literal interpretation of the biblical account of creation or miracles. Slightly more believed in the central Christian belief of Christ's resurrection, but not many, especially amongst the low scorers. From the argument presented in Chapter 3, it is reasonable to suppose that some of the young people with medium CR scores who indicated that they 'believed' in the resurrection did so only nominally. In other words, it was part of the 'Christian package' available to them. They had no other explanation for it (whereas they did for the other beliefs mentioned) and so let it stand until further notice. The following comments provide an indication of the teenagers' tendency to place a priority on natural explanations of biblical accounts:

[Jesus just appeared to be 'walking on water' because] there is a sand bank under the surface of the Sea of Galilee [Sophie, Roman Catholic, Medium].

How come dinosaurs and cavemen are not explained in the Bible and some science contradicts religion? [Charles, Uncertain, Medium].

... there was a storm with Jesus calming the storm. Scientifically it's been proven that there are storms in the lake because it's a valley and they come and go, and it's like a minute or so. 
*Do you think that can explain the sort of miracle?*
Yeah, there are things that can be explained [Louise, Roman Catholic, Medium].

I don't believe that God created the world for a start. Like I don't believe that somebody just came along and said "Right, let there be light" and all this. ... I think the scientific sort of explanation is quite good. ... It just sort of starts from there because, I mean, if he didn't create the world he didn't do anything else really [Susan, Atheist, Low].

Even amongst those with higher CR scores there was some doubt about the literal truth of biblical narratives on the basis of scientific understanding:

... the main question which I find interesting after reading a book called The Jesus Conspiracy is whether or not the Bible's right and whether or not it is actually a conspiracy, which sounds really sort of alarmist but in a way it was a very interesting book. It was about how – do you know the Turin Shroud? – about how it may be scientific proof that Jesus actually didn't rise from the dead which was kind of quite a disturbing thought really because so much is based around it [Keith, Free Church, High].

As I mentioned in Section 4.1 above, this emphasis on the validity of natural or rational explanations also served in the interests of common religion for some youngsters, in that ghosts and superstitions were sometimes regarded as being more empirically available. For some young people, the priority of rational explanations, however, was so important that it ruled out the possibility of an authentic miracle. For these youngsters a miracle was not a miracle if it could be explained naturally, and if there was not a natural explanation then it could not have happened at all. It seems that for some this would be their position even if, like Thomas in the New Testament, they experienced a miracle and, as it were, 'touched the wounds' themselves:

What would make you more sure of your belief about God?
To see him.
What, physically coming in here?
No, because it could be anyone. Like he could do something that would make me know.
Like what?
I don't know. ...
If he made someone who was really sick well, would that [do]?
Yeah, something like that.
That would be good evidence for you?
Well, it would and it wouldn't be.
Why not?
Because she might have been getting better and you didn't know about it. [Helen, Agnostic, Medium].

There was, however, also a widespread recognition that science does not have all the answers to the world's problems. In this respect Table 4.2 shows that out of all the young people in this study only 30% believed that one day everything will be explained by science (as expected, this attitude was mostly found amongst those young people who scored lowest on the CR scale). In another survey, Francis (1992) also found that only 16% of young people thought that science had disproved religion, compared to 51% who were uncertain and 33% who disagreed. The position of the young people therefore seems to be in line with Barker's (1979) description in the 1970s. That is to say, the young people recognized that science cannot provide all the answers to what life is about, but it is important that religious beliefs do not contradict scientific findings. In this respect the onus was therefore on Christian young people to defend their faith either by finding 'evidence' that the belief was true or by reinterpreting the Christian faith along rational lines, or perhaps to undermine a challenging scientific explanation altogether:

You know, evolution, I don't agree with that ... I believe God created man and woman at a set time. I don't agree with fishes growing into crocodiles and monkeys into humans. I think scientists are always looking for the missing link, whether it's a fish with legs, you know. So they haven't quite got it all together. [Rebecca, Free Church, High].

... however the world began, whether it was the big bang theory or God created it in seven days, or whatever, ... God was behind it and he created the big bang, or he created the apes or he created whatever. [Pam, Free Church, High].

When looking at questions such as Jesus walked on water we must consider the symbolic element of the Bible and allegorical qualities. [Freda, Church of England, High].

My belief in life after death/resurrection is science based. It stems
from carbon dissipation and re-absorption [Fred, Agnostic, Medium].

For the young people, like Rebecca, who did want to adopt a literal interpretation of the Bible, the general emphasis on scientific compatibility led to a degree of contradiction in terms of following science courses at school. The strategy they adopted was to respond in class according to standard scientific teaching (eg evolutionary theory) rather than according to their interpretation of biblical understanding (eg creationist views). This meant that they did not create problems for themselves in school. They remained clear in their own minds, however, that they did not believe in views which contradicted a literal biblical understanding. It should also be noted at this point, however, that even these young people gave no indication that they were 'anti-science' as such. They simply gave precedence to the Bible as they understood it. Where they did not perceive a clash between science and their religious beliefs then there was no evidence in the current data that a scientific point of view was unacceptable to them.

It therefore seems that whilst science may be able to provide information necessary for a rationally informed, reflexive inquiry into existential questions, the extent to which the young people invested faith in science per se as a means of achieving ontological security was limited. For the most part, the search for identity via psychotherapy, for instance, or through other reasonably reputable scientific means of self-analysis (as opposed to the parapsychological methods of self-understanding) was beyond the scope of the young people in this study. A sense of hope or purpose in life was not generally found to be linked with science either. Having said that, there was little evidence of a disillusionment with science or a sense of 'radical doubt' resulting from the destructive potential of technological advance or the moral dilemmas some scientific developments have produced (see Chapter 6). Science contributed to the ontological security of young people in that it offered a base-line or tool by which to judge what is 'true'; consequently it tended to root 'truth' in the mundane reality of the material world. The fact that the young people did not completely disregard transcendent referents and that science did not appear to directly answer the existential questions, however, suggests that science itself was not entirely
adequate as a basis of faith. Science filters out implausible answers to existential questions and, insofar as the plausible explanations remain intact, they are strengthened and made a surer foundation for ontological security. However, when science challenges the plausibility of beliefs the foundations of faith are shaken, hence science can be quite threatening, especially to the more fundamentalist strands of conventional religion. Nevertheless, science did not in and of itself provide the young people with existential meaning, hope and purpose — it seems that that had to be found elsewhere.

The one area where the 'scientific' worldview did overlap a little more directly with the unknown Other or transcendent realm was in terms of extra-terrestrial or alien life forms. Extra-terrestrial life forms allude to 'science' insofar as their portrayal through the media, be it in documentary or fictional form, is usually expressed within a 'quasi-scientific' discourse. From the current survey, 41% of the young people overall agreed that there probably is life on other planets, and again it was the young people with less commitment to the Christian sacred universe who were most likely to accept this belief. This is a greater proportion of young people than believed in Jesus' resurrection, his miracles or the biblical account of creation. Indeed, overall the results suggest that more young people regard aliens as a credible possibility than they do God. Only three youngsters actually spoke about these extra-terrestrial life forms in the interviews though. Generally they thought that since the universe is so big, the chances are that there is life out there somewhere. Stories about unidentified flying objects, however, were given the same treatment as stories about God — if a natural explanation was available to explain events then this was the preferred option:

Well, for some cases they [UFO sightings] might be true, some I totally disagree with; it's a camera trick or whatever [Peter, Roman Catholic, Low].

Science, therefore, plays an important part in young people's understanding of the world but more as a validation of faith items rather than the locus of faith itself.
4.3 Common Religion And Scientific Rationality According To Gender And Religious Identity

Having looked at the young people's beliefs generally in terms of common religion and a rational scientific worldview, I now turn to the survey data to consider differences according to gender and religious identity.

4.3.1 Gender

The results in Table 4.3 suggest that for the majority of boys and girls alike, a literal biblical understanding is problematic and belief in reincarnation has a similar degree of appeal to girls and boys. The survey results do suggest, however, that boys are slightly more empirically orientated than girls, in that more boys believe in the explanatory power of science than do girls, and more girls than boys believe in luck. This difference is emphasized in relation to belief in horoscopes vis-a-vis belief in life on other planets. Assuming horoscopes are associated with common religion and life on other planets is seen in terms of a quasi-scientific belief (as suggested above), it seems that on the whole girls are more open to common religious beliefs than are boys.

In Chapter 3, I suggested that part of the explanation for the girls' greater openness to religion was differential socialization – girls were prepared for the private world of home, family and relationships, whereas boys were more prepared for the public world of paid employment. It was also suggested that there is less stigma attached to girls drawing comfort from religious belief and being dependent on someone/something outside of themselves, than there is for boys who are trying to establish their masculinity with its traditional characteristics of independence and rationality. This differential socialization may again contribute to an explanation of the figures in this chapter. Boys traditionally have been steered towards studying 'rational' subjects at school, maths, physics, chemistry, and girls towards arts and humanities. Thus boys are channelled more specifically into an empirical rational worldview to a greater extent than are girls. Consequently girls may be less bound
to a 'this-worldly' perspective and better able to conceive of transcendent realities. To return to Chapter 3, 23% of boys compared to only 14% of girls, for instance, thought of God as a 'higher power', a view that seems to have more resonance with a scientific worldview, where impersonal forces are more acceptable than a view of God which is personal. Girls also tend to have greater access to horoscopes through teenage magazines than do boys and these are attractive reading insofar as they deal with what the youngsters are most concerned about, that is relationships (see Chapter 5). Science fiction, on the other hand, might well have a greater male audience, especially since major themes in much science fiction relate to invasion and/or domination which are traditionally masculine themes.

Table 4.3: Common religion and scientific rationality by gender – % agree (n=100%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Belief</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Cramer's V (p&lt;0.01)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There really is no such a thing as luck</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(531) (551)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe in my horoscope</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>0.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(535) (553)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When people die they come back to life again as someone or something else</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(534) (554)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God really did make the world in six days and rested on the seventh</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(535) (550)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesus really did walk on water</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(533) (550)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesus really rose from the dead</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(535) (552)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One day everything will be explained by science</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(532) (552)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is probably intelligent life on other planets</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(532) (548)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.3.2 Religious Identity

The differences in belief according to religious identity very clearly draw attention to the more traditional orthodox stance of the Free Church young people, compared to the other groups. They were the least likely of any of the religious identity groups to believe in the common religious themes or empirical rational beliefs and most likely to stick to belief in miracles. In comparison, from Table 4.4 it seems that the Roman Catholics, Church of England and Non-Denominational young people were not so different in their beliefs from the Agnostics, Atheists and Uncertains. This reflects a degree of nominalism amongst these other Christian groups. In this respect, it was also interesting to see that a number of the Atheists did not entirely reject belief in common religious themes or believe science had all the answers. A quarter of the Atheists, for instance, did not believe that one day science would explain everything, 60% refused to say there was really no such thing as luck and 35% believed in their horoscopes. The young Atheists in this study were not therefore operating with a purely empirical worldview. They were prepared to conceive of other esoteric ideas.

These results and the comments from the questionnaire confirm the suggestion made in Chapter 3 that Free Church members hold more conservative Christian beliefs compared with the other groups and consequently scored more highly on the CR scale. It was argued above that both common religion and science can be taken as potential threats to the Christian sacred universe and undermine its effectiveness as a 'protective cocoon' from existential anxiety. The results here confirm other work on Conservative Protestants which suggests that they tend to hold disproportionately negative views of science. Surveying adult belief in the United States, Ellison and Musick, for instance, suggest that Conservative Protestants tend to regard science negatively on moral grounds, partly because of their theological orientation of which they identify three strands — biblical literalism, belief in the ubiquity of sin and theological orthodoxy.\(^5\)

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\(^5\) Biblical literalism refers to the belief that the Bible is the inerrant word of God, therefore everything it contains is literally true. Scientific theories which challenge the Biblical portrayal of events (eg evolutionary theory's challenge to creationism) consequently must be rejected. Theological orthodoxy in Ellison and Musick's study refers primarily to authority and the "importance of Scripture, Church teachings, and pastoral leadership" (Ellison and Musick...
They also found that Conservative Protestants are more likely "to hold pragmatic reservations" and so reject the idea that "Science will solve our social problems like crime and mental illness" (Ellison and Musick 1995:249). They explain this view more in terms of the rhetoric of the New Christian Right, however, than as a consequence of a theological stance. In contrast to the Free Church members, the Roman Catholic youngsters in this study seem to be more tolerant of common beliefs. I suggested in Chapter 3 that one of the reasons for these differences in orthodoxy might lie partly in the difference between communal and associational belonging, and the perception of the Bible as a source of authority. I argued that where the Bible is of prime importance and church members consciously choose to become a part of the denomination and take on board all its teachings, as is the tendency particularly in Free Church membership, there is less scope for the improvisation of belief. To this might be added the observation that Roman Catholicism has a more diverse expression of the Christian sacred universe in terms of ritual expression, etc, compared to the Protestant Free Churches. A broader view within the Christian context might in this sense make for a greater accommodation of supernatural ideas more generally. As for the non-Christian groups, all are more willing to accept the alternative beliefs than the Christian groups are, which is to be expected since these beliefs do not pose a threat to them.

1995:247). Thus science as an alternative authority could be regarded as threatening. The ubiquity of sin suggests that sin is everywhere, including science, and therefore science may either result in discoveries which are used for malevolent purposes or may simply turn people away from Christian ideas.
### Table 4.4: Common religion and scientific rationality by religious identity –% agree (n=100%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Belief</th>
<th>RC</th>
<th>FC</th>
<th>CoE</th>
<th>Non-Denom</th>
<th>Ag</th>
<th>Ath</th>
<th>Uncert</th>
<th>Cramer’s V (p&lt;0.01)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There really is no such a thing as luck</td>
<td>12 (216)</td>
<td>30 (61)</td>
<td>14 (209)</td>
<td>13 (46)</td>
<td>11 (211)</td>
<td>19 (129)</td>
<td>14 (165)</td>
<td>0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe in my horoscope</td>
<td>33 (216)</td>
<td>13 (61)</td>
<td>28 (212)</td>
<td>22 (45)</td>
<td>37 (212)</td>
<td>35 (130)</td>
<td>38 (166)</td>
<td>0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When people die they come back to life again as someone or something else</td>
<td>17 (214)</td>
<td>10 (61)</td>
<td>19 (212)</td>
<td>17 (46)</td>
<td>21 (212)</td>
<td>23 (130)</td>
<td>22 (167)</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God really did make the world in six days and rested on the seventh</td>
<td>16 (216)</td>
<td>79 (61)</td>
<td>27 (212)</td>
<td>26 (46)</td>
<td>2 (211)</td>
<td>4 (129)</td>
<td>13 (166)</td>
<td>0.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesus really did walk on water</td>
<td>26 (215)</td>
<td>72 (61)</td>
<td>29 (210)</td>
<td>13 (46)</td>
<td>3 (211)</td>
<td>3 (129)</td>
<td>13 (167)</td>
<td>0.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesus really rose from the dead</td>
<td>58 (216)</td>
<td>89 (61)</td>
<td>52 (212)</td>
<td>30 (46)</td>
<td>12 (212)</td>
<td>4 (130)</td>
<td>23 (166)</td>
<td>0.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One day everything will be explained by science</td>
<td>25 (216)</td>
<td>8 (61)</td>
<td>22 (211)</td>
<td>28 (46)</td>
<td>33 (210)</td>
<td>46 (130)</td>
<td>36 (165)</td>
<td>0.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is probably intelligent life on other planets</td>
<td>48 (216)</td>
<td>16 (61)</td>
<td>40 (211)</td>
<td>25 (44)</td>
<td>40 (209)</td>
<td>52 (128)</td>
<td>42 (166)</td>
<td>0.18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: RC = Roman Catholic; FC = Free Church; CoE = Church of England; Non-Denom = Non-Denominational Christian; Ag = Agnostic; Ath = Atheist; Uncert = Uncertain.

#### 4.4 Common Religion And Scientific Rationality In Late Modernity

I began this chapter by asking whether young people are disillusioned by science and so, given their lack of interest in Christianity, are turning to alternative transcendent forces for their faith; or whether it is more the case that young people prefer to trust in rational scientific understandings of the world in order to give their life existential meaning, hope and purpose. The answer to this question from the above analysis appears to be that both common religion and science have an input into the young people's search for meaning but neither provides a sufficient basis for faith.
Young people, it seems, are aware that the future is uncertain but Christianity is disregarded by most of them as a source of faith. However, it appears that young people are prepared to consider other transcendent referents encapsulated in common religion. In contrast to conventional orthodox Christianity, common religion as a means of dealing with existential anxiety has the advantage that it allows individuals to choose for themselves which ideas to accept and which to reject (this fits in well with the characterisation of late modernity as the age of the reflexive autonomous individual) and also does not require much commitment from the individual. Even so, the young people in the study were unable to derive their faith from common religion, mainly because they were uncertain as to the validity of common religious beliefs, just as they were uncertain about the validity of Christianity. Martin and Pluck found the same amongst the young people in their study:

... the internal incoherence of belief ... can tolerate any degree of inconsistency [but] it seems very intolerant of uncertainty. What causes unease is not an overall lack of consistency in a system but detailed factual lacunae. To the question "What would make you believe?" the typical answer is "More facts" (Martin and Pluck, 1977:23–24).

It appears that young people want to know that any basis of faith they may adopt is at least plausible, if not proven to be true. The gauge by which to judge validity in this respect is science, but from the young people's point of view science generally seems to undermine transcendent referents. Science itself, however, does not provide a sufficient basis for faith either, in that it is not used to provide wholly adequate answers to existential questions. It could perhaps provide the young people with a mechanistic understanding of how things work or suggest whether a particular understanding of the world could possibly hold true, but it was not used to provide the majority of young people with existential meaning, hope and purpose. Science essentially left the young person alone in the world. Caught between the uncertainty of religion (both conventional and common), and the emptiness of empirical rationality, where then did the majority of young people find their 'courage to be' in late modernity? This is the question addressed in the next chapter.
Chapter Five

INVISIBLE RELIGION

The last two chapters have considered the place of conventional religion, common religion and science as a basis of faith in late modernity. From the analysis of the survey and interview data it seems that transcendent referents have little real significance for the majority of young people on a daily basis. On the whole, empirical rationality propagated through science holds much more sway with the youngsters. Meaning is therefore largely understood as 'explanation' and science provides a rational, causal explanation as to how things came to be the way they are. Having said that, however, science as such was not generally used by the young people to provide answers to existential questions and so, whilst giving the youngsters some form of meaning, did not in itself provide ontological security. Science in effect provides the test for truth, truth being understood as 'empirical fact'. It determines the plausibility of various assertions upon which faith can be based without actually being a faith referent in its own right. In the face of difficulties, or a major life event, the young people therefore have to look elsewhere to find 'the courage to be'. Some of the youngsters in this respect did look to customary or common religious beliefs and practices to try and find the assurance and security they required, but their use of the transcendent referents in this way was only temporary and lacked the emotional and cognitive commitment which faith requires. This was partly because the transcendent referents they had in mind were too fragmented and uncertain to offer a 'protective cocoon' against existential angst on a long-term basis. In the main, customary and common religious beliefs and practices were retained 'just in case' and operated on a short-term basis. Faced with this scenario, the question then arises as to what actually constitutes the faith of young people in late modernity? Or is it perhaps the case that they are without faith and experiencing a sense of anomic, alienation, meaningless or radical doubt as Giddens and Tillich suggest? In response to these questions, the aim of this chapter is to try and broaden the search for the faith of young people by looking for it from the perspective of Luckmann's
notion of 'invisible' religion as discussed in Chapter 1. In order to do this a more 'grounded' approach to the data was taken compared to the analysis conducted for Chapters 3 and 4 (see Chapter 2). The young people were asked to talk about what were the most important things in life for them, what they liked to do in their spare time, what they planned to do in the future and what were their most memorable events in their lives to date. On the basis of this information, I aimed to uncover the latent faith themes in the young people's everyday lives.

5.1 Invisible Themes Of The Modern Sacred Cosmos

From the European Values Survey and the British Values Survey, Robinson (1994:129) argues that most people believe that life has meaning. Very few individuals take a nihilistic view of life. However, Robinson goes on to say that, amongst the non-churchgoing population, at least, few people actually go on to think about what that meaning might be. One might say they simply answer this question at a preconscious level, expressing meaning through everyday behaviour, as Giddens suggests. From the uncertainty that characterised the responses of most of the young people in this study, the same could possibly be said here. Nevertheless during the interviews, the youngsters' comments identified two inter-related sources of faith:

I love me and my family and friends. No other Gods. I believe in myself. [Lisa, Uncertain, Medium].

Faith, for most of the young people in this study, was in some sense centred on (a) significant others, that is, family and/or close friends; and (b) the reflexive self. These referents were therefore explored in detail in order to understand how they relate to the organisation of trust and how they help establish ontological security.
5.1.1 Faith, Family And Friends

In Chapter 1, family members, as primary care-givers, were identified as a source of proximate meaning to the infant and young child. It is they who, in the early years of the young person's life, interpret the immediate world. Ideally care-givers also provide the child with a sense of security and permanency and meet his/her material needs. Thus care-givers generally communicate to the child that 'everything is all right'. In other words, they provide the infant with 'basic trust'. It was clear from the young people taking part in this study that family generally retained an important role for them in adolescence too. Family members were a source of existential meaning, hope and purpose; in other words, faith was invested in them. In addition, the teenagers had faith in a few close friends who proved themselves to be trustworthy. When asked what was the most important thing in life for them, the young people therefore placed family and close friends at the top of the list. Time spent with family and friends was often a source of pleasure and happiness, with family holidays being given as one of the happy, memorable events in several of the interviewees' lives. Family was celebrated through rituals such as birthdays, weddings and Christmas. Looking to the future, hope for many of the youngsters lay in the prospect of one day having a family of their own:

My family makes me very happy. I love being around my family, especially my mum and dad and my mum's parents. ... we're a very, very close family and we always have been. Even though me and my sister do argue a lot, we are really close. And my friends as well are very important and my boyfriend. So I think, I don't know, the environment of my family ... makes me the happiest, being at home [Pam, Free Church, High].

What would you say was the most important thing in life for you?
Just to be happy really.
Can you say what that means?
Just getting married, have kids, and live happily ever after, like in a fairy tale or something [Helen, Agnostic Medium].

There were two main reasons why the young people felt family and close friends were important to them: firstly, they recognised the support and a sense of belonging these
relationships provided, and secondly they gave the young person a sense of positive identity (the young person could think well of him/herself).

The support the young people received from family was of different sorts. At the most basic level the youngsters recognized their economic dependence on the family to provide for their material wellbeing. All of the interviewees in this respect were living with at least one family member who met their material needs. Beyond economic welfare, however, the young people valued family and close friends because they offered moral support in terms of self-realisation, and emotional support through acceptance of the self.

Moral support was given by family and friends taking an active interest in the young person's life and their hopes for the future. They provided encouragement as well as practical help so that the teenagers might reach their full potential:

... he's [Father] really supportive. He helps me with my education a lot. ... when it comes to studying he will do anything to help me. He'd spend all the money he has to help me [John, Free Church, High].

My dad, he didn't really know anything about it [rugby] at all. I came out and told him that it would be nice to go to the club and since then he's quite hooked on it. He knows all the rules and everything now!

*Did you have to teach him?*
Yeah, he stood on the sideline watching and asking other people what was going on and that. My mum comes and watches but I don't think she understands what's going on really. She only knows how to get a try and that.

*So do you like it when they go along to watch you?*
Yeah. My dad comes every week to watch, but my mum has to look after my sister ... She comes once a month to the big games and that [Godfrey, Roman Catholic, Medium].

The emotional support family and close friends provided, however, was the most salient aspect of relationships for the young people. They needed and valued others who would listen, talk through worries and problems with them and give advice where necessary. This applied just as much to the boys as to the girls, despite the pressures that were sometimes put on the boys to conform to a male stereotype of self-
sufficiency and independence:

I'd rather know that, like if I've got a problem I can go to someone I trust and that, rather than have to keep it all to myself. It's good to know other people are there [Simon, Agnostic, Medium].

*What is it about your friends which you like?*
When I'm upset and that they'll come to me and give me advice and that, and comfort me. That's what I like about them. And then I like to play around and play and chat to them and that.

*So they're sort of supportive?*
Yeah, very supportive. [Mark, Roman Catholic, Medium].

Trust, as Simon's comment shows, was therefore invested in family and close friends and was a vital component of intimate relationships involving confidences. Indeed, if the youngster did not trust the other person s/he was not inclined to reveal to them important aspects of him/herself, the risk of the self being undermined was too great. The trust the young people spoke about had various elements to it. For somebody to be counted as trustworthy in the eyes of the young people ideally they:

(a) Had to be recognised as having the young person's best interests at heart.

(b) Understand the young person's dilemma.

(c) Be willing to help, if appropriate, either practically, through informed advice or just by being somebody who would listen to them whilst they worked through the problem for themselves.

(d) Would respect confidentiality.

(e) Would not place guilt or shame on the young person. In this respect Giddens makes a useful distinction between shame and guilt. Guilt relates to the morality of an action. It is a feeling engendered in the individual when s/he recognizes s/he has done something wrong. Shame, however, relates more directly to the self, it refers to the inadequacy of the self. It is a feeling engendered when the individual recognizes him/herself is something wrong.

Since few individuals fully matched up to these criteria, the young people would often implicitly 'weigh up' which of these components was more important to them before
deciding who would be the most appropriate person to share a particular confidence with. Parents, for instance, were usually trusted in terms of being concerned for the young person's welfare, being in a position to offer good advice and usually would not be seen as the source of shame. Lack of understanding and the potential to impose guilt was sometimes more of a problem. Thus the young people indicated that they might avoid talking to parents if it was likely to get them into trouble (ie the avoidance of guilt) or if the parents were unlikely to identify with the youngster's situation. Under these circumstances the young people often chose to talk to their close friends or siblings instead:

I think it would be lonely without it [friendship] because you can't go home and like tell all your deep darkest secrets to your parents, because they'd be absolutely shocked, like "Oh my God!". Whereas with your friends you can just say things and they don't say "Oh" like that. [Penelope, Roman Catholic, Medium].

... do you talk to your mum fairly freely? Not about problems ... we talk about homework and school and friends, but I mainly speak to my friends if I've got problems I think. And do you find that they help you? Yeah, well, it depends who it is, because I've got a couple of closer friends, but they're better on something that they've, sort of, had or that they're doing. So would you talk to them about boyfriends and stuff like that? Yeah [Samantha, Agnostic, Medium].

The risk of sharing confidences with peers lay more in the fact that they might not have the young person's best interests at heart or be able to give appropriate help. They were also potentially a source of shame rather than guilt. It was the reduced potential for shame that marked out family and close friendships as being different from less intimate relationships and the key to this lay in acceptance of the self despite all its shortcomings. On the whole, family members were expected by the youngsters to accept each other for 'who they are' rather than what they could

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1 This is not, of course, to say that parental relations do not produce shame (indeed, in cases where this happens the effect might be much more profound than that induced by friends) or that friends do not make each other feel guilty. It is to say, however, that on the basis of the young people's comments in this study peers are a greater risk in terms of shame than parents.
contribute to the relationship. This implies not only acceptance of the 'nicer' aspects of another person, but acceptance of the whole person 'warts and all'. It also implies a degree of forgiveness may be necessary in the face of foibles and difficulties:

... when you're with your family you're so completely at ease and you don't mind, you know, and you just accept each other for what you are [Keith, Free Church, High].

Such acceptance was a virtue more rarely found amongst the wider peer group, but was what marked out a 'true' or 'close' friend from other people:

... it's not often that you find friends who, sort of, accept each other for what they are [Keith, Free Church, High].

And what sort of things do you look for in a good friend? Someone you can trust. Someone who likes you for what you are and not what you could be or what they want you to be. And just someone who generally respects you and your beliefs for what you believe in and who you are really [Julie, Free Church, High].

Indeed, the degree to which acceptance between friends allowed mutual self-disclosure and intimacy without shame, the closer the relationship came to one of familial status:

Who would you talk to though? If you were going to talk to somebody, who would it be?
... probably, maybe my mum. I tell my mum a lot ... But if not, I would probably tell my mate Samantha, who I go to clubs and stuff with, because we've gone through a lot together. We've been friends for ages, so she knows me very well ... I do love Samantha and she knows it. I always say to her: "Samantha, you know I love you, don't you?" You know, but I do care about her, just like she's my sister really [Alison, Atheist, Low].

Where there was acceptance, the self was affirmed and valued. The young people also had an identifiable place in the world through such relationships, a recognisable niche in a social network. In other words, they belonged somewhere and nobody else could quite take their place; they were valued as a unique part of a social whole.
Acceptance then left little room for shame. Conversely, where there was rejection, the self was undermined, devalued and alienated from the world. It was then very vulnerable to a sense of shame. The detrimental affects of the shamed self was most apparent in those interviewees who had been the victims of bullying, and, indeed, bullying was a major area of concern amongst many of the young people in this study:

It makes you feel like you are useless and no one likes you [Henry, Atheist, Low].

Given the difference in trust invested in family and close friends compared with other less intimate peer friendships, the interviewees were asked how love for family differed from love for friends. Love can be regarded as an expression of faith. In this respect, permanency, strength of relationship and obligation were the three dimensions they highlighted. Peter and Alison, for example, both drew attention to the permanency of family relationships compared to the transience of general peer friendship:

Well, my family is more important than my friends. Do you know why that is?
Because your family you've lived with the whole of your life practically, and you're going to live with them until you die, I suppose. Because when you're with your friends you usually split up because, you know, if it's not a neighbour or anything, but if it's just someone at school you usually split up eventually [Peter, Uncertain, Low].

Do you think your love for your friends is different from, say, love for your family?
I don't know. I suppose in a friendship, I mean, you can just break off from them, you know; if you have an argument you don't have to see them again; but with family they're always going to be there. [Alison, Atheist, Low].

The expectation of permanency was augmented by a sense of being physically linked to family members through the blood line. Thus relatives were regarded as actually being a 'part of each other' and so, to a certain degree, having a shared identity. That is, family are:
a close-knit group. They are you, they're your flesh [Brian, Free Church, High].

Associated with the feeling of permanency and shared identity was the perception that family relationships represented a stronger bond between people than friendships did, and that consequently different behaviours were appropriate towards family and friends:

I worry about my parents; I think about them, I'm sort of concerned, care for them. But my friends, I like them but I never worry, or anything, about them. They do what they want, that's what they want to do. But I still, I love them as a friend, but not caring, not like I would for my mum or dad or sister [Ben, Atheist, Low].

Family are different because they're actually related to you. I mean, my friends aren't so, I mean, you don't run up to your friends and give them a big hug or something do you! [Berni, Uncertain, Medium].

Finally, some of the young people hinted at an almost obligatory element to love associated with family which was not apparent with friendships. Families 'stick together come what may':

I do think [that family is important because] they're supportive and if you've got any troubles you can just go to them, or I'll go to them if I'm having some problems with some friends or something; a fight or anything like that. I can just go round to my cousin's and we all stick together [Louise, Roman Catholic, Medium].

Friendships on the other hand were chosen relationships and were not cemented together by obligation, duty or 'natural affiliation'. Friendships depended much more on the mutual satisfaction the relationship brought each person. The pattern of these friendships seemed to have much more in common with Giddens' model of 'pure relationships'. In this respect, fun and laughter were a very important aspect of friendships:

Love for parents is sort of, they look after you. It's almost instinct. It's the little family unit. Love for friends is, like, liking them because
you like them and they like you and they get on well [Sharon, Church of England, High].

Without any external factors to impose loyalty, friendships had to be actively worked at and protected. This was especially true in an environment where the availability of potential friends was limited. Pam, for example, explained that close girlfriends were important to her, but in order for her to retain them she had to make a deliberate time and emotional investment in these relationships. In other words, close friendships could not be taken for granted and put to one side in favour of a boyfriend, for instance. Pam's comment below shows that in this case there was a recognition of the transitory nature of relationships and, therefore, a conscious commitment had to be made to the friends and relationship *per se*. It seems this was a reflexive process negotiated within the group and as such was in line with some of the characteristics of 'pure relationships':

... when I started going out with my boyfriend and that, I thought ... "I'm not going to give up all my time for him and he has to realise that. But my friends will always, well, I hope they'll always, be there and so it's very important to give time to them. And I've ... talked to my friends about that and we've all decided that it's important ... I think they know that they come sort of second after my family in my list of priorities and I would be willing to give up time for them ... *Why is it you would be more willing to give time to your friends than your boyfriend?*  
Because I don't know what's going to happen in the future ... I can't be certain about me and my boyfriend. We're not going to be an old married couple. But my friends have always been there for me, and I hope they always will be and that we have a very special relationship and it would be stupid to give all that up for one person [Pam, Free Church, High].

Similarly, Alison consciously made an effort to resolve disputes with friends in order to retain them:

I mean, I have, sort of, arguments with them [school friends] but I always ... say I'm sorry and resolve it because it's not really worth it, you know. You've got to stick with them in school because there's not that many people, friends, you can go to [Alison, Atheist, Low].
Not all disputes could be rectified, however, and friendships did sometimes break down. Relationship breakdowns were always associated with a loss or reorganization of trust by at least one of the parties towards the other. The consequences of this could be serious in that it may threaten ontological security and undermine the 'courage to be'. Bianca was a case in point. She recalled a time when she tried to act as a 'matchmaker' between two of her friends. As a result she was regarded as interfering and no longer trustworthy. Consequently her friends withdrew their acceptance and support from her and left her feeling depressed and without hope:

I lost my friends at one point, I suppose everyone does. ... I had none at all and at that point I was nearly on the verge of suicide ... my mum didn't know what to do and I just felt awful and I was just really depressed all the time. ... everyone turned against me. But now I've just managed to build their courage back into trusting me again, and I've got them all back; but people are still a bit wary of me ... It's just when you've had them all I suppose you take them for granted and then when they're all gone you ... realise what you're missing [Bianca, Uncertain, Low].

As one might expect, if loss of trust amongst friends was traumatic, loss of trust within the family with all its expectations of acceptance, support and permanency, was often even worse. For the young people in this study one major form of trust reorganization occurred through parental divorce. When a divorce occurs trust is not only reorganised between the separating partners but also between the young person and his/her parents and the reflexive trust the young person has in him/herself. Trust in the idea of the marriage relationship per se also alters too. Consequently in relation to some of the youngsters in this study one or both of the divorced parents lost some of the trust that might otherwise have been accorded them and the marriage institution came to be seen as almost worthless. The reaction of the young people to members of the reconstituted family highlighted the unique bond of trust biological parents generally held in relation to their children. Whilst a youngster might get on well with a step-parent there was still a sense in which they lacked something; the step-parent was not the real parent. Maggie illustrates this when talking about her step-father.

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2 Nine of the 36 interviewees had parents who were divorced.
her biological father:

Oh yeah, I've [got] a father figure, but he's only a figure. He'll never replace my dad and so I still see my dad. But I remember my dad saying to me once: "If Jim and your mum ever get married, I'll always be your dad. And if mum makes you call Jim 'dad', I'll always be your dad naturally and Jim wont be". And so I've never called Jim 'dad' [Maggie, Agnostic, Low].

In terms of identity and the existential question 'Who am I?', the step-parent was not, as Brian put it, part of the young person's "flesh" and, therefore, did not have such a direct affect on the young person in terms of physical characteristics and temperament as the biological parent did. Nor were step-parents seen as necessarily being people who would offer acceptance of the self in the way that biological parents were expected to. Kitwood (1980) makes a similar point but in relation to the authority given to care-givers. Young people saw biological parents as having legitimate authority over them even if they disagreed with their parents' opinion, whereas this was not necessarily the case with step-parents. Of course, the trust and authority accorded to biological parents might be, indeed was, abandoned in the face of experiences of abuse or neglect, and step-parents could earn the trust of the young person and acquire equivalent authority to natural parents. Nevertheless, the young people in this study retained an ideal of what family 'should' be and step-parents did not easily fit into that ideal; consequently they were not automatically credited with the same status as biological parents were.

In terms of the young people's own relationships with peers of the opposite sex, it is worth noting here that amongst the eight girls who spoke about partners (none of the boys had girlfriends), boyfriends were not trusted in terms of sharing confidences as much as parents or girlfriends were. Boyfriends did, however, confer identity and self-worth to some of the girls. Kitwood (1980) makes the same point when he argues that amongst adolescents it is something of a status symbol for a girl to have a boyfriend and it enhances her self-esteem. The girls in this study who had boyfriends tended to adopt part of their boyfriend's identity for themselves, representing their 'unique chosenness' or 'specialness' to themselves and others.
symbolically by wearing the boyfriend's identity signifiers. Thus one girl, for instance, wore her boyfriend's jumpers, another girl wore her boyfriend's badges, and another adopted her boyfriend's favourite football team and decorated her bedroom with football memorabilia in much the same way as her boyfriend had decorated his room. Whilst there was insufficient data from the interviews to consider boys' reactions to girlfriends, there was no evidence to suggest that boys would take on aspects of a girlfriend's identity.

The young people therefore invested faith in family and close friends; these referents helped to provide the basis of ontological security. Family or care-givers in the first instance communicate meaning to the infant and establish 'basic trust' in the sense described in Chapter 1. For the teenagers they go on providing ontological security against the uncertainties of life in terms of economic, moral and emotional support. They provided the young people with a sense of belonging and contributed to a positive sense of self which, in turn, meant the young people could have faith in themselves.

5.1.2 Faith And The Reflexive Self

The second area in which the young people located their faith was the reflexive self.

I believe in myself and my family. I am my God [Jack, Atheist, Low].

In this respect, as Giddens suggests, the self in late modernity was found to be reflexive and the source of its own meaning. At one level the subjective appropriation and reinterpretation of transcendent referents in terms of customary and common religion was an expression of self-created meaning. At another level though, the self per se could actually become the focus of faith. In other words, to repeat Durkheim's point, the self becomes "both believer and god". Finding and expressing one's 'true' self (ie 'authenticity') therefore was important to the young people. There was a desire amongst the youngsters in this respect for self-realization, a wish to reach their full
potential and live life to the full. Such self-realization was another important means of achieving happiness which gave the young people hope and a reason to go on living. In order to develop and express faith in oneself, however, autonomy is vital. As such, personal freedom and independence, the components of autonomy, were key values for the youngsters. When the teenagers were allowed to be free and independent they had a chance to realize their true self and establish that self as trustworthy and a suitable location of faith. The idea of personal freedom in terms of conventional religious beliefs, expressions of sexuality, and freedom of speech all came through quite clearly in the interviews. It was also articulated in the value the youngsters placed on 'being your own person', 'standing up for what you believe in' and 'being a strong person'. The following comments reflect some of the opinions of the youngsters in this respect:

I think the way forward is freeing yourself, being your own person. Yeah, being yourself, freeing yourself, doing what you feel is right by you. [Geoffrey, 'Butterfly', Low].

I suppose the most important thing [in life] is probably to be happy. To be happy with who you are and if anybody, sort of, tries to put you down you shouldn't listen too much because otherwise you can get too self-conscious [Sharon, Church of England, High].

Given its importance, contravention of another's autonomy was seen to be a cause for serious reprimand, as Bianca found out when she 'interfered' with her friends' relations (see Section 5.1.1). Similarly, the young people did not like others to 'decide for them'. The authority teachers and parents had over them, although still regarded as 'legitimate', was therefore sometimes a cause of tension. Henry was a case in point. He admired Christopher Columbus because:

... he's adventurous, doing things that haven't been done ... [and] no one really stopped him from doing what he believed in.

Do you think it's important to do what you believe in as far as possible?

Yeah.

Do you think you get the opportunity to do that?

Not in school. You're just told what to do ... you're sitting here doing what they say. ...
And what would you do differently?
I would give people more choice. Like freedom to wear the clothes you want to wear, make your own decisions. ...

Can you tell me what the most important thing in life is?
Do what you think is right.

And where do you think you get your ideas of what's right and wrong from?
You make your own decisions, what you think, what's wrong and what's right [Henry, Atheist, Low].

In terms of religious beliefs too, the young people thought that everybody had a right to chose their own beliefs whatever they may be, provided that those beliefs were not forced upon others and especially not upon themselves. Similarly, in terms of moral decisions (Chapter 6) the young people indicated that decisions did not have to conform to an absolute authority – behaviour was the choice of the individuals concerned and largely organized around the notion of authenticity.

For the reflexive self to be a locus of faith, however, it had to be seen in a positive light. In this respect personal achievements of various kinds which provided the young people with a positive sense of self-worth were found to be significant amongst the young people in this study. Since the interviewees were in their last year of secondary education, a major area in which they wanted to achieve and realize their potential was, of course, in their GCSE exams. Several of the young people said they had given up other activities in order to concentrate more fully on preparing for their exams. Exam success was also important in terms of future planning since they were regarded as a means to self-realization later on through access to chosen careers. It is important to note here that career choices ideally had to provide some form of meaning and purpose as far as the young people were concerned. It was not simply that they wanted to earn enough money to meet their needs or give them a comfortable lifestyle; the young people wanted jobs that would allow them to express themselves and locate them in a wider community. Jobs in the emergency services, child-care and the arts were therefore popular choices of career. Given the need to obtain a subjectively satisfying occupation in the future, the young people had a very pragmatic view of the examination subjects they were going to take. They wanted to take exams which had a clear relevance to their future employment. As Chapter 7
will show, this meant that there was a certain amount of impatience towards the compulsory nature of religious education which the young people thought irrelevant to the world of work.

Another important area of achievement was in relation to sports and leisure activities. Louise, for example, was working hard to achieve a place in the England Show-Jumping team for which she was shortly due to attend trials. David had achieved a great deal of success in the Scouting movement, having been selected as a national representative for an international Scouting Jamboree in Holland. Similarly, the individuals whom the young people respected and said they would most like to meet were often those who had achieved a great deal of success in their chosen profession. Martin, for instance, would have liked to have met Aerton Senna because he had "always been at the top" and Keith would have liked to have met Winston Churchill because he saw him as being the "ultimate" politician. The importance of achievement was also reflected in the young people's recognition of the value of hard work and persistence, the courage to go on in the face of uncertainty and opposition:

I want to have an objective in life and I want to live a full life. I want to live it as well as I can live it. I would say I'm a strong person; if I want something I'll make sure I work for it, or I'd get it any way I can. And if something's got to be done, yeah, I'll go ahead and do it [Louise, Roman Catholic, Medium].

This comment from Louise indicates a somewhat ruthless individualistic attitude which might well reflect the ideals of Thatcherism prevalent in the 1980s. As noted above, self-confidence and standing up for oneself in the face of difficult opposition was an important expression of faith in the self. In this respect, it was noticeable that the girls had less faith in themselves than the boys. The faith of girls seemed to be rooted more in the security which relationships conferred; hence, for example, the adoption of part of a boyfriend's identity.

A further aspect of achievement which the interviewees highlighted was competition. For some young people it was not sufficient to enjoy or simply be good at something;
the ideal was to be 'the best'. In this sense faith in the self, therefore, had to be constantly proved and justified. To be 'the best' meant that some of the uncertainty associated with faith in oneself could be dissipated.

Creative self-expression was another important aspect of self-realization. In this respect the young people backed up Giddens' point that:

A creative involvement with others and with the object-world is almost certainly a fundamental component of psychological satisfaction and the discovery of moral meaning (Giddens 1991b:41).

Creative self-expression was a way of objectifying aspects of the self and holding it up for reflexive self scrutiny or for examination by others. The forms of self-expression the young people drew attention to included the use of creative arts (music, writing, painting, etc) as well as more direct communication through talk and style of appearance. Self-expression also included rather more tangential creative activities such as crafts and cookery which, whilst not directly representing the self as such, nevertheless was a product of the self and therefore could be accepted or rejected in just the same way by others. These various forms of self-expression were important too, in celebrating the uniqueness of the self. Alison, for example, liked dance music, but not "the stuff that's in the charts", ie the popular music that everyone shares. Maggie comments:

I had my hair dyed bright red once ...  
How did people react to it? 
I don't know because ... I'm always doing weird and wacky things on my own, so I suppose people just looked at me and thought: "Oh no, she's dying her hair now" [Maggie, Agnostic, Low].

In terms of being 'different' or 'set apart' from others, the quest for a unique identity suggests a special or even 'sacred' status could be given to the self. However, there was a fine line between being unique and the need to be accepted by others as part of the group. Berni seemed to have got around this problem by being part of a distinctive group. He established his own identity within the group, but he had the
The weekend just gone, I went in [to town] with all my friends, there was about 20 of us, we all went in suits and dinner dress. ... We walked through town. It was really quite funny.

**What sort of reaction did you get?**

Just people staring and pointing ... I'm quite an embarrassing person to be with, because if anybody walks past I say "Hello, how's it going?", and I've never seen them in my entire life. Either that or I go surfing on [department store] escalators, jump on them and pretend I'm surfing up them. It's a bit weird. ... Because it's not everyday you see someone surfing up a set of escalators.

**That's true. Do you do it on your own or are there friends with you?**

My friend is a bit like me. He runs round and jumps all over the place, but the rest of them all walk off, going bright colours, like red. I find it highly amusing myself [Berri, Non-Denominational Christian, Medium].

From the above, therefore, the young people took some responsibility for establishing their own identity and so creating their own existential meaning, purpose and hope in life. However, it is important to note that self, family and close friends were an integrated set of faith referents.

**5.1.3 Faith: An Integrated System**

The integration of self, family and friends as a location of faith was particularly clear when the young people described the reciprocal organisation of trust. They trusted themselves and took responsibility for establishing their own existential meaning, hope and purpose. They also trusted their family and close friends who provided them with a basis for ontological security. In return, however, the young people's families and friends also invested trust in the youngsters too. This was important for the ontological security of some of the young people's families and friends, but it was also important for the youngsters in whom trust was invested, since if others thought a young person was trustworthy, then the youngsters had more confidence in him/herself as well. Such an initial investment of trust conferred on the young person a degree of autonomy and responsibility whereby they could 'prove' themselves trustworthy and
help maintain the ontological security of others. The investment of trust in young people by others was apparent in several ways, be it in terms of part-time employment, leadership roles in the various organizations of which they were a part (e.g., Scouts and Army Cadets), or the care of other individuals such as siblings or children for whom they baby-sat. Penelope exemplifies how the trust invested in her confirmed the trust she had in herself when she recalled becoming a godparent was one of the most important events in her life:

I thought that was quite important because you have the responsibility to the child as well [as his/her parents] and it's not just: "Yeah, I promise to do this" and then just leaving it. I think it's quite important and it showed, it proved, I thought, that people were thinking "Well, yeah, she's responsible enough to do this. We'll let her do it" [Penelope, Roman Catholic, Medium].

John's comment suggests that the trust invested in him by his parents made him responsible for temporarily maintaining the 'protective cocoon' for his brothers and sisters:

I take [responsibility for] looking after my sisters when my parents go out, but when I was in London I used to look after them during the nights because [my] parents were both [working] nights. My mum's a care assistant for old people and my dad's a senior head staff. So sometimes he works nights and I have to look after the children. They cooperate alright, they understand.

*Do you like filling that role?*

Yeah, I don't really mind. As I'm growing older I'll get used to it. I'll become a dad one day, so if I start now I'll know how to look after kids [John, Free Church, High].

Faith is, therefore, organized largely in terms of an 'internally referential system' to use Giddens' terminology. In other words, each individual invests faith in and derives ontological security from the reflexive self and significant others, s/he also contributes to the ontological security of other individuals. The individual does not necessarily look beyond this structure to the transcendent realm to find existential meaning. Family, friends and the reflexive self are the source of identity and belonging, and the source of hope for the future. The responsibility to help maintain the 'protective
cocoon' of others also provides a purpose in life. This was expressed during the interviews in several ways. Amongst the things the young people said were most important in life, for instance, were 'getting on with people', 'meeting people', 'respect for others' and 'helping others'. For example, Sally and Bianca regard caring for others as intrinsic to being human:

*Can I ask you what you think is the most important thing in life?*

The most important thing in life? To care for people.

*Why do you think that's so important?*

Because, I mean, if people don't care for people, then they're not going to get anywhere in life. I mean, it's no good just being really hard and not giving any sort of emotions and that, because, I mean, it's just not human [Sally, Agnostic, Medium].

*What would you say is the most important thing in life?*

Um, people.

*People, why?*

Because without people the world wouldn't go round. ...

*What about how we react or behave with other people, what's important there?*

Well, we've all got to get on with one another, but, like you get people who create bombs and everything and, you know, you've got everything around you and they just want to destroy it. It's stupid. Um, ... but, like, you get countries and they're starving and everything and you've got to help them ... you get Childline and everything, and if you didn't phone up or help them with that then the whole world would die.

*So is it fairly important for you to help out then?*

Yeah. If I see a charity on the street I put money in because if no one, you know, you've got to have a bit of kindness in your heart [Bianca, Uncertain, Low].

Or, as Geoffrey said, "what it all stems down to" is love, where 'love' meant caring for another, trust, respect and commitment towards others, spending time with somebody, being there for somebody no matter what, feeling happy oneself and wanting to make others happy too.
In this chapter I have sought to uncover the referents of 'invisible' faith of young people in late modernity. From the above it seems that for most of the youngsters in this study faith was located in family and close friends and the reflexive self without reference to a specifically transcendent referent. This accords very much with Luckmann's suggested themes of the modern sacred cosmos set out in Chapter 1 (ie the inner self, familism, and forms of self-realization). It also corresponds with Robinson's work. On the basis of the British Values Survey he argues that family, friends and leisure are of most importance to people and give meaning to life. He goes on to say:

Meaning, for non-churchgoers, seems to relate strongly to one's place as someone who is known and valued within a relatively small circle of people rather than to society more widely... It would seem that for non-churchgoers, the only meaning that life might have derives not from any source beyond this world, but only from the very immediate presence of family or friends. The meaning of life is not thought through so much as experienced and that experience points to the place of close relationships as vital (Robinson 1994:130).

It therefore seems that for most adults and young people alike faith can be regarded as 'immanent' and as being organized in terms of an internally referential system. Immanent faith is more than Cottrell's notion of 'proximate meaning' in that it does give the youngsters existential meaning, hope and purpose. Through these referents the young people gain an identity and a sense of belonging. They discover that they have a place in the world and, through family in particular, they locate that place in relation to the past, present and future. The purpose of life and the hope for the future primarily lies in securing personal happiness by realizing one's fullest potential as an individual person, establishing trustworthy relationships with family and close friends and then helping others to do the same. Through immanent faith referents the young people therefore have the 'courage to be', a reason to live, without necessary recourse
to an altogether 'Other' reality. The basic organization of faith can therefore be modelled figuratively as set out in Figure 5.1 below.

Figure 5.1: The basic structure of immanent faith

Family and close friends are related to the self by permanent bonds of trust (indicated by the black lines on the diagram). Trust is also placed in the reflexive self, hence a bond of trust exists where the self (Self') trusts him/herself (Self').

In this respect, Giddens' suggestion that trust in late modernity is increasingly organized around 'pure relationships' appears to be true only in part. The description the young people gave of friendships had many of the features Giddens uses to characterise 'pure relationships'. For example, the youngsters' emphasis on self-realization, autonomy and authenticity are all in accordance with the view of individuals as reflexive selves being in relationship with one another. Similarly, the open negotiation of the relationship between friends implies that this reflexivity is utilized as a basis for maintaining relationships on the grounds of reciprocity and mutual satisfaction. The young people also recognized the transitory nature of relationships in late modernity. In this respect they were very much aware of divorce, for instance, either through their own parents' separation or the separation of friends' parents. All of this suggests that a 'pure relationship' model is perhaps becoming increasingly common as a normative basis for relationships in contemporary society. What is significant from the point of view of this study, however, was that it was in fact those relationships which least approximated 'pure relationships' which were the

3 Alternatively, one might say in Luckmann's terminology that faith is located at an intermediate level of transcendence rather than a great level of transcendence.
main focus of faith. The young people had an ideal of what family should be and that
ideal was associated with obligations, as was evident from the young people's
expectations of family relationships. Close friendships too took on some of those
obligations, especially when they were close enough to approximate familial status.
For the most part it seems that these obligations meant that these significant
relationships were secure and stable enough to invest faith in and enable the youngster
to face an uncertain world.

Given the above basic immanent faith structure, the question therefore remains as to
why the young people still hold on to transcendent referents rather than reject them
outright? On the basis of the data presented in this chapter and Chapters 3 and 4 it
would seem that the answer to this question lies in the potential transcendent referents
have for helping to maintain or restore ontological security, when the 'protective
cocoon' established by the basic immanent faith structure is threatened or weakened;
for example, when the bonds of trust are broken by betrayal, failure, abuse, hardship
and especially death. All of these life events can feed into a negative self-identity or
disrupt a sense of belonging and being valued by others. In addition, where the
relationships in the basic structure begin to approximate more closely to the 'pure
relationship' model, the 'protective cocoon' is likely to be weak due to the inherent
instability associated with this type of relationship. Under such circumstances the
youngsters may want to look for additional sources of existential meaning, hope and
purpose. This is where customary religion and common religion have a part to play.
These are the referents which offer comfort at times of difficulty.

The most obvious example of customary or common religion being used in this way
related to questions of finitude. Whilst there was a large degree of uncertainty about
the possibility of life after death, only 14% of the young people in the current survey
actually disagreed outright with the statement 'there is life after death'. The youngsters
therefore seemed to want to believe that life does not come to an end, especially their
own life and the life of family and close friends. Thus notions of an afterlife were
usually connected with the idea of meeting up with departed family members or
friends rather than primarily being concerned with the possibility of being with God.
Beyond providing comfort in times of difficulty, the transcendent referents could also be used as tools to facilitate the self-awareness needed for the reflexive development of identity. It was noted in Chapter 3, for example, that prayer was sometimes used by youngsters with a nominal Christian commitment more as a means of achieving a sense of inner peace or achieving greater self-awareness than as a means of communicating with the transcendent realm. Alternatively the youngsters might look to expressions of common religion (eg horoscopes) in order to gain self-understanding or assess whether or not a relationship was likely to last and therefore worth investing trust in. The practices associated with conventional and common religion were also useful as a means of shoring up the 'protective cocoon' when the immanent faith structure was weakened. The data in Chapter 4, for instance, indicated that superstitious practices could be employed as a means of gaining a degree of control over the uncertainties of life, thereby empowering the self and making it a more plausible referent for faith in the immanent structure. Conventional religious practices could similarly be used as means of strengthening immanent faith. For example, as mentioned earlier and discussed in more detail in Chapter 6, weddings for most young people were primarily about family. In other words, the sacredness of the ceremony was more in terms of family and friends being together than in terms of a ceremony being performed in the presence of God. Christenings and Christmas had become rituals of immanent faith for many of the youngsters in this study too.

Transcendent referents for the most part were therefore retained because they could be a useful temporary back-up to the immanent faith referents. To reiterate the point made in previous chapters, however, this does not constitute faith in the transcendent referents per se. The emotional and cognitive commitment associated with faith was expressed by the young people towards family, friends and the self, not towards the transcendent. The basic immanent faith structure represented in Figure 1 can therefore be elaborated as in Figure 5.2.
Bonds of trust in the basic immanent faith structure may occasionally be strengthened by subjectively appropriate transcendent referents. The referents may come from different sources, for example, astrology, Christianity, spiritualism, etc (represented by 'WXYZ' in the figure); and the individual may refer to different transcendent sources at different times.

Indeed, the individual may utilize several different transcendent sources at once. The bonds of trust linking the basic immanent structure to the transcendent referent/s are, however, weak and transitory, hence their representation in the figure by a 'dashed' line. These transcendent referents are not permanently incorporated into the faith structure.

The exception to this organization of faith was, of course, the young people with high CR scores who had a strong conventional Christian commitment. For them the transcendent was a faith referent in its own right and not simply a means of maintaining immanent faith. Having said that, it should be emphasised that the basic organization of faith in terms of the basic immanent structure remained important to these young people too. As Chapter 7 will make clear, immanent faith is usually the basis of faith in the transcendent realm. Indeed, conventionally religious young people can be regarded as having a faith structure in which the transcendent referent is permanently incorporated and integrated into the basic immanent faith structure, as shown in Figure 5.3. This organisation of faith can therefore be referred to as 'transcendent faith' to distinguish it from the nominal use of transcendent referents depicted in Figure 5.2.
Bonds of trust in the basic immanent structure are permanently located in, and strengthened by, trust in one transcendent realm which in this study was Christianity ('X'). This is represented by the unbroken line in the figure linking the immanent referents to the transcendent realm.

The important point to note about transcendent faith, in terms of the current analysis is that the relationship with the transcendent described by the youngsters surpassed the unconditionally loving nature of family and close friendships in the immanent structure, and was therefore ultimately at odds with the notion of 'pure relationships', since the latter is primarily about reciprocity rather than unconditionality. As far as the young committed Christians were concerned, God was completely trustworthy in terms of the five characteristics of trust listed in Section 5.1.1. They believed that God accepted them for who they are, would not abandon them, would forgive them their failings and free them from guilt and shame. In other words, God would love them come what may. God was eternally faithful and helped them through life's difficulties. The relationship did not depend on the mutual satisfaction of both parties and consequently was secure.

The outworkings of these two structures of immanent and transcendent faith are the focus of the next chapter.
Chapter Six

LIFESTYLE DECISIONS

One of the important aspects of faith is that it affects how we react to the world on a day-to-day basis. The aim of this chapter is therefore to consider how the organisation of faith affects the lifestyle decisions of young people.

A lifestyle can be defined as a more or less integrated set of practices which an individual embraces, not only because such practices fulfil utilitarian needs, but because they give material form to a particular narrative of self-identity (Giddens 1991b:81).

The adoption and expression of a lifestyle involves hundreds of every-day decisions – what clothes to wear, what food to eat, who to see, where to go, that is who to be (Giddens 1991b:81).

According to Giddens it is a characteristic of late modernity that such choices have to be consciously made and it is a situation which contrasts with the pre-modern period when lifestyle was more or less determined by tradition or 'how things have always been done'. Lifestyle today involves choice to a much greater extent since there is no privileged course of action. Moreover, the process of globalisation means that young people are familiar with an increasingly wide variety of possibilities from which to construct their lifestyle. Faced with this choice and without an overarching authority to guide decisions, Berger and colleagues (1974) have noted the development of a 'pluralisation of life-worlds'. There potentially can be as many different lifestyles as their are individuals. Moreover, Giddens suggests an individual's lifestyle may be further divided into sectors. Thus as an individual moves from one social milieu to another s/he may adopt a different set of actions and values according to whatever is deemed appropriate 'in the different settings. These differences may be particularly salient in the separation of the public and private spheres.
Not everybody, of course, has the same range of options from which to choose, since life chances vary according to circumstances. This is perhaps especially the case with young people who are still under parental control and lack economic resources of their own. Nevertheless, choices still have to be made even if it is only to decide *not* to follow fashions which are too expensive. In addition to economic constraints, decisions are not always made with a full knowledge of the range of options available to an individual. Again, young people might be seen as particularly vulnerable here, in that whilst they may be aware of many options, they might not yet be in a position to decide which courses of action are realistically available to them personally. Frustration or disillusionment can result.

Given that late modernity requires a choice of lifestyle, Giddens suggests that individuals have to engage in some form of life-planning. That is, they have to prepare a course for future action. In so doing Giddens also brings in the concept of 'life-plan calendars' (1991b:85) whereby individuals organize their biographical narrative chronologically according to personal time in terms of events which are significant for them. This is a reflexive process subject to continual revision in the light of new occurrences and experiences, so events may subjectively increase or diminish in importance throughout a lifetime. Some of these events may constitute what Giddens calls 'fateful moments', that is, times:

> ... when individuals are called on to take decisions that are particularly consequential for their ambitions, or more generally for their future lives. Fateful moments are highly consequential for a person's destiny (Giddens 1991b:112).

For the young people in this study fateful moments included decisions over which examinations to take and future career choices. Giddens further argues that life decisions are potentially political in that the choice an individual makes may well have an affect on the choices available to other people. It is in this respect that Giddens talks about 'life politics' which he suggests is another characteristic of late modernity:

> ... life politics concerns political issues which flow from processes of

With the development of life politics comes the re-emergence of existential debates and a new salience to the morality of choices which were suppressed in the early period of modernity. Giddens (1991b) identifies four moral areas which map onto the four existential questions mentioned in Chapter 1:

i **Survival and Being**  
The nature of existence relates to the moral area associated with 'survival and being', in particular with the relationship between human beings and the natural world. Giddens argues in this respect that the natural environment, as something free from human influence and control, has come to an end.

ii **Transcendence**  
The question of finitude forms a moral area dealing with transcendence. Questions surrounding reproduction are one of the main foci of morality in this area because the process of reproduction often raises questions about death. Birth often brings an awareness of the fragility of life and, indeed, the whole reproductive process is filled with risk. With the increasing possibility of intervention through science and technology, moral dilemmas revolve around the circumstances of creating life and terminating it.

iii **Cooperation**  
The third existential question refers to the relationship of the individual to society and the morality of cooperation and justice, both on a local and global scale.

iv **Personhood**  
Finally, the existential question of self-identity relates to the moral area of 'personhood', that is, the choices involved in establishing a coherent self. In this sphere moral decisions revolve around the self and the body.
The purpose of this chapter is therefore to look at the empirical outworking of these suggested areas of morality in relation to the young people's faith. Before focusing on these four areas, however, I begin with a brief examination of the young people's attitudes towards the notions of 'good' and 'evil', since these concepts traditionally underlie morality in the Christian context.

### 6.1 Good And Evil: A Basis To Morality

During the interviews the young people were asked what they understood by the terms 'good' and 'evil'. Their comments suggested a continuum from good to bad with evil being an extreme version of 'bad' as illustrated in Figure 6.1.

#### Figure 6.1: A good–bad continuum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Bad</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Promotes faith and reinforces ontological security</td>
<td>Undermines faith and destroys ontological security</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Evil**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interpersonal</th>
<th>Individual</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Individual</th>
<th>Interpersonal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Love, kindness)</td>
<td>(Achievement)</td>
<td>(Jealousy, Lying)</td>
<td>(Murder)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the interviews it seems that good and evil are value labels placed on actions to describe their affect on the organisation of faith. Good primarily was understood in practical, interpersonal terms which clearly reflected the young people's ultimate concern with trustworthy relationships. Thus good meant 'caring for people', 'helping people', 'being kind and polite' or rather more vaguely 'being a nice person' — all actions which would contribute to the five features of a trustworthy person mentioned in Section 5.1.1. A secondary subjective understanding of good was linked to the self and was more to do with subjective commendation. For example, good was 'enjoyment', 'something you like' and 'achievement'. The concept of good therefore related to those actions and values which promoted the organisation of faith in relation...
to others and the self and thus reinforced ontological security. Only six of the young people, not all of whom had strong CR scores, made a link between this immanent understanding of good and a transcendent understanding expressed through conventional religious ideas (in all instances Christianity) – 'God is good', 'good people go to heaven', 'serving God is good', 'Bible stories are good'. From this it seems that, whereas God tends to imply good (see Chapter 3), good does not necessarily imply God – there does not have to be a transcendent referent from which good stems.

Evil, in comparison to good, came across as an 'extreme' concept; it was the worst possible expression of 'bad'. As such it was a concept reserved for actions and values which affected other people. There was no secondary understanding of evil as such, that is, no corollary for 'achievement' or 'enjoyment' – individual failure in terms of say, dishonesty or dissatisfaction, were seen as 'bad' rather than evil. Thus, purposefully harming another individual was evil – murder, child abuse, criminal acts, generally acts of cruelty (including cruelty towards animals) and hatred, all fell under the young people's heading of 'evil'. These are actions which more or less conclusively betray basic trust and break the bonds of trust in the basic immanent faith structure thereby destroying ontological security. Only nine of the interviewees (seven of whom had strong CR scores) linked evil with transcendent themes, again taken from the Christian perspective (the Devil, Hell and sin). The following quotations illustrate some of the typical comments made by the youngsters:

Good is someone who doesn't do anything wrong at all; helps other people; generally kind. Evil is someone that, I don't know, a terrorist, for example. Someone who blows people up, they've got hate in them [Bianca, Uncertain, Low].

Good is like, like: 'Well done', as in an achievement. Good is like someone who is good to other people. Good is also like when you say: 'Oh that was really good', like enjoyment and things like that. Evil's like someone with hatred in them and no feelings, or death and things like that, really.

Is death always evil, because, I mean, everybody dies?

Like murder [Phyllis, Non-Denominational Christian, Medium].
Given these ideas on good and evil the young people agreed that every person has the capacity for good or evil within them and that they each had an individual responsibility to choose between adopting good and evil actions and values. There was a consensus that 'right' choices were those made in accordance with good. However, since good related both to others and the self, there could sometimes be a conflict in deciding what the 'right choices' were. For example, it might be good to achieve something which reaffirms faith in the self, but sometimes this can conflict with the interests of others. Without any reference to a transcendent moral order or absolute authority, the young people would sometimes adopt a minimalist criteria - right choices involved 'being nice' or at least 'not harming anyone too seriously'. This was then the main condition that had to be met. After that, another guideline the young people suggested they would adopt was 'authenticity', that is, adopting a course of action that was 'true' to the self. This points, once again, to the importance of autonomy and the reflexive self, and to knowing who one's 'true' self really is. Indeed, authenticity was important even in the few cases where there was an absolute authority to refer to as well (those with high CR scores):

It's, like, good is following what's right and what you think is the moral thing to do, and evil's the opposite [Chris, Roman Catholic, High].

There was also an awareness amongst the young people that, whilst an action based on good was the most desirable course to follow, evil was an inevitable, perhaps even a necessary, part of the human condition. This 'fallen humanity' was not seen as being in need of any sort of 'redemption', however, but just acceptance that that is how things are:

... you can't have love all the time, there's got to be hate somewhere in there.

What do you mean by that?
You can't have something all the time, you know. I mean, it's like I love my mum but on some days I hate her, you know. But deep down inside I love her [Maggie, Agnostic, Low].

... if you're good you're still going to have a bit of evil in you because nobody can be totally good [Susan, Atheist, Low].
On the whole, therefore, morally good actions were those which respected and strengthened the trust between individuals and towards the self. Morally evil actions were those that attacked the trust between individuals. That the self does not feature as a realm of evil as such raises an interesting point about the scope of actions an individual allows him/herself in relation to his/her own personhood, as against the actions that are acceptable when others are involved. In other words, whilst it was seen as being morally wrong to abuse others, self-abuse (through the consumption of harmful drugs or, for example, through strict dietary regimes) may be seen as an amoral area. It is to the different areas of morality that I now turn.
6.2 Four Moral Areas

Table 6.1 indicates the young people's attitudes on the 9 moral questions asked in the survey questionnaire.

Table 6.1: Moral beliefs by CR score – % agree (n=100%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Moral Area</th>
<th>Belief</th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>CR Score</th>
<th>Cramer's V (p&lt;0.01)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>CR Score</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(1083)</td>
<td>(168)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survival and</td>
<td>Protecting the environment and avoiding pollution is less urgent than</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being</td>
<td>often suggested</td>
<td>(1083)</td>
<td>(168)</td>
<td>(625)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transcendence</td>
<td>Abortion is wrong except where the life of the mother is at risk</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(1084)</td>
<td>(168)</td>
<td>(625)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperation</td>
<td>All war is wrong</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(1077)</td>
<td>(168)</td>
<td>(618)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rich nations should have a lower standard of living to help poorer</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>nations become wealthier</td>
<td>(1080)</td>
<td>(168)</td>
<td>(621)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>People who are unemployed should have to take any job available or</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>lose their unemployment benefit</td>
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<td>Shopping on Sunday is wrong</td>
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<td>It's alright to use soft drugs like marijuana (hash or pot)</td>
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<td>I use the Bible to guide the way I live my life</td>
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* Not significant at the p<0.01 level.
6.2.1. Survival And Being

The first moral area Giddens lists is 'survival and being'. Over the last two decades there has been an increasing public awareness of the damage human beings have caused the environment and the problems that continue to be brought about through the development and use of technology. Indeed, in Chapter 1 this was identified by Giddens as a contributory factor to the 'radical doubt' of late modernity. Environmental disasters, excessive pollution and the continued threat of a poisoned world unable to sustain life contributed to a 'greening' of the public mind if not of public actions. Nature itself has been used as a marketing tool to make desirable product associations with 'goodness', 'individual wholeness' and 'wellbeing'. It has also been linked with spiritual values through the revival of some forms of paganism, which has much to say about 'Gaia' or 'Mother Earth', reflecting a nostalgia for a person–environment holism and a quest to be 'at one with nature'. This nostalgia is perhaps somewhat misplaced, bearing in mind that humankind's relationship with the environment has always been one of attempted domination with the aim of survival rather than environmental harmony. The means of domination were not perhaps as exploitative and damaging in the past as they potentially are today, but nevertheless the relationship was essentially one of people controlling the environment. Given the publicity that green issues have had, especially over the last ten years or so, and how much of its media presentation is targeted at youth, it was very surprising that the young people in this study did not highlight environmental issues to a greater extent than they did. In fact, environmentalism was hardly mentioned at all. Martin and Pluck (1977:15) also noted the absence of ecological references in their young people's comments. Environmentalism did not constitute any part of the answers to the question 'What is the most important thing in life?' in this present study, and only four of the youngsters mentioned it when they were talking in other contexts. For example, Jane described her view of heaven as a place similar to the world as it is but without pollution. In response to this comment Jane was prompted to talk a little more about any environmental concerns she might have. This betrayed an absence of positive action on her part and suggested 'green' issues were not of fundamental importance to her:
Do you think there's too much pollution in the world as it is?
Yeah.
Does that worry you at all?
Sometimes ... all the animals and that.
What about in your home, do you do anything to be environmentally aware or not?
Well, my mum does. Like she takes all the bottles down the bottle bank and things like that.
Do you do anything like that?
Not really. Probably will when I'm older and got my own place, but she does it for now [Jane, Church of England, High].

Simon also did not like pollution but his main concern in this respect lay in the fact that it inhibited his enjoyment of fishing rather than being anything to do with an overall environmental awareness. Indeed, on a daily basis even for the four youngsters who did mention 'green' issues, the environment was not of key concern and activism was minimal:

Is that [chemical pollution] something which would perhaps trouble you, or is it something you wouldn't really think about too much on a daily basis?
Not on a daily basis, but when I hear, when I see documentaries or on the news about spillages of oil and, basically, of nuclear disasters and that, it really makes me think ... can't we do anything to stop this? Is there any other way we can actually treat the environment better, so that it gives us more back?
And do you have any ideas on that as well, what perhaps you personally could do?
I've started using CFC free sprays and toiletries. If I was [a] ... sixth form candidate, I would, like, use the environment to get people to vote for me. So I would say: "Oh we can do things like sponsored walks for the World Wide Fund for Nature" and things like that, that are actually going to stop people from destroying the environment that animals live in, and give more back to the environment so that it doesn't, say in years to come, it doesn't all collapse and we end up all dead [Mike, Atheist, Low].

When asked directly about their attitude towards pollution was in the questionnaire survey, 77% of the young people agreed that environmental protection and pollution control was an urgent issue (only 9% felt that 'protecting the environment and avoiding pollution is less urgent than is often suggested'). This accords with Francis
and Kay's (1995) survey which indicated that two thirds of young people were concerned about the risk of pollution to the environment. It also fits with Ester, Halman and Seuren's (1993) results from their analysis of the European Values Survey. However, in the light of the above comments, these figures would appear to be somewhat misleading if they are taken to show anything other than a fairly nominal environmental concern. Ester, Halman and Seuren drew a similar conclusion in their work:

People hear and read so much about pollution and the greenhouse effect that they can hardly ignore environmental problems. Therefore, expressing concern is hardly escapable. But being concerned is quite different from having a strong value orientation in favour of environmental protection. One might say: the message from the media is heard but not internalized ... The dangerous side-effects of economic growth and consumption patterns are seen and society wants to prevent them and to restore the environment, but not at the cost of economic welfare. There has been no fundamental change as yet in attitudes towards nature (Ester, Halman and Seuren 1993:180).

Certainly in terms of the young people's lifestyle decisions the environment appears to hold little real influence. There was very little indication that they would accept a lower standard of living to help the environment. There was no significant association between the attitudes of young people in terms of environmental awareness and their CR score.

6.2.2 Transcendence

The second moral area Giddens proposes is that of transcendence, which is concerned in particular with issues of reproduction stemming from the possibility of intervention with science and technology. In late modernity the whole process of reproduction can, to a large extent, be taken out of the hands of Fate and brought into the realm of choice. Effective and readily available means of contraception initially paved the way for the separation of reproduction from sexuality. The development of in vitro fertilisation, artificial insemination and genetic engineering widened the gap further. A recent example of the new moral dilemmas which individuals face as a result of
these possibilities is the debate surrounding a woman's right to the sperm of her dead husband. In such a case moral issues of transcendence are brought into stark relief as the possibility for the dead to have children is very much a reality. Other moral dilemmas in this realm include the rights of the unborn and the ethics behind genetic engineering. The young people in this study were, therefore, asked about their views in relation to reproduction.

In terms of a their lifeplan most of the young people interviewed mentioned that they expected one day to have children of their own which reflects the importance of family relationships discussed in Chapter 5. However, they did not necessarily intend that family to be bound by marriage (see Section 6.2.4). The young people realized that the decision to have children was a matter of conscious choice and that individuals have a responsibility to be aware of the means to limit the risks of unwanted pregnancy. Should an unwanted pregnancy occur, however, the young people were asked in the survey about their attitudes towards abortion. This showed that 39% agreed with the statement "Abortion is wrong except where the life of the mother is at risk", 37% disagreed with the statement and the remainder were uncertain. These figures are similar to those obtained by Francis and Kay (1995). They found that overall 38% of their young people thought abortion was wrong, 30% were uncertain and 32% thought it was alright. During the interview some of the young people in this study were asked about their views on abortion in order to shed some light onto the meaning behind these figures. The interviewees tended to answer in terms of teenage pregnancy. Very few of these youngsters were in favour of unqualified abortion or were completely against it under all circumstances. Most of the interviewees regarded the decision as a very personal one which should be made in relation to the individual's circumstances. In other words, there was no moral absolute which could dictate the 'right' course of action for all people. In instances where the likelihood was that the child would be born into a situation devoid of security and family intimacy (for example, to a teenager unable to provide adequate care and attention for the infant) then abortion was more appropriate than in other situations. In other words, in the absence of relationships in which the infant could invest trust and derive ontological security, life would not be worth living. Similarly,
the effect of the pregnancy on the mother's trusted relationships or projects for self-
realisation (ie the effect on her immanent faith structure) had to be considered. If, for
example, the pregnancy was the result of rape (itself an act which undermines basic
trust) and would be a constant reminder of the uncertainties of life and so a threat to
the mother's ontological security, then abortion would be acceptable to some young
people. Also, if a pregnancy would undermine other trusted relationships (if, for
example, it would cause disgrace to the family and betray the trust current family
members had in the pregnant woman); or if giving birth and raising a child would
jeopardize the mother's future ontological security by upsetting educational and career
attainment, then according to some young people abortion was an acceptable option.
Under these circumstances abortion was not seen as evil because it was a means of
maintaining the mother's faith – evil was that which undermines faith. The other
justification for abortion was that the foetus could not feel anything and therefore
termination of the pregnancy was not seen as contravening the basic moral criterion
to avoid harming another.

The above therefore locates the main basis for moral decision making in this instance
as being around the organisation of immanent faith. Only one of the interviewees
made a direct reference to the transcendent sanctity of life. Overall, as might be
expected, the young people with a high CR score were more likely to object to
abortion. However, such an objection was not overwhelming and the correlation
between CR score and attitude on this item was weaker than might be expected
(Cramer's V = 0.16, p<0.01). Only 51% of those with high CR scores agreed with
the statement "Abortion is wrong except where the life of the mother is at risk" (17%
disagreed with the statement)\(^1\). Indeed it was interesting to note from the interviews
just how much the importance of autonomy, associated with the significance of the
self in immanent faith, had affected those few youngsters with high CR scores. Even
when these young people saw abortion as morally wrong in relation to an absolute

\(^1\) It could be the case that committed Christians disagreed with the statement, not because they
agreed with abortion under some circumstances, but because they felt all abortions were
wrong, regardless of circumstance, including danger to the mother's life. However, only 3
young people made a note to this affect on their questionnaire, and even then they indicated
a general agreement with the statement in their response.
authority in terms of a transcendent God, nevertheless they were reluctant to 'push their faith' onto somebody else. In other words, the 'absolute authority' was only 'absolute' to them:

I don't agree with it [abortion] but I don't think you can really judge people if they do go ahead with one because it's up to the individual really. But I personally would never do that.

Regardless of the circumstances?
Yeah. I mean, if faced with an unwanted pregnancy I still couldn't go through with it because I just think it's taking a life which God has planned and created and I don't think it's right. It's the same with euthanasia ... and like murdering and stuff. You can't take away a life that Jesus has died for. It's just not right [Julie, Free Church, High].

On the whole I'm against abortion because that's killing an innocent life. But you can't really force your faith upon a woman who's going through a very traumatic time [Sharon, Church of England, High].

Whilst autonomy and individual choice were important for the young people in this study, it was also clear from the interviews that should the young people be faced with making such a decision themselves, they would seek some help. In the first instance such help would be sought from parents. This again reflects the importance of the trust invested in family relationships. None of the young people mentioned consultation with the baby's father in any decision as to whether or not to have an abortion. It seems that this was based on a fairly realistic notion that it would be the mother's parents who would be involved in the main economic provision for the baby and emotional support for the mother. These familial relationships were the relationships which could be relied upon. That less faith was put in the baby's father was not surprising in terms of the current thesis, since the relationship between the teenage mother and her partner was more likely to resemble a 'pure relationship' and, therefore, be inherently unstable and not trustworthy.

6.2.3 Cooperation

The third area of moral concern in Giddens' scheme is that of cooperation, or the relationship of the individual to society both at a local and a global level. One of the
questions Giddens identifies as falling into this category relates to violence; another important area to include here would be the ethics of wealth distribution. Both in the questionnaire and during the interviews, the young people were asked about their moral attitudes under these headings. The interviews also provided the youngsters with a more open ended question in which they could highlight their own concerns about justice in the society they live in.

Violence is not, of course, a new phenomenon in late modernity. It has always occurred on a local level through "invading armies, marauders, local warlords, brigands, robbers or pirates" (Giddens 1991a:107). What is new is the industrialization of violence and the capacity for destruction beyond the local to the global level. Nuclear weapons and chemical warfare make total annihilation a very real possibility. Living under the shadow of this threat, Giddens argues, is a contributory factor to the existential angst of late modernity. Having said this, over the past few years violence at a local level has increasingly become an area of public concern and political importance, in particular that violence involving youth either as victims or perpetrators. The infamous case of the James Bulger murder in 1993 by two 10 year old boys, the murder of a school headmaster in 1995 by a group of youths, the tragic deaths of a group of young children in Dunblane in 1996, are but a few instances that have provoked moral outrage against violence throughout British society. As far as the young people in this study were concerned it was local violence which caused them most anxiety. Local violence in terms of murder was also the most common example the young people gave of evil behaviour.

The youngsters' concern about local violence came through very clearly when they were asked in the interviews about things that made them angry and what they thought about society generally. Over a third of the interviewees cited violence as an issue, in particular the emotional and physical violence associated with bullying. Francis and Kay (1995:32) found that 25% of the young people in their survey were worried about being bullied at school. The young people's response to another being bullied, however, varied according to who they were and the risks the young person ran if they intervened. The young people recognized a power hierarchy in terms of ages in this
respect. Thus, those in older years at school, for instance, had power over younger children. Teachers had the most power, they constituted the 'police' of the school according to Peter. The risks the young people were prepared to run on behalf of another increased according the strength of relationship between them:

*What would you do if you saw somebody being bullied?*
Well, it depends on who's being bullied really. If I don't like them myself I'd leave them. I'd make them tackle him on their own. But if I was a friend or something I'd probably help them out, or if it's someone I don't know I would just keep out of it in case I get hurt or something.

*And how, in the case of your friend, would you, sort of, intervene directly, or would you go and see a teacher or what?*
I would sort of intervene quickly, push them out of the way or something, I don't know. Because the teachers are usually walking around anyway so they would probably spot it ... they are there to teach [and] ... look after us as well aren't they. They're really like policemen in our outside community. In here they're sort of like the law and everything [Peter, Uncertain, Low].

In terms of their own moral behaviour, however, other factors came into play and the strong relationships within a peer group would often take precedence. Trusting relationships which affirmed identity, even at the expense of others, were therefore of great importance to the young people. Simon, for example, suggested his own self-worth was partly determined by his group of friends which entailed loyalty to them and might sometimes involve him in behaviour he would otherwise see as immoral in relation to society in general. As a group they would sometimes enhance their own self-esteem, for instance, by comparing themselves with others to whom they felt superior. Such behaviour increased feelings of self-worth and mutual trust within the group, but led to what group members individually would regard as 'wrong' behaviour:

... people taking the mickey out of other people, sort of like mentally disabled people, physically disabled people, or people in the Third World countries and that. That really winds me up when you get jokes told about them.

*Can you say why?*
Well, it's not their fault they're in that sort of position and people just making fun out of them is not nice. I mean, I've been small all my life. I had a growth deficiency [and] ... when I was young people were
always taking the mickey out of me ... I've learnt to live with it now but at the time ... it wasn't nice, I didn't enjoy it. So I wouldn't do it. Well, I say I wouldn't but if I'm with a gang of lads I might say the odd joke and that, but I'd never actually mean them.

Why do you think you'd say them then, if you're with your friends? I suppose it's just to be in with the crowd rather than be a loner.

[Simon, Agnostic, Medium].

The most commonly mentioned area of concern about society in general followed a similar theme – racism. Both bullying and racism could be classified as 'evil' in the eyes of the interviewees in that both of these actions are attitudes associated with 'hatred' and 'hurting others'. Both of them undermined basic trust in others and trust in the self which was devalued and shamed through victimisation.

On a global level of violence, some of the interviewees also expressed concern about war and terrorism when talking about society, and 59% of the young people agreed with the statement "All war is wrong". Somewhat surprisingly, there was only a very weak correlation between CR score and attitudes towards war (Cramer's V = 0.08 p<0.01). None of the young people specifically mentioned any concern about anxieties relating to nuclear war and global destruction during the interviews. When they did mentioned wars, their comments reflected the fact that there was a safe distance between themselves and specific war situations, in particular the unrest in Yugoslavia and Russia. There was no indication that they really saw this as having any impact on them. They saw such conflicts as 'stupid' situations perhaps, but there was almost a sense in which they accepted war (provided it was going on somewhere else) as an inevitable part of human nature. It was not something they would get really worked up about on a conscious level because it did not have a direct impact upon them or somebody they knew personally. As with environmentalism, this again suggests caution should be exercised in interpreting the results of surveys which prompt young people towards articulating their concerns. Francis and Kay's survey, for instance, suggested that 60% of young people are "concerned about the risk of nuclear war" (1995:70). As far as the interviewees in this study were concerned, it seems unlikely that it was a cause for worry on a daily basis; and as Francis and Kay note:
There is little or no evidence that young people are campaigning for nuclear disarmament in the way that recalls the height of the Cold War (Francis and Kay, 1995:79).

This perhaps indicates that global destruction is not such a cause for existential angst in late modernity as might be anticipated from Giddens' writing. It could, of course, be an area of concern at an unconscious level but this is not verifiable in a sociological study such as this.

Very often one of the causes of violence in society is the unequal distribution of wealth amongst its members:

I wouldn't exactly go on my own in most places.
Why's that?
Because you can't really trust any of this world really nowadays.
Do you think it's a dangerous world?
Yeah.
Can you tell me a little bit more about this idea that it's a dangerous world?
Well, you can't really go down a dark alleyway without thinking there's going to be something around the next corner, can you? I mean, that's what most people tend to believe nowadays, it's 'cause there's violence. I would say this world is a bit violent and can't be trusted because it's between the poor and rich really [Peter, Uncertain, Low].

Inequalities in wealth limit lifestyle choice for some people. The young people in this study were therefore asked about their attitudes and behaviour in terms of economic morality.

The first, somewhat surprising, finding from the interviews was the reluctance some of the young people expressed towards claiming money as the most important thing in life. Money clearly was important to them in that several had Saturday jobs or gained money through occasional work. Indeed, it was a vital part of developing some independence from their family, and in some cases even contributed to the family budget. It was also the case that several of the youngsters had 'invested' in the
National Lottery\(^\text{2}\) and others were looking forward to a career which would leave them 'comfortably' well off. However, whilst late modernity may be characterised by consumerism and a young person might flaunt possession of the latest designer trainers or most up-to-date video games, to come out and say money is the most important thing in life was seen by some youngsters to be an admission of selfishness or superficiality, neither of which was regarded as a desirable quality. This was matched by well worn platitudes such as 'money can't buy you happiness' or 'love'. Personal happiness and love within relationships was, as found in Chapter 3, of primary importance for young people. Moreover, in terms of life planning and career choice the young people also suggested job satisfaction was just as important as economic reward. Thus, although the young people wanted to be comfortable in terms of financial provision, they did not particularly aim to be 'rich':

Money can't buy love so maybe it's not all that important. ... it can buy food and clothes and a house so it's got to be important in some respects to keep you alive, no matter what people say about it, ... [but as] long as I've got enough money to be comfortable and pay the debts I can give the rest away. I won't want it. Because all that'll do is bring people round to, like, they're only after your money. False friends. I wouldn't want that [Simon, Agnostic, Medium].

... what would you say is the most important thing in life?
I was going to say money, but I suppose it's not. I don't know. ... I suppose to me at the moment money's quite important but I don't know really, I haven't got enough experience to know.

Why did you change your mind when you said 'money'?
Because, I don't know, you're not really supposed to say money are you, I suppose. I don't know.

Why don't you think you're supposed to say money?
Because it's selfish ...

Why selfish?
Well, not selfish, but you're not really supposed to, I don't know. All we done in RE and all that. I mean you're not supposed to consider money important or whatever are you?

What do they say in RE then about money?
What is it? If you idolise money you can't idolise God, or something

\(^2\) Several of the young people in the study were against the National Lottery on the grounds that it was a 'waste of money' and might encourage gambling which potentially put vulnerable people in financial jeopardy. However, most of the youngsters regarded it as a harmless bit of fun with low stakes and therefore held no moral objection to it.
like that. [Martin, Church of England, Medium].

In discussing the National Lottery with the interviewees it seemed to be the case that for some being rich held the potential for fear and guilt and, therefore, also potentially undermined trust. Fear, as Simon's comment above suggests, was associated with loss of 'true' friends, that is, people who liked him for 'who he is'. Several of the interviewees in this respect felt that being rich would attract friends who liked you 'for your money' rather than for 'who you are' and this was a heavy price to pay. In other words, being rich potentially threatened the possibility of trusted relationships and so could jeopardize ontological security.

There was guilt associated with being rich too, especially where wealth was the result of good fortune rather than hard work and, therefore, seen as largely 'undeserved'. A lottery win was not in this sense an 'achievement' which could enhance the individual's faith in him/herself. Such a win was recognised as being down to external random chance or 'luck', and as I indicated in Chapter 4, it was outside of the individual's control. In this respect, the organisation of immanent faith suggests that to work and achieve and thereby gain self-realisation is a moral good as this promotes faith in the self. At the same time, however, a failure to share providential rewards can threaten interpersonal trust as it goes against the principle identified in Chapter 5 of offering support when possible to others, and consequently guilt results from a sense of having done something wrong:

And what would you do if you won 12 million pounds?
... I've read a lot about people saying how to remove the thought of guilt ... I suppose I'd get myself sorted and then see what else I could do, see if I could help anybody. It sounds so, sort of, stereotypical, or cliched, but I think I'd have a go. I think I'd go a bit further than myself and my family. Maybe a charity ...
What do you mean by this guilt thing? Why would you be guilty?
... I can't speak for everyone, but me as a person, if I owned that much

3 Martin went on to say that he was not sure whether or not he believed in God. His concern over idolatry therefore indicates how values associated with conventional Christianity may still linger even in a secular society.
I would find it very difficult to deny anything from someone who didn't have as much as me, if you know what I mean. Like people who are in need, you know ... I mean as a person I feel reasonably guilty if I go past, I don't know, like a tramp in the street type-thing. ... I mean, some of them, I must admit I go past them and the devious part of me sort of like sits there and looks at them and thinks: "What have you done wrong type-thing?"; but there's always the other side of me thinking: "I wish I could help". Even if it's only subconscious it's always there and I think if I could help, I'd find it very difficult not to on a large enough scale. ... I mean, it would be difficult to remove this guilt thing by just some sort of helping in one incident. You'd have to do something wider than that to remove it completely. Even then I think most probably it would still remain. ... I think the only way you could not feel guilty is if you were rock bottom yourself, and if that happened you'd have a lot more things to worry about than other people [Keith, Free Church, High].

The idea of helping 'when possible' is important here, because it implies that generally immanent faith obliges the individual to secure his/her own wellbeing first, family and close friends next and, finally, the wellbeing of others. Taking responsibility for one's self is, of course, part and parcel of exercising autonomy. Thus, whilst selfishness was to be avoided as morally bad (it threatens faith by detracting from the reciprocal task of contributing to the ontological security of others), selfishness is only defined as such when the self receives attention over and above the securing of a reasonable level of personal wellbeing and at the expense of others. What counted as 'reasonable' was somewhat subjective so, just when the needs of others took over from the needs of the self, depended on the individual concerned:

I think some people make selfish choices and some people make choices to help each other ... different people have loads of different opinions of what they should do and all that ... I make decisions for myself and other people. If I help myself, then I might be happy, but I try and help other people at the same time as well

Which is most important of those people?

I don't know. It depends, I mean, sometimes you can do it for yourself. Sometimes you can help other people and it's different times, different things happen. Sometimes it can just be little things and you'd rather do something for yourself. If it's worse, you know, you want to help other people then [Paul, Church of England, Medium].
The balance between meeting one's own needs and the sense of moral obligation to help other people led the young people to take a pragmatic stance on giving to charities. Charitable giving was made from surplus money left over after the individual's own needs had been met. The conflict between the needs of self and society was also reflected in the youngsters' responses to the statement "Rich nations should have a lower standard of living to help poorer countries become wealthy". In principle the young people gave the impression of generosity. Forty-two percent of them agreed with the statement, whereas 36% were uncertain and 22% disagreed. Here Table 4.1 shows the young people with high CR scores were more likely than the other young people to agree with this view. This fits with the Christian ideal of responsibility to others (including strangers), 'holding all things in common' and avoidance of financial idolatry. Unfortunately, there was not time to explore this with all the interviewees so it remains unclear as to what sort of sacrifices the youngsters themselves would be prepared to tolerate for global economic equality. It appears to be the case, however, that sacrifices for others depends to a certain extent on an evaluation of how the other person/nation got into an underprivileged predicament. As Keith's comment implies, there was greater sympathy for those who were regarded as 'deserving poor' (ie where the individual's problems were not the result of his/her fault), and David implied a certain reluctance to give up living standards too readily:

... the rich who are making money is fine, that's up to them. But the poor, you have to find out why [they're poor] and tackle the problem. It's not really up to the rich because they work really hard for their money, so it's quite fair that they should keep it ...

_Do you think there could ever be a situation where all nations could have an equal standard of living?_

No, I don't think so. I think countries will always be different.  
_Do you think that's fair?_

Yes, because you can choose how a country is run, so it is fair. Because ... well, most countries have governments you can choose from, so you should have the one that people think is right [David, Roman Catholic, High].

This view again implies the individual has a responsibility to secure his/her own wellbeing. However, the young people were reluctant to suggest that people should be forced to take care of themselves financially in that only 21% of the teenagers
agreed that "People who are unemployed should have to take any job available or lose their unemployment benefit". In this respect, those with higher CR scores showed a higher degree of uncertainty than the other groups, but they were the least likely to agree with the statement.

When it came to giving to deserving causes the range of charities to which the youngsters were prepared to contribute was quite extensive. One or two were involved with medical charities which they were introduced to through family or friends' illnesses, that is, through the relationships of the basic immanent faith structure. Others took part in a sponsored famine and contributed to Third World aid, as a result of hearing about the plight of people living in Africa through the media. Here the young people's giving reflected something of the time-space distanciation noted by Giddens as a feature of late modernity. As well as the local needs of family and friends with whom they had face-to-face contact, the young people were aware of international needs (famine and wars) and national problems (especially homelessness) through television, newspapers, etc. However, in terms of priority, local needs always came first, as indicated above. Indeed, the importance of electronic communications technology in this respect lay partly in the fact that it brought about the realization of a 'global village' whereby the global became local. Pictures of suffering individuals were brought into the family home by television pictures; 'face-to-face' contact or a 'personal relationship' was thus approximated enough for the young person to feel some sort of moral responsibility towards the other. From the interviews, however, it seems any such feelings of responsibility were somewhat short-lived and dependent on the media emphasis. Young people do not pro-actively follow up issues themselves. Another influence on international and national moral awareness came through the schools highlighting some social issues during lesson time. The possible extension to the prioritizing of moral obligation around local intimate relationships, was the responsibility some of the young Christians had towards financial giving to their church. Several of the young people were expected to tithe their pocket money or other income (that is, give 10% of their income to the church for God's work):
Being a Christian you have to pay a lot of tax ... paying one tenth of everything you have to the Lord [John, Free Church, High].

It is reasonable to assume that part of this money would be used by the church to cover running costs. However, beyond this, churches are also involved in meeting social needs at national and international levels as well as those of the local community. Nevertheless, whilst such giving was seen as a part of what it was to be a Christian, one of the youngsters involved in tithing noted that she was not always happy about it, partly because there was no personal involvement with the recipient of the money:

... my mum's always said that a tenth belongs to God, you know. Like, when she gives me my pocket money or allowance I give so much away. ... I don't really agree with it. ... [But] my mum, you know, she goes: "Have you given some away". If I say: "No", she takes it out of my pocket money or something like that. So I just do it anyway, even though I don't agree with it.

Well, I think, you know, it becomes a chore and when you do give money away you don't get the pleasure of giving, like, I don't know, three pounds to an old man who's homeless. [Rebecca, Free Church, High].

One of the advantage of the charitable events the young people mentioned, such as the 'Live Aid' concert or 'Comic Relief', was that through electronic media they temporarily created a sense of local community. Individuals not only were linked to deprived areas of the world by television but they were also encouraged to engage in enjoyable, fund raising events with others, often family and friends. As such, the charitable event became a form of entertainment and therefore focused upon personal happiness within immanent faith relationships. It also provided an opportunity to build up faith in oneself and others in that there was a sense of achievement over what was accomplished, and trust was shared in working together with others for the 'good cause'. The rapid dissipation of this 'community' after the event, however, highlights the fluidity of late modernity and general lack of a permanent sense of community.

It was not surprising, given the lack of communal sense, that the young people
generally seemed to have difficulty when it came to discussing social concerns on a national and global level. For some, at least, this was not something which particularly concerned them:

Can you tell me if you think young people are happy with the way society is in this country now?
I think some young people are and some young people aren't. I think it's mainly [that] their opinion is the same as their parents about society because that's who they listen to ... I don't really take much interest in it ... My dad's got a lot of opinions about society and that, and I only sort of listen to them ... if I think they're right. I sort of believe them a little bit, but I don't think young people know that much about that sort of thing to have any big opinion on it. I don't know that much about it at all to have opinions really [Godfrey, Roman Catholic, Medium].

I don't sort of think about society as a whole because I'm sort of more on my own than part of a big society and that [Susan, Atheist, Low].

For others, feelings of being powerless may have prevented them from taking a more active interest. Francis and Kay (1995:70), found in their survey, for example, that 25% of young people agreed with the statement "There is nothing I can do to solve the world's problems". In this respect, David, who compared with the other interviewees had quite a strong awareness of social issues through his work with the Red Cross, said in relation to his concern about the National Health Service:

There's nothing really which I can do. Nobody listens to young people. [David, Roman Catholic, High].

He went on:

I don't think many people give it [society] thought ... I think they should do because it's going to affect them later on in life. But we can't do much, we can't go and demonstrate because there wouldn't be much support [David, Roman Catholic, High].

In terms of social issues covered in the survey, the biggest variation in opinion between young people with different CR scores came in relation to Sunday trading.
Overall, only 12% of young people thought Sunday trading was wrong. It appears that most young people saw the prohibition of Sunday trading as an outdated religious law which unnecessarily inconvenienced them. It was also seen as a specifically Christian issue which was being pushed onto others and, therefore, was an infringement of personal freedom and autonomy. There was no indication that the young people had considered the possibility that shop-workers may be forced to work when they might prefer not to.

The morality expressed in this area of cooperation once again, therefore, highlights the values identified in Chapter 5. Self, family and close friends are the most important influence on moral decision-making.

6.2.4 Personhood

The final moral area Giddens identifies relates to the domain of self-identity and moral dilemmas in relation to the self and body. Pertinent questions in this realm include: "What rights does the individual have over her/his body?" and "What, if any, gender differences should be preserved?" In terms of the current study this realm of morality was considered through the young people's attitudes towards the expression of sexuality (sexuality being a major aspect of self-identity) and the use of drugs (drug use is often seen as damaging to the body).

Adolescence can be a traumatic time for the young person as s/he begins to develop his/her sexuality. Not only does s/he have to come to terms with physical changes but also the social and political implications of sexuality — teenage pregnancy, AIDS, sexual abuse, adultery, homosexuality, etc. Despite the risks associated with sexual expression, surveys on young people's sexual attitudes and practices indicate a liberal view. Francis and Kay's survey, for instance, reports that only 13% of young people think "it is wrong to have sexual intercourse outside marriage" compared to 70% who do not (1995:83). These results are similar to the current survey. Seventy-two percent of the young people disagreed with the statement "It's wrong to have sexual intercourse outside marriage", 16% were uncertain and 12% agreed. Francis and Kay
also found that over half (54%) of their young people did not think it was "wrong to have sexual intercourse under the legal age (16 years)" compared to 24% who did (1995:83). In accordance with this, Family Planning Clinic Service figures suggest the average age at which 16 to 24 year olds lose their virginity is 17 (Independent 23.1.85:19). Wilkins argues that the expression of sexuality has in fact become an amoral activity:

Sexual intercourse is a form of play – and nothing else. Play is appropriate to lower age groups. Not only are films, magazines, books and advertisements giving young people sexual role models to emulate, the adult world can tell them nothing about sex except that it is play, and play is what children do. ... For all its passions and ardour, sex is at best recreational and at its most basic a form of nervous and hydraulic relief (Wilkins 1995:89).

It is difficult to judge on the basis of the current data whether the young people saw sexual practices in quite such an amoral way because the questions were framed such that they implied it was a moral issue. However, what was clear, was that whether sexual practices were right or wrong depended more on the practical implications for the self and interpersonal feelings than on transcendent moral absolutes. Thus sex outside marriage was seen as wrong if undertaken without due regard for the risks of disease or unwanted pregnancy (see Section 6.2.2):

I don't think that it's wrong, [but] I feel that if you're going to you [should] make sure you're prepared for the consequences. I mean there's nothing wrong with having sex outside marriage it's just that some people [think]: "Oh well, we'll leave contraception this time" and they get pregnant and they don't know what to do [Samantha, Agnostic, Medium].

I think they [one night stands] are not worth it and [you] shouldn't bother ... like in a loving relationship you're more open with, like, your partner, you can talk more. But if it's just a one night stand, you meet them, you go off, you have sex, that's it. You don't see them again. Whereas they could have any infection or anything you don't know about. But with your partner you'd talk about any problems or anything you might have [Penelope, Roman Catholic, Medium].
The last comment suggests that the other criteria appropriate for controlling sexual practices were subjective feelings of love and fidelity. However, what counted as fidelity and love were quite minimal. The young people's understanding of love in these relationships was the same as the love they had for peer group friends (see Section 5.1.1). Thus 'love' did not necessarily imply permanency, strength of relationship or obligation – love in this case had a degree of transience. A 'long term' faithful relationship might be just a month or so, and 'love', as Paul states below, could easily be substituted by 'liking':

I mean, if you like the person a lot it's alright. I mean, I don't believe it's wrong to have sex outside marriage [Paul, Church of England, Medium].

One of the questions on the questionnaire asked if it's wrong to have sex outside marriage, what do you think about that?
I don't believe in that.
Can you say why?
... I think as long as you love each other you don't need to be married to be in love. ... As long as you feel it's right, I think it's OK [Louise, Roman Catholic, Medium].

In the end, the young people felt it was up to individuals to decide for themselves an acceptable basis upon which to engage in sexual intercourse.

The exception to this liberal attitude came, not surprisingly, from the young people with a strong Christian faith. The survey showed that there was a relatively strong correlation between CR score and attitude towards sex outside marriage (Cramer's V = 0.32, p<0.01), with 41% of those scoring highly on the scale thinking it wrong compared to 7% of those with a medium CR score and 6% of those scoring low on the scale. In contrast to the young people with liberal views whose moral guidance was internally referential, the committed Christian youngsters in the interviews made reference to the external, transcendent authority of God and the Bible as the criteria for judging when sex was appropriate. Sexual intercourse was seen by these young people as something 'special' and, therefore, 'sacred' in terms of being 'set apart'. In this sense it was a means of enhancing the immanent faith between two married
people by relating it to transcendent faith. Sex was not in this respect seen as a form of play and indiscriminate sex was understood to devalue it as a means of intimate expression:

I don't think it's [sex before marriage] right. ... Because, ... it says in the Bible that you're not to have a sexual relationship before marriage, and I think that it could ruin someone emotionally and physically. I think it would be more special if you waited until you were married. I think it would be much better [Brian, Free Church, High].

I'm not really for sex before marriage because I think people should wait; because God invented sex and he made it for marriage. So ... I think you should wait because it's not something you can just go out and do because it's so special. He created it, it should be in the right place. If you, sort of, go around having sex with anybody before marriage, it takes away how special it is. So I wouldn't, I don't think [Sharon, Church of England, High].

As in their attitude towards abortion, however, these young people also took the autonomy of individuals to be of great importance too. Thus, the transcendent authority to which they referred to guide their actions was seen as their own personal choice and they were rather tentative about suggesting it was an ultimate moral value binding on others. They had chosen to submit to God as ultimate authority but recognized the right of other individuals to choose differently. Seen in this way, it is the individual in his/her freedom to choose who ultimately has authority.

As far as the young people's lifeplans were concerned their comments indicated that in the future most of them wanted and expected to have a family of their own. However, as mentioned earlier, this did not necessarily imply marriage:

As it stands at the moment, no, I wouldn't [get married]. All being married means is you wear a ring on your finger and there's a piece of paper saying "married". If you've lived with someone for 16 years, you've got three kids and you've worked really hard together, that bit of paper and two rings aren't worth anything [Simon, Agnostic, Medium].

I think that it's wrong when it's: "Oh you can't live in sin, you can't have a child before you're married". I think now, in this day and age,
if people love each other they don't have to get married. What does a ring symbolise in a marriage? I don't think it symbolises anything. I don't think they [the Church] should be so strict on getting married and then having children ... If I got pregnant, like, by accident and I didn't like the person then I don't think there's any point in getting married because there's no point a child having two parents that are at each other's throats or one parent that's unhappy [Penelope, Roman Catholic, Medium].

These comments suggest once again that immanent faith can operate alone without reference to the transcendent, even at such a fateful moment as having children. Penelope's last comment is important too because it makes reference to a risk the young people are very much aware of, that is, divorce. Nine of the young people in the study had parents who had divorced⁴ and five of them identified the divorce as a fateful moment in their lives. As discussed in Section 5.1.1, divorce brings about a number of reorganisations in the structure of trust and potentially undermines the faith of young people. Their experience of the divorce had made some of the young people cautious about marriage and families for themselves:

I mean, everyone would like to [get married] but I don't want to put children, if I have children, through the same situation that I went through, because I was so young and I didn't understand what was going on and I couldn't understand why my dad wasn't there [Maggie, Agnostic, Low].

I mean, I suppose I'd like to have a husband, well, or to live with someone who cares and loves me. Don't know about children. I suppose I will, but I don't know. It's a big step. I wouldn't like them to like go through a divorce or anything. [Alison, Atheist, Low].

Even when marriage was desirable it was not necessarily linked to a transcendent reality. In this respect the young people who wanted to get married were asked if they would have a church wedding. Most of the young people said that they would prefer a church wedding but their reasons had more to do with marking the day out as significant to them and, importantly, to their families and friends, than to do with God. As suggested in Chapter 5, church weddings are a remnant of pre-modernity

⁴ All but one of these youngsters had a medium/low CR score.
which facilitated the celebration of family, close friends and self-realisation. In this sense it was a day of coming together and taking a pride in one’s self. It was, therefore, more a rite of immanent faith than transcendent faith. Romantic ideals were important in this respect and a church building contributed to this sort of atmosphere. However, other ‘traditional’ pastoral or rural settings could also serve the purpose just as well:

I've always thought of not getting married in church but maybe getting married in a field or something; you know, a barley field or something like that.

Why in a barley field?

Don't know. It's like, maybe in harvest time when all the barley's brown. It's nice. [Maggie, Agnostic, Low].

For some, however, a fateful moment such as marriage did require something extra to strengthen the 'protective cocoon' of immanent faith. Thus, a few of the young people, whose Christian belief was customary in style tapped into transcendent referents to mark out the ceremony as one of extra significance:

You're more sort of blessed in a way with a church for marriage ...

What do you mean by being more 'blessed'?

I mean you're going to church and I suppose it's God again, but to be blessed by God really and to have ... your vows and everything. I think if you were just to do it in a building you might as well just do it anywhere. It's not the same [Louise, Roman Catholic, Medium].

For the majority, the conventional Christian element of the ceremony was not of particular significance beyond tradition and making the day pretty and special for family and friends. This was true particularly for the boys, some of whom suggested in the interviews that they were indifferent as to what sort of wedding they might have and would leave the choice down to their partner.

Again the exceptions to these views came from the young people with high CR scores who attached a transcendent significance to the marriage ceremony. For them, marriage vows were as much a commitment to God as they were to the other person.
Moreover, one or two of the young people with high CR scores said that if they were to get married their partner would be determined by God, and that it would be important to marry another Christian so that they would share beliefs. Julie drew upon the Bible as the authority in this respect, and upon her faith in God's commitment to her:

I don't believe that, you know, Christians should, like, go out with people who aren't Christians sort-of-thing, because the Bible talks about us being unequally yoked with unbelievers ... I think that for every Christian, you know, God has got something in mind. If it's his will that they get married he's got someone in mind. And ... it's not my job to, like, rush after any blokes or anything, [but] just to sit back and when the right time comes he'll provide me with the right person [Julie, Free Church, High].

It is perhaps worth noting here that, given that the demographic make up of Christian congregations is predominantly female and therefore short of potential marriage partners, it is sometimes difficult for Christian girls to adhere strictly to such a moral code.

It should also be noted that, regardless of the basis for moral attitude, the young people were under a certain amount of peer pressure to engage in sexual activity. As with the other areas mentioned above, the importance of self-acceptance by close friends was sometimes strong enough to persuade the young people to adopt a course of action which they might otherwise have preferred not to:

I think that ... I shouldn't have sex before marriage but the temptation is so big that I probably will. But I think that if I lose my virginity it will be with someone who I really feel I love a lot because I think that's what it is, the unity of a man and a woman. ... All my friends have lost their virginity, so it is very difficult. ... but I'm not going to be rushed into something that's going to be gone forever just because they want it, you know. They think it's, you know, good or whatever, or 'cool' or 'happening' ... but I know full well that that isn't, not necessarily, what God wants ... But I don't know. [Pam, Free Church, High].
Indeed, one girl mentioned that her friends saw pregnancy as a means of retaining a boyfriend. Penelope spoke about the advice her friends gave her when her relationship with her boyfriend was coming to an end:

Well, friends said: "Oh well, yeah, cool. You don't want to lose him, you don't want to lose him. Have a child!" I'm thinking: "I'm only 16 – Go away!" [Penelope, Roman Catholic, Medium].

The young people's comments, therefore, confirm sexuality in late modernity is separated from reproduction, marriage and transcendent significance. However, the ideal of sexuality being expressed in a loving relationship was retained and as a source of intimacy was potentially a means of enhancing the bonds of trust in the basic immanent faith structure, provided it was not a practice engaged in indiscriminately.

Apart from the appropriate context for sexual intercourse, the young people were also asked about their attitudes towards homosexuality. In this respect the youngsters were relatively conservative which was a little surprising given their liberal attitudes towards the expression of heterosexuality. A third (32%) of the young people thought homosexuality was wrong compared to 46% who did not (22% were undecided). This conservative element was apparent regardless of strength of Christian faith, since there was only a very weak and statistically insignificant correlation between CR score and attitude (Cramer's V = 0.06). When the questionnaires were being completed in the classroom sessions, it was clear, from the young people's reactions, that homosexuality was a controversial issue, not so much because it was regarded as 'morally wrong', but rather because it threatened their own developing sexual identity and therefore self-identity. To declare a liberal attitude towards homosexuality was taken by peers as tantamount to declaring one's own identity as gay, and since homosexuality tended to be viewed negatively, it was not something a young person would want to admit to if they wished to avoid being the subject of rejection and bullying. Having said that, the young people did retain a more generalised attitude of tolerance in that they accepted the right of others to chose a gay lifestyle, provided it was not pushed upon them. In terms of rights over one's own body and self-expression through sexuality, individual autonomy was therefore of greatest
importance in the majority of cases.

The other realm of bodily control the young people were asked about related to the substances one puts in to it, that is, drugs. In terms of soft drugs, which are not necessarily thought to be harmful to the body, 36% of young people agreed with the statement "It's alright to use soft drugs like marijuana (hash or pot)", 47% on the other hand disagreed and the remainder were uncertain. In the *Teenage Religion and Values Survey* the acceptability of drugs to young people varied according to substance. Thus, 81% agreed that it was wrong to sniff glue, 79% that it was wrong to use heroin, 75% thought sniffing butane gas unacceptable, 58% thought marijuana use was wrong, 45% were against smoking cigarettes and 22% were against becoming drunk. The more dangerous the drug, the more of a threat it was to ontological security and the less acceptable to take. From the current interviews it seems that those youngsters who were against the use of drugs again made their choice on pragmatic grounds rather than in relation to an ultimate authority. That is, in several respects drug use was thought to be against their own interests. Firstly, they were aware of some of the harmful effects of drug abuse; secondly, the drugs they had tried had been ineffectual; and thirdly, they simply did not like them and had stopped taking them. The sorts of drugs the young people in this study had tried were cigarettes, alcohol and marijuana:

\[
\text{I've tried marijuana and that. Didn't really do anything for me. And I've tried a normal cigarette and the only thing that done for me was make me want to throw up, so I didn't touch those again [Simon, Agnostic, Medium].}
\]

*And have you ever smoked?*

Yeah. ... It was OK. I don't see why people keep on about it because it's nothing really special [Samantha, Agnostic, Medium].

My brother said to me: "Never try drugs", and I sort of thought: "Well I suppose he knows what he's talking about".

*Has he tried them?*

No. Some of his friends were on drugs and I've met a man (he lived next-door to one of my step-mother's sisters) and he used to be a drug addict. ... he's really skinny, he can't put on weight and he has to be addicted to something. So he smokes a lot and he drinks loads of
coffee, and he's on a prescription and stuff ... he may not be allowed to leave the country ... because if you're a registered drug addict you can't leave the country or you can't go on holidays without special permission. So you sort of see what it does to people and you think: "No, I'm not going into that then" [Susan, Atheist, Low].

Other young people simply thought they were a waste of time. For example:

I would never do it [take drugs] and I've been offered, but I would never do it. I just don't need it. People need it to be happy and to have fun. I just think it's pretty sad that. I mean, because some people only take Ecstasy because if they go to a rave or something they can't keep up. And what really kills you, as well as the drug, is the dehydration because you keep going and I don't really need it. I can keep going because I'm fit and I think it's better to be fit and have your adrenaline that way [Louise, Roman Catholic, Medium].

Only the Christian young people gave a transcendent reason for their moral opinion. They objected to recreational drug use on the grounds that it was contrary to God's will and so it undermined respect for God and the self. The following comments do, however, make the distinction between drugs and alcohol, the latter were seen as being much more acceptable:

I don't think being paralytically drunk, you know, is what he [God] wants. I mean, drinking's alright to an extent. And also with drugs as well, I think you just ruin your body with them. ... it's just my opinion [Pam, Free Church, High].

... your body is a temple of the Lord and if you destroy it [with hash] it's destroying the Lord.

What about drinking and stuff like that, do your friends go out drinking?
Yeah.
Do you go with them?
No, because I don't really ... like it. I'm not against it at all, that's not so bad.

What's the difference between alcohol and hash?
I don't know. Alcohol you can control in a way, with the other stuff you can't [Brian, Free Church, High].

The results of the survey indicated that opinion on drug use was correlated to strength
of Christian religiosity. Sixty-six percent of those with high CR scores as against, 48% of young people with medium scores and 33% of youngsters with low scores, were opposed to marijuana use (Cramer's V = 0.18 p<0.01). However, the comments again revealed the subjective basis on which the young people held their opinions:

It's really up to the person ... they're making a personal decision, but they [drugs] can be very harmful.
If you had a friend who was taking them what would you do?
I would suggest to them that they stop, but I wouldn't try and make them stop. [David, Roman Catholic, High].

Drugs were readily available to the youngsters and all of the young people who were asked said that they knew where they could get hold of drugs should they want to. There was also a degree of peer pressure influencing whether or not they took drugs and an expectation on them that, being young, they would want to experiment. Even amongst their parents it seems there was a non-reactive attitude to their children's experimentation since it was seen as a 'normal' part of growing up. One of the young people explained how her mother allowed her to drink alcohol so that she would get used to it and not drink to excess when she was legally allowed to consume alcohol. It was also the case that several of the young people spent their leisure time in pubs and nightclubs where they would drink alcohol although they were under the legal age limit. In these cases not only was this form of drug use acceptable to them, but so too was breaking the law on the age for alcohol consumption. Francis and Kay in relation to this found that 39% of young people thought there was "nothing wrong in buying alcoholic drinks under the legal age (18 years)" (1995:98). Freedom of the individual, therefore, challenges the legal controls of society. This could suggest that for minor offences at least, the law is only morally binding where the individual agrees with it.

Given the ill affects drugs can have on health and as perceived by the young people, it is perhaps worth noting here the moral status health and bodily control has been given in recent years too. Many of the young people in this study noted that sport was something they liked to be actively involved in as well as enjoying it as
spectators. Stringent control of the body, for example, in cases of anorexia, and the implicit assumption that being thin is morally better than being over-weight has become part of the reflexive project of the self. This stands in contrast to the inclination to relax control of the body through the use of alcohol and other drugs. The plurality of life worlds which characterise high-modernity are reflected in the opposing views the young people have chosen to adopt. On the whole, however, the young people suggested that the owner has complete autonomy over his/her body. It is up to the individual him/herself to decide who they are and express themselves in whatever way they think is appropriate, provided that others are not hurt in the process.

Before moving on to consider the implications of these results from the theoretical perspective of the current thesis, it is worth considering differences in moral attitudes according to gender and religious identity.

6.3 Lifestyle Decisions According To Gender And Religious Identity

6.3.1 Gender

Table 6.2 sets out how the moral beliefs in the survey differed according to gender. It would seem that the girls were generally more concerned about the people and the environment around them than the boys. Thus they were more likely to be concerned for the environment and were slightly more likely to object to abortion and war than boys. Girls were perhaps more aware, therefore, of a responsibility to protect the life and ontological security of others rather than threaten it. The girls were also more supportive of rich nations accepting a lower standard of living to help poorer nations become wealthier. In terms of unemployment, the girls were less inclined to force people into work regardless of the individual's suitability or inclination for the job. This would suggest that they thought the self should be respected and realised in an environment suitable to the individual. Furthermore, the girls were more tolerant of the self being expressed in a homosexual way than were the boys. It seems the
exploration of homosexual identity was particularly difficult for boys because it threatened their developing sense of masculinity. Indeed the correlation between gender and moral attitudes was strongest on this item. Forty-five per cent of boys agreed that homosexual relationships were wrong compared to only 20% of girls (Cramer's V = 0.33, p<0.01). The boys tended to retreat from homosexuality by labelling it 'abnormal' and declaring that they wanted nothing to do with it themselves. The girls on the other hand made comments appealing for tolerance and the right to individual freedom:

It is [homosexual relations] wrong, against the way of nature [Joe, Roman Catholic, Medium].

I do not mind gays, as long as they keep it to themselves – do not have gay marches. They should not involve me in it. Besides, they are not normal. It may not be wrong though, who am I to say? [Rob, Roman Catholic, Medium].

I think number 47 [on the questionnaire] was wrong to ask. It is up to the gays and lesbians. Nobody else can say anything. They do not say anything about our relationships. We should leave them alone. They are the same as us. They just have different feelings. This is not relevant to ask [Angela, Agnostic, Medium].

I think that implying that lesbian and gay relationships are wrong is totally despicable. How are young people supposed to be true to themselves with the Church attacking the very idea? [Hazel, Roman Catholic, Medium].

Finally, the girls were less inclined to risk harm to others through drug use.
Table 6.2: Moral beliefs by gender – % agree (n=100%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Belief</th>
<th>Male (n=530)</th>
<th>Female (n=553)</th>
<th>Cramer's V (p&lt;0.01)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Protecting the environment and avoiding pollution is less urgent than often suggested</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abortion is wrong except where the life of the mother is at risk</td>
<td>36 (534)</td>
<td>42 (550)</td>
<td>0.08*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All war is wrong</td>
<td>47 (530)</td>
<td>71 (547)</td>
<td>0.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rich nations should have a lower standard of living to help poorer nations become wealthier</td>
<td>34 (529)</td>
<td>50 (551)</td>
<td>0.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People who are unemployed should have to take any job available or lose their unemployment benefit</td>
<td>27 (530)</td>
<td>15 (551)</td>
<td>0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping on Sunday is wrong</td>
<td>12 (533)</td>
<td>12 (533)</td>
<td>0.00*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It's wrong to have sexual intercourse outside marriage</td>
<td>13 (535)</td>
<td>11 (552)</td>
<td>0.06*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homosexual (gay and lesbian) relationships are wrong</td>
<td>45 (532)</td>
<td>20 (553)</td>
<td>0.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It's alright to use soft drugs like marijuana (hash or pot)</td>
<td>44 (535)</td>
<td>29 (551)</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use the Bible to guide the way I live my life</td>
<td>9 (528)</td>
<td>11 (547)</td>
<td>0.04*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Not significant at the p<0.01 level.
Table 6.3  Career choices of the interviewees by gender.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Career</th>
<th>Gender representation**</th>
<th>Male (n)</th>
<th>Female (n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional and related in education, welfare and health</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child’s nurse</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary school teacher</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art teacher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecturer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overseas children’s aid worker</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catering, cleaning, hairdressing and other personal services</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stylist</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hairdresser</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air hostess</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selling</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel agent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butcher</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security and protective services</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire brigade</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prison warden</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambulance service</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police service</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farming, fishing and related</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vet</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with animals</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managerial: large and small establishments</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure manager</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shop manager</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional and related in science, engineering and technology</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientist</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formula 1 designer</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanic</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport operating, materials moving, storing and related</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air traffic controller</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literary, artistic and sport</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graphic Design</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photographer</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animator</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional sportsperson</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actor</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musician</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church</td>
<td>[Male]***</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missionary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evangelist</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some of the young people gave more than one occupational choice.

** Dominant gender in occupation area according to Hakim (1992).

*** Not included in Hakim's study – traditionally male officials.
All of the above supports the points made in Chapters 3 and 4 that gender roles do not seem to have changed that much and may still contribute to how individuals organise their faith. Traditionally girls are brought up as the nurturers and are pre-eminent in the private world of family, intimate friendships and emotional support. Given this upbringing, it is not surprising to find the girls in effect, preparing to take up the mantle of 'guardians of immanent faith' with the responsibility of maintaining the ontological security of others. This was also reflected in their lifecplans insofar as career choices went. A good, enjoyable career was one of the future hopes all the young people had and potentially employment was a means of self-realisation. However, Table 6.3 illustrates the gendered nature of the young people's chosen careers. It lists the career choices of the interviewees under the headings used by Hakim (1992) to look at gender segregation in occupations. From this it can be seen that the young people in this study tended to fall in with the general gender pattern of career choices. The girls predominantly hoped to establish careers in those areas which would promote the ontological security of others (that is, education, welfare, health, protective and personal services).

6.3.2 Religious Identity

Table 6.4 describes the attitudes and beliefs of the young people according to religious identity. The main point to be drawn from this is that the Free Church members tend to have a more conservative moral stance than the young people in the other groups. On the whole, the non-Christians were more liberal than the Christian groups, although they were more authoritarian when it came to unemployment benefit. The Atheists and Uncertains were more likely to want people to be prepared to take on any sort of work or risk their benefit payments. The conservative nature of the Free Church members lies in part with their greater inclination towards a Bible-based approach to life. In this respect 55% of the Free Church young people said that they used the Bible to guide their lives, compared to only 17% of the Church of England, 8% of the Roman Catholic and 7% of the Non-Denominational Christian youngsters. Even fewer of the non-Christian groups made reference to it. These Free Church young people were therefore relying on external criteria to judge behaviour, whereas
the other groups were more inclined to look internally to themselves, their family and friends for moral guidance. The area in which this had greatest effect was in relation to Sunday trading and sexual relationships outside marriage. Compared to the other groups, the Free Church young people were more likely to be opposed to such practices. These results therefore accord with the argument set out in Chapter 3 that Free Church members place more emphasis on the Bible than the other identity groups do. Since they tend to accept the authority of the Bible they are more inclined to be bound by its moral teaching than the other groups and consequently are more conservative. As will be discussed in Chapter 7, Free Church members also tend to have the social network necessary for reinforcing and implementing the consequences of transcendent faith. It was mentioned earlier, for example, that Rebecca's mother ensured she tithed her pocket money. This was not so much the case for the youngsters in the other identity groups.
Table 6.4: Moral beliefs by religious identity – % agree (n=100%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Belief</th>
<th>RC</th>
<th>FC</th>
<th>CoE</th>
<th>Non-Denom</th>
<th>Ag</th>
<th>Ath</th>
<th>Uncert</th>
<th>Cramer’s V (p&lt;0.01)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Protecting the environment and avoiding pollution is less urgent than often suggested</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.09*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoiding pollution is urgent than often suggested</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>120</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abortion is wrong except where the life of the mother is at risk</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abortion is wrong except where the life of the mother is at risk</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>120</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All war is wrong</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>0.09*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All war is wrong</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>120</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rich nations should have a lower standard of living to help poorer nations become wealthier</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rich nations should have a lower standard of living to help poorer nations become wealthier</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>120</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People who are unemployed should have to take any job available or lose their unemployment benefit</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People who are unemployed should have to take any job available or lose their unemployment benefit</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>120</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping on Sunday is wrong</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping on Sunday is wrong</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>120</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It's wrong to have sexual intercourse outside marriage</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It's wrong to have sexual intercourse outside marriage</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>120</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homosexual (gay and lesbian) relationships are wrong</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>0.08*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homosexual (gay and lesbian) relationships are wrong</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>120</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It's alright to use soft drugs like marijuana (hash or pot)</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It's alright to use soft drugs like marijuana (hash or pot)</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>120</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use the Bible to guide the way I live my life</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use the Bible to guide the way I live my life</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>120</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Not significant at the p<0.01 level.

Key: RC = Roman Catholic; FC = Free Church; CoE = Church of England; Non-Denom = Non-Denominational Christian; Ag = Agnostic; Ath = Atheist; Uncert = Uncertain
6.4 Faith In Action

I began this chapter wanting to know how young people's faith related to their (potential) life decisions in terms of four areas of morality. From the above analysis, it seems clear that moral decisions in late modernity are based primarily on immanent rather than transcendent faith.

Most of the young people in this study wanted to do and be 'good'. That is, they wanted to engage in actions which promoted faith and so the ontological security of themselves and others. In this respect, the majority of interviewees, when asked what they would like to be remembered for by others, said 'achieving something worthwhile' and/or being a 'friendly person who had helped others'. Similarly, some of the people the interviewees most admired included music artists such as Bob Geldoff and sportsmen like Alan Shearer and Michael Jordan, along with some more notable individuals such as Martin Luther King and Mother Teresa, who had contributed to improving the lives of others. Mark, for example, said he would like to meet Alan Shearer, the football player, because:

> He's such a great person. I've seen him on TV many times in interviews and that. ... He's funny, he jokes around, he's got a great personality, someone - he's very - cares. He likes to play for charity, fund raisers and that. And he does do a lot of photo shoots with sick children [Mark, Roman Catholic, Medium].

Chris said he would like to meet Malcolm X:

> Who would you most like to meet?

> It is a very difficult question. I think someone like Malcolm X. Someone who's devoted their life to the good of others, find out what they're motives were [Chris, Roman Catholic High].

Good actions in this way gave the young people a purpose and hope for living, as suggested in Chapter 5. The girls in particular were orientated to securing the ontological security of others, which appears to reflect gender differences in the
socialization process for girls and boys. Moreover, there was a certain expectation that doing good was the norm which reflects the reciprocal nature of immanent faith - good is done to others that others might do good to you. In connection with this expectation was a realization that everyone had within them the capacity to do both good and evil, and that the individual had a personal responsibility to choose aright. Given such an expectation the young people displayed a certain fascination with those who had chosen to do wrong - people such as Adolf Hitler or mass murderers.

However, whilst there was agreement that people should do and be good, very few of the young people had any ultimate guidelines by which to decide when an action was good or bad. Overall, only 10% of the young people indicated that they used the Bible to guide the way they lived their lives and most of these were committed Free Church young people. Having said that, one or two of the interviewees who did not read the Bible themselves, nevertheless thought it offered some good general principles. Moral decision-making in the main, however, was organized around the referents of immanent faith, that is, the reflexive self, family and close friends. It is important to recognise here, therefore, that moral decision-making is not made in isolation. Whilst morality does depend to a large extent on individual autonomy and authenticity (that is, the individual has the freedom to decide upon actions in relation to his/her own values and be 'true to him/herself'), it is also inherent in the structure of immanent faith that family and/or close friends are considered too. For instance, we saw in Chapter 5 that young people turn to family and close friends for advice and guidance in relation to certain actions, particularly at fateful moments. Also, in the current chapter, the decision as to whether or not to have an abortion, for instance, would generally be a family decision rather than a purely individualistic one. Similarly, the threat to ontological security through the break-down of trust in a close friendship meant that peer pressure could persuade a young person to adopt a particular course of action regardless of their own independent opinion. In terms of Gidden's theorizing about life sectors this provides an illustration of the compartmentalisation of life worlds which helps to deal with the inherent strains in immanent faith.
It was not only the opinion of family and friends that affected the young people in this study, but also the affect an action would have upon family and friends. The baseline for deciding whether to engage in a particular behaviour or not was: 'Does it hurt me or others, in particular my family or close friends?' Thus moral decisions organised around immanent faith tended to be localised. Furthermore, the young people's moral concerns were not primarily in terms of national or global issues, but local ones. The young people were not overtly concerned about the risks of environmental disaster, nuclear war or the economic welfare of Third World countries, they were much more concerned about the risks of divorce and relationship breakdown, the threat of localised violence in terms of bullying and racism or having the self devalued through false accusation, etc.

Tolerance and relativism were the other key elements of morality amongst most of the young people in this study. Without a transcendent absolute baseline for decision-making (notwithstanding the general guideline of avoiding harm to others), it was open to debate as to whether an action was acceptable or not. Whilst moral reasoning in the past has not always been straightforward and has required an interpretation of general rules, it now seems that more than ever morality is a reflexive process. Each case therefore has to be judged on its own merits in relation to the surrounding circumstances. Thus we have the development of 'situational ethics'. With such a minimal baseline it is not surprising to find in other studies of morality that:

... it is pretty easy, in the view of most people, to live a morally impeccable life (Osmond 1993:87).

Given the reflexive nature of immanent faith it is also not surprising that tolerance becomes a key virtue in late modernity. If young people have to go out and construct their own identity through the processes of self-realisation then it is important to maximize the number of ways in which self-realisation can be achieved (ie maximize the different forms of self-expression and achievement). Under such circumstances, the preferences of others have to be tolerated as long as they do not undermine the ontological security of the self, in order that other selves may be fully realized.
Tolerance was also apparent in the attitudes of the young people with high CR scores. These youngsters did make reference to an absolute moral base-line in terms of biblical and Church teaching, and the questionnaire indicated they held slightly different moral views when compared to the other groups (they were slightly more conservative in terms of personal morality and had a greater concern for the wellbeing of others outside the immediate immanent faith context). Nevertheless, the youngsters' comments clearly indicated that, whilst they referred to an 'absolute' authority, they were reluctant to say that others should conform to that authority. In practice, 'absolute authority' therefore became relative, that is to say, was only 'absolute' for them. For example, Kate, who had a strong Christian commitment, was against Sunday trading but made the comment on her questionnaire that:

It doesn't really affect non-Christians [Kate, Free Church, High].

It seems, therefore, that the basic immanent faith structure was important in moral decision-making for most of the young people in this study, even for the minority for whom the transcendent realm also had an important influence. The link between the transcendent and immanent referents (ie, why some young people develop a transcendent faith to guide their life whereas most do not) is the focus of the next chapter.
Chapter Seven

BRIDGE OF FAITH

For most young people, I have argued, faith is of an immanent nature; that is to say, it revolves around family, close friends and the self. One general effect of this is that lifestyle and moral decisions are localised and internally referential to the immanent faith system. For a few young people, however, this immanent faith is related to a transcendent reality in the form of Christianity and takes on an extra dimension as indicated in Figure 5.3. Young people making life decisions then have another referent by which to judge actions. In such cases there is not so much a 'leap of faith' as a 'bridge of faith'. Individuals do not 'jump' from immanent faith to a transcendent faith, transcendent faith is integrated into the basic immanent faith structure. It is not a separate entity. This is, of course, the basis of Erikson's argument described in Chapter 1 whereby the primary care-givers communicate basic trust to the infant giving him/her a sense of stability and security. From basic trust all other forms of trust can emerge, including trust in the transcendent. When the relationship between the care-giver and child breaks down or is dysfunctional in some way, however, basic trust is threatened. The aim of this penultimate chapter is to consider the relationship between immanent and transcendent faith in more detail. That is to say, I want to look at what influences some young people to make the bridge from immanent to transcendent faith whilst others do not. I begin by considering the influence of family and friends. These people are, of course, key referents in the immanent faith system. I then move on to think about cultural influences through the media, and institutional influences in terms of the Church and school. Table 7.1 records the results of the survey in terms of the young people's own perceptions of influences on their faith.

It is important to bear in mind that these are the young people's own perceptions. It was beyond the scope of the present study to consider independent indicators of the effect of different influences on the structure of faith. Nevertheless, the young people's own perceptions on this process are important and this approach accords with one of the study's aims, that is, to let the young people speak for themselves.
Table 7.1: Young people's perceptions of the influences on their faith by CR score – % agree (n=100%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influence</th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>CR Score</th>
<th>Cramer's $V$ (p&lt;0.05)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My parents have been a great help in forming my religious beliefs</td>
<td>32 (1079)</td>
<td>72 (167)</td>
<td>31 (623)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth leaders have been of little help in forming my religious beliefs</td>
<td>44 (1078)</td>
<td>29 (169)</td>
<td>45 (621)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television/radio programmes have little effect on my religious beliefs</td>
<td>63 (1081)</td>
<td>63 (169)</td>
<td>63 (623)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious leaders (eg vicars) have been a great help in forming my religious beliefs</td>
<td>17 (1084)</td>
<td>62 (169)</td>
<td>12 (626)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Church seems useless for life today</td>
<td>20 (1080)</td>
<td>3 (153)</td>
<td>11 (638)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some school teachers have been a great help in forming my religious beliefs</td>
<td>19 (1086)</td>
<td>40 (169)</td>
<td>20 (629)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lessons in school about religion are usually interesting</td>
<td>31 (1085)</td>
<td>57 (167)</td>
<td>34 (626)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lessons in school about religion help me form my religious beliefs</td>
<td>22 (1083)</td>
<td>40 (167)</td>
<td>24 (626)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School assemblies are usually boring</td>
<td>82 (1086)</td>
<td>78 (169)</td>
<td>82 (626)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.1 Family Tradition

Since the family is a key referent in the immanent faith system it is also a key influence on whether or not young people bridge the gap between immanent and transcendent faith. Given the uncertainty the young people felt about Christian beliefs due to lack of scientific confirmation (see Chapter 4) it was vital that they had some other reliable source to testify to the acceptability of Christian ideas. In their capacity as trusted 'significant others', the family constituted this source. They formed what Berger (1969) refers to as a 'plausibility structure'. In other words, insofar as the young person saw those s/he trusted (immanent faith) believe in 'something', that 'something' became a plausible belief. The reasoning goes along the lines: 'It must be
true because those whom I trust say it is so'. The teenagers who were interviewed in this study were well aware of the importance of parents in this respect, as one would expect given the reflexive nature of late modernity. They often attributed the expression of their faith and the faith of others to 'how they were brought up'. The survey results presented in Table 7.1 when compared with the interviews seems to underestimate the perceived influence of parents on the young people, since they suggest that only 32% of youngsters agreed that their parents had been a great help in forming their religious beliefs. It may well be that the relatively low percentage reported here in part reflects the young people's understanding of 'religion'. In Chapter 3 I noted that 'religion' was usually equated with 'Christianity' by the youngsters. Consequently, since most of the young people were either nominal or non-Churchians (like their parents) most of them seemed to have taken that as an indication that their parents did not influence their religion. That is, their parents did not influence them in the direction of positive belief in Christianity. In this respect Table 7.1 shows that the young people with high CR scores were the most likely of all the youngsters to perceive the effect of parental help in forming their transcendent faith. Indeed, they were more likely to identify the influence of parents' on their faith than other contributory factors. Socialization could, however, operate in a negative direction towards conventional religious belief and/or encourage alternative sources of faith, non-belief, or indifference to the transcendent realm.

The way the influence of the family operated to help youngsters make the bridge between immanent and transcendent faith took several forms. Within the private realm of the home, family members could introduce the young person to transcendent referents by making their own transcendent faith obvious to the youngster through active participation in religious practices and by talking to the young person about their religious belief. Alternatively, the family could hamper the young person in making a link, either by articulating disbelief in the transcendent realm or by showing indifference to it. It tended to be only in families where the parents were quite committed to a transcendent faith of their own (be that conventional or common religion) that beliefs were openly discussed with young people in the home. Pam, for instance, described how she had spoken to her mother in order to come to some
conclusion on the 'creation versus evolution debate', and Lucy indicated she had had conversations with her mother about reincarnation:

I was talking to my mum about that the other day. We decided that, however the world began, whether it was the big bang theory or God created it in seven days, or whatever, that God was behind it [Pam, Free Church, High].

Why do you believe in reincarnation?
Well, things I've seen about it and everything, and my mum believes she's been reincarnated and she wants to be, 'regressed' is it? You know, when they hypnotise you and that. She wants to do that. [Lucy, Atheist, Low].

If family members were not very committed to a particular faith position in relation to the transcendent, however, they tended not to talk about such matters to their children very much. Customary Christianity in this sense tended to be largely silent and unobtrusive. As a result, uncommitted parents socialized their children into a view which regarded conventional religious belief as a fairly unimportant matter of opinion which did not require much social commitment and had little, if anything, to do with daily living. Consequently transcendent faith was reduced to personal preference, "a case of each to their own". This autonomous stance towards transcendent faith reflected the primacy of immanent faith and was translated into the moral attitudes described in Chapter 6, which were based on an internally referential morality without transcendent referent to provide ultimate guidelines in decision-making.

A 'half-way' point some of the young people experienced was where their parents had delegated the responsibility of religious socialization to institutions, be that the Church, some other overtly religious organisation (see Section 7.4), or the school through RE lessons, etc (see Section 7.5). Two important points need to be made here. Firstly, parents who adopted this 'half-way' approach, especially if they took their children to church, did still think it quite important to introduce their children to conventional religious ideas:
Well, I used to go to church every Sunday with my mum because, you know, she thought it was the right thing to do to bring me up and believe in God. But as the years went on she didn't take me any more because I didn't really feel the need to go, because I was going out with all my friends and everything [Bianca, Uncertain, Low].

But, secondly, there was also a sense in which parents also felt it was up to the young person him/herself to choose from a fairly young age (usually after they had grown out of Sunday School) what s/he was going to believe in. Individual autonomy, therefore, was a value the youngsters were socialized into. The parents of the youngsters in this study (and the young people indicated they would adopt the same approach when it came to rearing children of their own) respected the right of the young person to make his/her own choice and avoided 'forcing' their own beliefs onto the child:

No, they [parents] don't go to church, no.
And they've never suggested that you go?
Oh no, no. Sort of, like, they just say: "Do what you want. If you want to go and get Christened, you go. But, you know, we don't want to force it on you" [Alison, Atheist, Low].

So if you had children would you bring them up to go to church and stuff like that or not?
I would probably introduce them to Sunday school, but I wouldn't force them on it. [Louise, Roman Catholic, Medium].

In other words, among the parents of the young people there was little suggestion that what they were introducing their children to in terms of transcendent faith, was 'ultimate Truth' and mattered. Thus, once the young people had reached their teenage years their parents no longer insisted that their children carried on going to church. Levitt (1996) found similar attitudes amongst mothers\(^2\) in South West England. Levitt argues that when children are about 11 years old, mothers begin to think that:

... religion is something which children have to make up their own minds about (Levitt 1996:108);

\(^2\) Mothers, rather than fathers, tend to be the ones who take their children to church.
and that their children:

... should not be unduly influenced in religious matters (Levitt 1996:109).

There was little recognition that apparent indifference to religious belief on the part of parents facilitated indifferent attitudes in their young people. In this respect, Levitt argues that conventional Christianity is often regarded as necessary only for young children. In the current study a number of the interviewees made a similar point in that they suggested they had 'grown out of it'. Given the relatively free choice the parents gave their teenagers and the somewhat low profile conventional religion had in the majority of homes, it was therefore not surprising to find little evidence of a rebellious spirit amongst the young people in this study. They did not turn their backs on conventional Christianity in order to form a separate identity from their parents. Indeed, for the majority of the young people in this study, any such act of rebellion would have meant turning to conventional religion rather than withdrawing from it! There really was only one young person amongst the interviewees whose rejection of conventional religion was a form of antagonism towards his/her parents. Usually the youngsters followed their parents' apathy towards conventional religious belief and scepticism towards common religion. Along with their parents these youngsters adopted a form of customary Christianity and so made only weak and temporary bridges from immanent to transcendent referents.

7.2 Peer Group Influence

Beyond the family, immediate peer relationships were another main influence upon whether or not the youngster's immanent faith became linked to the transcendent realm. Generally, however, this operated in a negative direction. The theme of tolerance and the individual's right to choose their own religious beliefs was continued by peer groups in that a lot of the young people made the comment that it was up to each individual to believe whatever they wanted to, provided those beliefs were not
imposed on others. In this respect, when some of the interviewees were asked what they thought a 'Christian' would be like, it was clear that most of them did not see a 'Christian' status as making a person 'different' in any way. In other words, belief was largely an irrelevant part of another's personal identity. Insofar as a Christian person kept his/her belief to him/herself, s/he would be regarded as a 'normal' person who happened to believe in God, who was likely to be helpful and, if they are a 'real' Christian, would go to church but not 'make a big thing of it'. However, there were a few comments which portrayed more negative views towards Christianity amongst peer group members, especially towards the Church, and certainly being 'overtly religious' was viewed negatively. Some of the interviewees who found Christianity boring and irrelevant to daily life (see Chapter 3) also thought of it as being more for the 'goody-goodies', 'boffins' or weaker members of the school. To use Willis' (1977) term, Christianity was something for the 'car'oles' but definitely not for the 'lads'. Since most of the young people wanted to be seen as 'normal', an overt Christian identity could be difficult to handle and therefore better left unarticulated. Indeed, religion had become something of a taboo subject for normal conversation. As such, the ideological rhetoric of tolerance was not really about open discussion and a free exchange of ideas, as one might expect from Giddens' discussion of late modernity as a democratic, egalitarian social order; it was more about guarding one's right to individual, private belief. Moreover, to declare the transcendent Christian faith as valid was, in effect, to question the internal self-sufficiency of the immanent faith of others and thereby threaten their ontological security. One response to this by peers with medium to low Christian commitment was to use the more negative images of conventionally religious people to try and ridicule or shame the more committed youngster, thereby undermining the plausibility of his/her Christian faith. The Christian youngster's 'protective cocoon' may well be damaged by such an attack, but such an action could be justified by the peer group in that it meant their own ontological security was protected (see Chapter 6). Tolerance under these circumstances has to be regarded as defensive rather than liberating.

Given the prohibitions on speaking about religion, it was hard for young Christians to help their friends link their immanent faith with the transcendent referents of
Christianity. This left some young people with a very difficult dilemma to face. On the one hand, the rule amongst their non-Christian peers was that conventional religion was not a subject for discussion. On the other hand, those young people brought up within evangelical churches were being constantly reminded about the importance of 'sharing their faith' (ie transcendent faith) with others. Within the school context, the Church often placed this responsibility almost entirely on the young people themselves. The Christian youngster therefore faced a situation whereby if s/he spoke out s/he was likely to be the subject of bullying and rejection by peers in the group. The youngster's confidence, self-esteem and identity were then jeopardized. Day, in this regard, talks about school as being a "training ground for martyrs" (Day 1992:235). On the other hand, if the young Christian did not speak out s/he was left with feelings of guilt and/or having 'denied God'.

Brian explains the predicament even within a church school:

It's quite hard round school. I always think ....: "Yeah I'm going to tell somebody about God today", but you just can't. It just comes so hard, because everyone's so different. Some people I could say: "Yeah, this and this and this" and they'd listen, and they wouldn't worry about it. Then some people you'd say something and they think: "Oh yeah, right yeah" and start laughing at you. But sometimes it gets bad because people who laugh at you have always got lots of friends and lots of people who are with them, and they just tag along with them and then you get less and less popular. And then it's hard to keep saying, you know, what you believe in and stuff like that. ... When I say: "Oh no, I don't go to church, really, honestly", to start with it's OK and then I sort of think: "I should have said this is like" - because there's a, I can't remember what passage it was in the Bible, but it said: "Whoever discards my love will" something or other. And I think: "Oh no! I did it, I didn't tell someone about it", because that's what you're called to do. You're called to evangelise and I keep forgetting. [Brian, Free Church, High].

Given the difficulty these young people faced, they used several different strategies to fulfil their evangelistic duties whilst minimizing the cost to themselves. For instance, Julie (see Chapter 3) described the bullying she suffered for being a Christian as 'persecution'. Adopting this particular interpretation of her situation helped her to
locate herself within the Christian tradition of martyrs which allowed her to reinforce rather than undermine her Christian identity. Through this interpretation she understood her suffering as worthwhile because it might help people "be saved".

Another strategy the young people adopted was to talk about Christian beliefs but avoid any personal references, either by locating them in a neutral context such as an RE lesson where talk about religion was permissible and expected, or by shifting the religious attribution to other family members:

Well, I don't exactly tell them [peers] in a straight way. You don't say: "Look, God loves you!". You just say, we're doing 'the Big Bang' at the moment and they say: "Oh the Big Bang, do you believe in God?", and stuff like that and you can bring it in. ... and they think you're just bringing it in from RE ... they don't actually think that I go to church ... sometimes your friends say: "Oh my mum goes to church, I wonder what it is like there?" and you can say: "Well it's, I suppose it's alright". And they say: "How do you know?" and you say: "My mum often goes" ... stuff like that [Brian, Free Church, High].

Others did speak more openly but waited for the 'right moment':

You sort of subtly bring it up in the conversation. Not like: "Are you a Christian?" I just say that I believe that there's a God and that isn't it nice to know that someone, sort of, gave their life for you and died for you, and doesn't that make you feel important or whatever. And then it sort of leads on. It depends who they are and what they're doing [Pam, Free Church, High].

On a normal day-to-day basis, however, conventional religious belief more or less goes 'underground'. For young people with high CR scores, meeting up with other committed Christian youth, either at church youth groups, in school Christian Unions or wherever, then becomes vital. Through these meetings friendships are formed which allow the teenagers to talk amongst themselves about their religious beliefs. Such Christian friendships contribute to the plausibility structure which helps the youngsters sustain each other's transcendent faith – these are the trustworthy friendships which form part of the immanent faith base of the whole faith structure,
as indicated in Figure 5.3. Brian, for instance, explained how Christian friends provided acceptance and understanding. They could relate to the extra transcendent dimension of his faith structure which therefore helped him maintain his ontological security and gave him guidance as to how to maintain a Christian lifestyle:

... they're [Christian friends] not likely to take the mickey. They're more likely to sympathize and they've got that Christian background. They're more likely to know what to do in the Christian sense [Brian, Free Church, High].

In this respect it was sometimes easier to have Christian friends as the close friendships in the immanent structure rather than non-Christian friends who could not relate to this aspect of faith.

There was also the added importance that these friendships with other Christians showed that transcendent belief was not just for weak or older people, but was something that teenagers could trust in. Christian friendships amongst the young people helped strengthen the bridge between transcendent and immanent faith, without which the link could be critically weakened and may break altogether since the majority of peer relationships are likely to undermine transcendent faith and leave the youngster with customary or common religion, or with no transcendent referent at all. Bianca, for example, explained how she changed her mind about Christianity having gone to church when she was younger, and Pam indicated that the school setting, more-or-less devoid of others sharing her transcendent reality, tended to attenuate her Christian faith:

*What made you change your mind about it?*
I suppose it's everyone else's opinion. You know, "Oh you believe in God!", you know, make a joke about it and everything. I don't know, I suppose as you grow up you think that you don't really need it any more because it's not one of the most important things [Bianca, Uncertain, Low].

But it was all very well [in a supportive Christian group] saying: "Oh well, that's great" but when you come home it's different, and go to school, and it sort of dwindles out [Pam, Free Church, High].
Just as plausibility structures are needed to maintain the Christian faith, so common religious themes also require the same if they are to be taken seriously. The young people were more willing to talk about ghosts, horoscopes, past life regression, etc, to each other than they were about Christianity. This greater openness may be explained in part by the fact that common religion does not threaten immanent faith in the same way that Christian religious themes might. Common religion was not thought of in institutional terms, nor was it seen as something which required commitment in the same way that Christianity did. As such, common religion was more compatible with individual autonomy than was conventional religion. Young people could therefore feel a little freer to talk about common religion within their peer groups. In this respect, Opie and Opie's (1959) study of the Lore and Language of Schoolchildren emphasises the effectiveness of the oral tradition as a means of spreading folklore consistently through younger generations. Oral transmission still has its place amongst young people today. However, modern electronic media have more recently increased the transmission of these common religious ideas quite radically. Moreover, the image the media portrays of common religion is far more glamorous than those of conventional Christianity.

7.3 Culture

The mass media are an important aspect of culture in late modernity. Whilst conventional religion has always been a feature in television and radio broadcasts (eg Songs of Praise BBC1, Prayer for the Day BBC Radio 4, etc) there has recently been a mushrooming of programmes concerned with paranormal and supernatural phenomena associated with aspects of common religion. Personalities such as Russell Grant or Mystic Meg and programmes like the X Files, Out of This World, etc, reflect an interest in common religion. These are the sorts of referents young people potentially can draw upon as an alternative bridge from immanent to transcendent faith. Magazines are a key influence on young people's faith in this respect, especially amongst girls. As I mentioned in Chapter 4, magazines make a direct link between immanent faith and common religion in that common religious themes are often
portrayed as a useful source of information about the self and intimate relationships. A particularly salient example of this was the 1996 'holiday special' edition of *Mizz*, a general interest youth magazine aimed at young women. The focus of this particular issues was on 'secrets' and it contained the following main articles under the general theme of 'discovering the secret you':

(a) 'Discover The Secrets Of Your Palm' – an article on palmistry which suggested how the lines on the palm of a hand could be used to gain an individual's personality profile.

(b) This was followed by an article 'The Rune Stones Of Love' which suggested, that if the young person followed the magazine's instructions, they could read the 'cut-out' Rune Stones provided and predict 'possible future trends in matters of love, relationships, work and life'; that is, key elements of immanent faith.

(3) The young readers were also encouraged to try out some 'safe psychic experiments' to assess whether or not they had mystic powers. This included the *Mizz Crystal Guide*.

(4) In addition, throughout the magazine there were 'Zodiac Secrets' just in case the young person wanted to know which lucky charm, fashions and talents were associated with their star sign.

Through transcendent common religious referents, the magazine's articles therefore offered the youngsters a way to understand themselves and bring an element of apparent 'certainty' to relationships.

Given this emphasis on common religious themes it was somewhat surprising to also find an article on Christianity. The contents page of the magazine, however, placed this article under a rather different title than the above. Instead of 'Discover The Secret You', the article (entitled 'I Hide My Religion From My Friends') came under
the heading 'Shared Secrets' and was listed along with the following articles about things young people would prefer others did not know about: 'I Was A Truant', 'I Caught Herpes From My Holiday Romance', 'I Have Secret Parties Every Friday' and 'I Had A Secret Abortion'! This article on Christianity highlighted the alienation one young Christian felt from his non-Christian peer group3. The magazine's articles in the main offered the youngsters a way to understand themselves and bring an element of apparent 'certainty' to the relationships necessary for immanent faith through transcendent common religious ideas.

This edition of Mizz was perhaps a particularly extreme example of the use common religious themes in teenage magazines. However, similar articles are frequently found in magazines of this sort with a particular emphasis on seemingly intimate relationships. The summer edition of Sugar, for example, not only provided readers with "Your Summer Stars: What's in store for you this summer? Will you meet your perfect love match", but also included a free set of 'male model astro-tarot cards' in order to "discover your love destiny" (Sugar Summer 1996). Just Seventeen (21 August 1996:50) provided readers with day-by-day horoscopes complete with "potential snog day", which faced an article entitled 'Spooky! Take a walk on the weird side of life' which encouraged readers to analyze their boyfriend's personality through his drawings. More! (14–27 August 1996:104), one of the popular magazines aimed at a slightly older audience but nevertheless freely available to youngsters in their early teens, amongst its other sexually explicit articles included 'Horny Horoscopes'. Even Smash Hits (14–27 August 1996:20), a mainstream music magazine came complete with 'Mystic Mag's' horoscope predictions for the week. In addition, horoscopes have been a regular feature in newspapers for a long time and even breakfast time television has features from time-to-time on things like celebrities' horoscopes and New Age ideas to increase self-knowledge and enhance intimate relationships.

The media expressions of common religion are therefore very prevalent and available

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3 The heading this article came under may well contribute to the further alienation of Christian young people from their peers.
to any young person who cares to look, much more so than expressions of conventional religion. However, as I argued in Chapter 5, these common religious referents do not usually become incorporated into the faith structure itself. In this respect, only 21% of young people felt that the media had influenced their religious beliefs, youngsters with low CR scores being more likely to suggest this was the case than medium or high scorers. One of the reasons why common religion does not become integrated into the faith of young people is that the beliefs are used so selectively that a coherent plausibility structure in anything but very general terms is very hard to establish. An interesting aspect of common religion in this respect is that attempts to establish credibility tend to be by drawing on notions of 'scientific' respectability. To recall the discussion in Chapters 4 and 5, this also indicates that science is regarded as the judge of truth. Mizz, for instance, opened the article on palmistry by saying:

Palmistry is a science, so you don't need to be a spooky psychic to do it! By just following a few simple palmistry facts you'll soon begin to uncover the secrets your palms hold about you! (Mizz Summer 1996:6).

Similarly, television programmes about the paranormal are often presented in a documentary-style format (eg Strange But True, ITV). These presentations open up the possibility to young people that there might be something beyond their material perception of the world. However, again as suggested in Chapter 5, science itself is not a sufficient basis for faith. Plausibility is established through trusted relationships; it is socially defined. Thus, as Giddens points out, faith has to be invested in the individual who fronts the expert system, in this case the scientists presenting their evidence on television. Phyllis, for instance, was open to the idea of reincarnation after watching a television programme which seemed to present some quite convincing evidence. However, she was not entirely convinced because she did not trust the Americans who presented the data:

... a lot of people are hypnotised to go back in time (which I've seen on TV), and that's quite interesting because they find a lot of things. I can't remember what it was on now, but someone like a sailor or something, [had] ... buried treasure in a common, you know, in

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England somewhere, and they were, like, tracing it all back and they like found things and that. And you think perhaps there is [something in it] ... It's quite confusing. I mean ... one minute you think: "Oh yeah, ... how could he have done that ... think all about this and trace the treasure and that, ... he couldn't have just had a book and read it all up and everything". ... but he was an American and sometimes they really over react ..., it was quite funny because they're so into everything, whatever they're into, that sometimes you think: "Oh, he's just making it up" because he's so over enthusiastic. [Phyllis, Non-Denominational Christian, Medium].

TV and cinema also provide a popular means of supernatural representation in the form of horror films. Their popularity and prevalence in the culture of young people maintains the idea or possibility of an 'X-factor', as evidenced in Chapter 4, by the youngsters who were wary of dabbling in the occult 'just in case'. The true extent to which these representations affect young people is, however, a contested issue. There has, for example, been concern over 'copycat' actions on the part of young people. Boyd (1996:180) points out, for instance, the horror movie Child's Play 3 has been linked with two murders, one of which was the murder of 2 year old James Bulger by a couple of 10 year old boys. However, insofar as young people know that such presentations are fictitious they are not plausible enough to form part of the faith structure. In this respect it should be noted that young people in the 1990s are probably the most visually literate generation there has ever been and they are capable of deconstructing the images and messages they are presented with on screen. Such deconstruction, as Willis (1990) found, locates the film in the realm of fantasy. The youngsters know they are watching created images. Critical appreciation of 'special effects' was one of the characteristics the interviewees displayed in the current study:

I like horror movies.

What is it you like about horror movies?
They have effects and good graphics on them [Anton, Roman Catholic, High].

In the same way, science fiction can be kept in the realm of fantasy by the youngster's appreciation of how the film was put together. The link between immanent faith and a transcendent realm is then attenuated. Allan (1995) commenting on the Teenage
Religion and Values survey makes the same point:

It certainly is not the case that all non-Christian young people are turning to the occult for spiritual satisfaction; a large number see no need for any satisfaction beyond the material realm. Paradoxically, it seems to me, this is why many teenagers of my acquaintance love horror films such as 'Nightmare on Elm Street': they do not believe any of it. (Allan 1995:92–93).

Music is yet another medium which potentially can help or hinder the youngsters bridging the immanent–transcendent divide. In this respect, for instance, heavy metal music has been associated with Satanic ideas (cf Clarke 1992, Willey 1993, Boyd 1996), and more recently other musical genres have been linked with common religious themes:

While heavy metal dinosaurs have yet to face extinction, the occultic theme is evolving into a wider musical expression. Recent musical offshoots also peddle paganism, shamanism and morbid Gothic romanticism ... In the late eighties the Shaman drew fire from a Tory MP who complained they had been stamping their mail with the slogan 'Jesus is a Lie' and a satanic inverted crucifix (Boyd 1996:162).

However, whilst such presentations again make themes available to young people, they are often decontextualised to such an extent that they lose their original meaning and can be manipulated to an individual's own meaning. According to the model in Chapter 5 faith, however, tends to rest on a collective understanding of referents amongst trusted others. The indiscriminant juxtaposing of common religious ideas means that for most individuals they cannot be incorporated into their faith structure. By the same token, of course, the coherence of conventional Christianity is weakened as conventional religious referents are disembedded and transformed. Messages incorporated in music can also undermine the validity of a transcendent belief in an altogether more straight forward way by denying any reality to them at all. Geoffrey, for instance, explains how the band he was listening to had put him off the Church:

My favourite band is 'Corrosion of Conformity'. Personally I like the name, I think the name's brilliant ... They're talking about independence
a lot, freedom ... the name of the band says a lot, that's what they talk about. They've got a song called 'Heaven's Not Overflowing' which is all about these Christians who preach and then they don't practise, which is what I feel very strongly about as well ... I don't go to church any more because it just disgusts me ... seeing people who sit down and pray for an hour and listen to that rubbish the priest will tell, and then they'll go out and feel like holy Catholic people and [that] they know everything and [think] that they can tell anyone anything, ... Then they go out and commit sin after sin after sin. Basically that's what I see.

*How did you come to reach that opinion?*

Just opening my eyes. That's all you have to do.

*Was there any specific incident which sort of highlighted it for you?*

The music I suppose. That helped me open my eyes and see what's going on [Geoffrey, 'Butterfly', Low].

In summary, cultural forms of expression like those described above do draw on common religious images and make them available to young people. Unlike the institutional articulation of the transcendent realm, this gives the young people a great degree of autonomy in that religious referents can be manipulated and reinterpreted according to individual choice. As such, they can be used from time-to-time to help strengthen immanent faith without actually being incorporated as a permanent third dimension of the faith structure itself. In this respect the link between the immanent and transcendent is weak and transitory, as suggested in Figure 5.2. It is to the influence of institutions and the effect they might have on a immanent-transcendent faith bridge that I now turn.

### 7.4 The Church

Conventional Christianity differs from common religion or customary Christianity in that it requires a degree of commitment from its believers, not only in terms of belief itself, but also by way of practice. Table 7.2 shows the frequency of three such Christian practices.
Table 7.2  Frequency of Christian practices by CR score – % Agree (n=100%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practices engaged in of the young person's own free will</th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>CR score</th>
<th>Cramer's V (p&lt;0.01)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reads the Bible at least once a month</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1033)</td>
<td>(161)</td>
<td>(590)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prays at least once a month</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1036)</td>
<td>(166)</td>
<td>(589)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goes to Church at least once a month</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1060)</td>
<td>(152)</td>
<td>(609)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some aspects of Bible reading and private prayer have already been mentioned in Chapters 3 and 4. For the committed Christian, private prayer and Bible reading were an expected part of everyday routines, although not all the young people managed to engaged in these practices on a daily basis (12% of those with high CR scores read the Bible every day and 56% prayed every day). They were nevertheless seen as important for the formation and maintenance of a relationship with God, and for the fulfilment of a Christian lifestyle in that they were a means of obtaining divine guidance and help, and as a way of realising God's affirmation of the self. Prayer and Bible reading for the young people with high CR scores therefore helped to reinforce the transcendent dimension of their faith. Loyd writes: "by worshipping God we ... enter into communion with Him and assure ourselves of His existence" (Loyd, 1936:23) and Fosdick makes a similar point:

Only to one who prays can God make himself vivid. ... Men say that they do not pray because to them God is not real, but a truer statement is, the practice of prayer is necessary to make God not merely an idea held in the mind but a Presence recognized by the life (Fosdick 1931:36).

For those with medium CR scores practising customary Christianity, prayer offered a means of spontaneously strengthening the 'protective cocoon' as and when necessary in much the same way as common religious beliefs were used. In this respect prayer was a relatively easy practice in which to engage, as it did not require much effort or
commitment. In contrast, Bible reading required more effort since it involved a
deliberate action on the part of the young person rather than a passing thought.
Coupled with the uncertainty these youngsters felt about the validity of the Bible it
was not surprising to find more young people with medium scores prepared to pray
than read the Bible. Low CR scorers, as one would expect, were reluctant to do
either.

Church attendance fell between prayer and Bible reading in terms of frequency, with
27% of the young people overall attending church at least once a month of their own
free will. Fifteen percent went on a weekly basis which is quite a high percentage
when compared with a church attendance in England of 9.5% of the population, of
which the 15 to 19 age group makes up the smallest proportion (Brierley 1991).
Indeed, the literature generally suggests that young people do not find the Church, or
at least church services, very attractive and have little incentive to go.

As one would expect, the most frequent church-goers in the current study were those
youngsters with a high degree of Christian commitment. As I mentioned in Section
7.2, church and parachurch groups played a vital role in developing friendships which
constituted part of a plausibility structure for the young people in relation to the
Christian faith. Through these activities transcendent and immanent faith were
integrated into one system. Church-related groups allowed the youngsters to develop
trusting relationships with others who shared transcendent faith. They also provided
an on-going interpretation of life which explicitly related immanent faith to the
transcendent referents. For example, Rebecca attended a Christian conference (Spring
Harvest) and heard a lecture which helped her come to terms with her father's death
(see Chapter 3); the immanent realm was interpreted by reference to the transcendent
context. Church groups were also places where a young person could talk to God in
prayer and thereby maintain that transcendent relationship.

In terms of the basic immanent faith structure, church was also important as a place
for the Christian young people to be with family and friends. This allowed the young
person to develop a sense belonging and the feeling that they were wanted, accepted
and valued by those around them. Rebecca, for example, said that she enjoyed her church services because they made her feel "warm all over". To a degree this was important for the young people practising customary Christianity too. For example, Penelope, who only went to church occasionally, nevertheless appreciated it as a potential source of acceptance and support, and so expected to introduce her own children to the Church herself one day:

I think it [the Church] ... builds like a stable surrounding because they've always got something that is there for them no matter what, which I think is good.

And that something is?

Well, if for example you need to talk or something there's always someone in that community that will listen and wont just say: "Oh well, I'm too busy, sorry". There'll always be someone there [Penelope, Roman Catholic, Medium].

Hervieu-Léger's study of the World Youth Gathering pilgrimage held in Poland in 1991 has relevance here too. She suggests it was the collective group experience of the pilgrimage that was the most important part of the event, rather than the actual religious ceremonial climax itself:

What is massively regarded as 'the main thing' is 'personal testimony' (including that of the priests and bishops). 'The real benefit was the way we exchanged our experiences.' 'When we started telling each other about our personal experiences, something really happened in the group, and we felt the Holy Spirit was amongst us.' The instruction sessions, the scripture readings, the prayer meetings and even the celebrations were ranked as 'high points' of the pilgrimage inssofar as they made room for mutual testimony ... In a very general sense, it appears that direct interpersonal contact and 'local' community experiments were the seedbeds for the decisive identification experiences which the young pilgrims mention spontaneously (Hervieu-Léger 1994:135–136).

As Hervieu-Léger points out in the above passage, the priest has a key role to play with respect to fostering feelings of belonging and being valued, and as such can become an important part of the process, helping young people make the link between immanent and transcendent faith. Supportive priests who take an interest in young
people confer a large degree of self-worth on the teenagers since they are the authority figures in the Church community. This is especially the case when they confer a degree of responsibility on the youngster, that is, when they invest faith in the young person and contribute to the basic immanent faith dynamic. This investment of faith means that the young person can develop his/her own faith in themselves and others, as described in Chapter 5. Chris, for instance, explained how his priest had asked him to take up the role of server which he enjoyed doing. David also appreciated the support his priest gave him when he set up a prayer group and a youth group for the other young people in his church. Whilst priestly involvement could be interpreted as a way in which the Church authorities retain control over their teenagers, this was not the manifest experience of the young people in this study; the priests were in fact devolving some power to them by allowing them a degree of autonomy in their running of the prayer and youth groups. Another example of priestly, or at least leadership, involvement conferring identity and self-worth on the young people was through public prayer. The interviewees with high CR scores appreciated others praying for them and with them. This sometimes included the 'laying on of hands' in more charismatic settings. Brian, for example, described a typical service at his church:

... there's a few leaders and they all stay at the front. We have a good time of praise and worship, different people leading it; a good band. And then we have a time of listening (because that's very important), and they, you get called to the front, stuff like that, and you get prayed for. So it's very good [Brian, Free Church, High].

John also described a time when he was prayed for that was very significant to him:

I went to a church and this man came, and he was praying, and he said: "All those who have got problems or who would like to do well in life, just come forward and we'll pray for you". And as the man was praying out of all of them he picked me and he prayed for me. And as he prayed for me he asked me what's my name. I said: "John", and he said: "When you grow up you're going to become a man of God. You're going to lead a lot of people to God", and I said: "Amen!" [John, Free Church, High].

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In accordance with the model in Chapter 5, the appreciation of priests and church leaders in this way, however, depended on a trusted face-to-face or personal relationship. Where the priest was unknown by the young person s/he could be seen as 'out of touch' or authoritarian, especially when the young person was not a regular church-goer:

I don't think 'old git' vicars and priests should preach about sex and marriage because all they go by is what it says in the Bible and have little life-experience regarding it [Wally, Roman Catholic, Medium].

In relation to the influence of priests and youth leaders, 17% of the young people in this study said that a religious leader had helped them form their religious beliefs and 29% that youth leaders had done so.

Finally, it was important for the young people that church-related activities be fun. This, of course, ties in with one of the purposes of life mentioned in Chapter 5, that is, to be happy. Thus, the impression the young people with high CR scores gave of their various Christian youth groups were similar; they located the transcendent in an immanent faith setting characterised by fun and enjoyment:

We normally do fun things, you know, just games and stuff like that. But sometimes we do have praise times and, sort of, the Spirit is in those. It's very good [Brian, Free Church, High].

We usually do like games, or we go out bowling and stuff. They then have, like, an epilogue at the end, like a gospel message. It's just nice, like, to meet people there and stuff [Julie, Free Church, High].

Church and church-related activities potentially provide a comprehensive plausibility structure which serves not only to strengthen the relationship between immanent and transcendent faith for the young person, but also the bonds of trust between the referents in the basic immanent faith structure itself. However, this potential was not

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4 Youth leaders need not, of course, be Church based. However, the comments on the questionnaires suggested that those who had effected religious beliefs did have some Church affiliation.

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always realised and where the trust relationships were broken or undermined there was also scope for serious damage to the link between the transcendent and immanent. Moreover, most of the young people did not go to church anyway. One of the reasons for not going was because peers did not go or did not approve of the young person going, as I indicated in Section 7.2. Another common reason was that church was perceived as boring and some young people felt that it could not be improved either. Even a few of the young people with high CR scores who found church youth groups fun, nevertheless thought the actual church services quite boring and 'lifeless'. Boredom for medium to low CR scorers was partly due to the lack of personal meaning the services held for them. This was important as Timothy's comment below makes clear. A young person may understand some of the symbolism and concepts used in church services, but unless s/he relates to them in a personal way, the services remain dull. Purely educating young people into what the various aspects of a service are supposed to mean is unlikely to help make it interesting or relevant:

It [church] didn't hold any meaning for me or anything. I recognized some things that were happening from things I'd been taught. It was a Christingle service, so I recognized some of the things I'd seen in RE and things like that, but it didn't hold any meaning for me [Timothy, Agnostic, Low].

It [church] doesn't really seem to make any sense any more ... All the stuff they talk about is a bit old fashioned [Henry, Atheist, Low].

In contrast to this boring image of church, several interviewees had picked up on the stereotype of Afro-Caribbean churches as potentially providing a more lively, appealing form of worship. Such services, they suggested, would have more significance to them. However, the significance that was implied lay not so much in relation to the transcendent, as in the young people enjoying themselves and being allowed to express themselves freely whilst at the same time feeling a part of something. Such services would be a means of self-realization, immediate experience and enjoyment; they would also allow a degree of authenticity. In other words, this type of service for these young people would reinforce the basic immanent faith structure rather than necessarily build a bridge to a transcendent reality:
I think Black people that go to church, they seem to have more fun. It's not as boring, they seem to enjoy it more ... they seem to show their feelings more than what we do.

*Do you think that that's important, to show your feelings?*

I think so, yeah [Samantha, Agnostic, Medium].

I suppose if you had the celebrations like most Black people, they're all into music in the church, ... it would probably be more exciting because you're getting into the mood and you're sort of joining in with everything. But when you're actually at church you sit down and don't get any say in it apart from "Amen" and other things [Bianca, Uncertain, Low].

Of the young people that did attend church regularly and enjoyed doing so, lively participative worship seems to have been a key element. It was an attempt to make services more accessible to young people that prompted alternative worship initiatives. The now infamous, 'Nine O'Clock Service' in Sheffield was one example of this, and the better respected 'Holy Disorder' services another. The aim was to present a form of worship in the young people's own language, using symbols and technologies which were relevant to aspects of their youth culture. However, there was no evidence amongst the young people in this study who did not attend church regularly that they would actively seek out and go to a 'lively' church, should one be available in the area. Indeed, care needs to be taken not to stereotype young people in this respect. Julie, for example, indicated that she did not like 'alternative worship' styles:

The church I go to is a Brethren [Church] ... they've got a piano and an organ. There's no, like, 'lively' instruments or anything. We feel that worship is to be centred around Jesus and, like, at the 'Breaking of Bread' service you're remembering his death and I don't think it's respectable to have, like, clapping and everything [Julie, Free Church, High].

She went on to say that she did not feel comfortable with worship styles that mimic 'secular' popular music because she thought that God could not honour such worship. It is also worth noting that places such as Taize and Wallsingam provide a form of spirituality which is attractive to (usually already committed) young people but do not rely on high-tech, 'lively' input. Brothers Emile and John of the Taize community
describe how young people discover an inner life:

Many young people have become aware of this dimension of reality in the Church which is at the heart of life in Taize. There, three times a day, the bells ring to call to prayer the brothers and the hundreds or thousands of young adults present for the week. Late in the evening, and even during the night, you can find young people praying there in silence. It is not unusual to see some of them running to prayer!" (Brs Emile and John 1993:278–279).

What remains important in all these church settings is the community spirit – that is, relationship. Taize itself is based on a monastic community, and often groups of young people travel there on pilgrimage. The whole experience then becomes one of building up immanent faith as well as incorporating a transcendent dimension.

Apart from boredom, another difficulty some young people had with church was a sense of hypocrisy. Geoffrey's comment in Section 7.3 makes this point. Christians who don't respect the obligations associated with immanent faith (to be kind and helpful to others) were seen as hypocritical if they then went to church. On the other hand, those young people who felt they were meeting their obligations to others then decided there was no need to go to church. One could 'believe without belonging' to use Davie's (1990) phrase:

I think you can be a Christian without actually going to church or being 'religious'. I think being a Christian is more about looking after your family, looking after other people and being charitable. More important than going to church every Sunday [Martin, Church of England, Medium].

Religious practices did, however, remain useful for some young people with medium to low CR scores, in that they could be an occasional means of celebrating immanent faith as suggested in Chapter 6. Weddings, for instance, were often an important means of celebrating family, and self-realization. The young people who went to church occasionally, at Christmas or Easter for example, made the same point. Church festivals offered a reason to celebrate family. Bianca and Paul both drew
attention to this aspect of customary Christian practice:

Yeah, I go at Christmas and Easter. I suppose it's because it's an occasion and you go with all your family and you go back and you celebrate. But no, I don't go on Sunday [Bianca, Uncertain, Low].

We won't go at Christmas or Easter unless we think about it or someone says that they're going and do we want to go with them [Paul, Church of England, Medium].

Another important factor which prevented the young people attending church was that they had other commitments on a Sunday morning. These were often activities (e.g., Sunday morning football or rugby) which offered them a means of achievement as well as enjoyment and communal belonging and, as such, were activities which contributed to the maintenance of immanent faith. Since immanent faith was enhanced and ontological security sustained in this way there was no obvious reason the young people could see for transcendent faith and the Church. Finally, three young people said that the reason they did not go to church was simply because it was too much effort and that they did not want to get up 'at the crack of dawn' to go to a church service.

Overall, therefore, the Church and church related activities provided a very important plausibility structure for those young people who were committed to the Christian faith. It integrated and maintained the whole immanent-transcendent faith structure. For those with less commitment, the Church perhaps introduced the youngsters to Christian themes when they were younger; and where a young person was drawn into immanent relationships with Christian young people who could provide a sustained plausibility structure for the transcendent realm, they too might bridge the immanent-transcendent faith gap and develop transcendent faith. However, for the most part the young people's faith remained immanent (as per Figure 5.2) and church simply offered an occasion for the celebration of family and close friends. No bridge to the transcendent as such was therefore established. As Martin and Pluck put it in relation to Christmas services:
It has simply embedded itself in the fabric of normality; its religious meaning is barely noticed or questioned (Martin and Pluck 1977:20).

Another institution which could perhaps draw young people's attention to transcendent faith, if not specifically guarantee the link, was the formal setting of the school.

7.5 School

Given the lack of religious salience that seemed to characterize the homes of most of the young people in this study, schools probably provide the main source of religious socialization for young people today. In this respect the 1988 Education Reform Act reiterated the aims of 1944 Education Act to promote the spiritual and moral development of young people, with a special emphasis on articulating the Christian sacred universe. The National Curriculum Council in 1993 produced a discussion document which suggested three broad areas of faith transmission in schools:

(a) The school ethos, that is:

the values and attitudes which characterise the community, the atmosphere of the school, the quality of relationships, and the way in which the school helps pupils to deal with conflict, loss, grief or difficulties (National Curriculum Council 1993:6);

(b) All subjects of the curriculum, especially Religious Education (RE). That is to say, all subjects should address the moral questions inherent within them, but RE in particular should provide an opportunity for young people to consider "the ultimate questions of life and death" (National Curriculum Council 1993:6);

(c) Acts of collective worship.

Measurement of the school ethos was beyond the scope of the present study although
some preliminary observations were made in this area. The aim in the present study was to consider how the young people themselves experienced these aspects of school life and whether or not it contributed to adding a transcendent aspect to their faith structure.

7.5.1 School Culture

The school ethos is part of the school's culture and in this respect Flynn's analysis of Catholic schools indicates that a Catholic school culture has:

... an influence on students which is independent of other influences such as that of the home, parish or peer group (Flynn 1993:366).

From the current study, the school culture potentially was helpful in locating immanent faith within a transcendent reality in at least two respects. Firstly, all the schools made Christian symbols available to their young people through their internal decoration. During my visits to the County School, for example, there was a display on the walls of the main corridor relating to women in history which predominantly featured representations of the Virgin Mary. The same school displayed students' art work in the main foyer and there were several portraits of Martin Luther King amongst the pictures. The young people also created displays dealing with moral issues such as posters with an anti-drugs message. The church schools were slightly more explicit in their representations. For instance, the Catholic school had a crucifix to greet the visitor on entry to the school, and the Church of England school had a portrait of the founding Bishop in the main hall, together with a painting which linked various aspects of the school (football players, computer equipment, etc) with church images (e.g., a choirboy). Images such as these were constantly in the background of daily life and, even if the young people did not consciously notice them most of the time, they were there as a potential reminder of a transcendent realm. During the time of the fieldwork there was not an equivalent emphasis seen in the school culture on

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5 It should be noted too that each of the schools received favourable comments from the OFSTED Inspectors in terms of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.
common religion.

Secondly, the staff offered relationships which helped some of the young people to make the bridge from immanent to transcendent faith. In this respect, during the course of the study all the schools allowed a Christian relational youth-worker (the job title is significant in terms of the current thesis) to work with the young people under their care. The purpose of the relational workers was essentially to establish trusting relationships with the young people and introduce them to Christianity. Teachers also had a role to play here too, although on the whole it seems that teachers contributed more directly to immanent faith by providing a sense of security within the school. For example, although the youngsters wanted their freedom and sometimes resented teachers controlling their behaviour, they still looked to them to be authority figures. They needed to know the teachers were there and in control. In other words, they wanted freedom within a secure structure (Hornsby-Smith 1978). Certain individuals also looked to staff whom they could talk to about personal problems and find emotional support in. Thus teachers contributed to developing the youngsters' self-worth by accepting them and showing concern and care for them. The teachers' role in helping the young people towards self-realization was, of course, an integral part of their work and expected by the youngsters. Leavey et al (1992), for instance, found that teachers generally were seen in the light of practical considerations. In other words, whether or not they helped the young person get through his/her exams. Achievement in this way was a means to self-realization. The teachers encouraged self-realization too, by giving students responsibility. Some pupils were therefore asked to be representatives on the School Council. Each of these areas represent the dynamics involved in establishing the basic immanent faith structure (Chapter 5). The other side of this was the teachers who were perceived to be acting hypocritically or unfairly. This perception brought a contradiction to the trust relationship assumed between pupil and teacher. Such teachers lost the young people's respect and no longer could contribute to their faith structure.

In some instances teachers did, however, contribute directly to the youngsters' development of transcendent faith. Nineteen percent of the young people overall said
that teachers had helped them form their religious beliefs. RE teachers in particular were expected to be 'religious' and a source of guidance in relation to the transcendent realm, especially where they were involved in school activities which had church connections. For example, in both of the church schools there was an opportunity for the young people to go away on weekend retreats which aimed to encourage the youngsters' Christian faith. In the Church of England school this was run through the Christian Union which was organized mainly by the RE staff. Not only did the young people who attended find it helpful to meet with other Christians of their own age, as discussed above, they also appreciated having Christian adults they could talk to about their faith. Similarly, the teachers at the Catholic school ran several events which would help the young people to develop a Christian faith. They held a very successful annual series of talks during the Lent period, for example, which was aimed at Sixth Form students (although they were also well attended by people from the local community). These activities, the trusting relationships established between teacher and pupil, and the religious symbols in the background, all contributed to a school culture which helped introduce transcendent referents to young people and incurred a degree of plausibility on the Christian faith. That is not to say, however, that school was wholly favourable to Christian beliefs. As noted earlier, peer attitudes could be hostile to conventional religious ideas and undermine any official influence the school could provide. Indeed, if Christian referents are only associated with school culture by the young people then any hostility towards school could also result in a rejection of Christianity. It is perhaps more accurate to say that the Christian elements of the school culture mostly served the young people who already had a Christian faith established outside the school context. In this respect, 40% of young people with a high CR score said that teachers had helped them form their religious beliefs, compared to only 20% of medium scorers and 5% of those with low scores. The Christian element of school culture tended to provide a mechanism for sustaining beliefs already established through other environments rather than establishing the immanent–transcendent link in the first place.
School assemblies are another part of school culture, although they are a part which is legislated for in all schools. The 1988 Education Act requires schools to provide a daily act of collective worship which over the course of a term will be predominantly Christian in its orientation. These requirements are extremely demanding on schools both logistically and in terms of content. Cox and Cairns argue that even if it were the case that schools were populated by young people who believed in the Christian God and were willing to take part in an act of worship, it would still be very difficult to find enough "varied and lively material [to get full participation] day after day" (Cox & Cairns, 1989:42). Indeed, churches themselves do not require as much from their staff and members. The job is made even more difficult, and possibly pointless, when the young people are unable (through lack of belief) or unwilling (through taboos of peer pressure) to take part.

Bearing these reservations in mind, the young people in this study were asked about their experiences of assemblies. From the survey 82% of the young people agreed with the statement "school assemblies are usually boring", only 11% disagreed. Moreover, there was hardly any association between CR score and attitude towards assemblies – all the youngsters found them dull. In accordance with this, Francis and Kay found that only 6% of the young people agreed that "schools should hold a religious assembly every day" compared to 73% who did not think this appropriate (Francis & Kay 1995:187). The comments from the interviews shed some light on why assemblies were so unpopular and therefore not conducive to Christian faith transmission.

First of all, most of the young people had an a priori assumption that conventional religion was irrelevant to them and unlikely to be of any interest to them (see Chapter 3). To the extent that the teenagers expected assemblies to be boring, the teachers immediately faced an up-hill struggle with any act of collective worship. Before they could begin to introduce the young people to the transcendent, the teachers had to gain the youngsters' interest. Very often, despite a great deal of work and dedication on
the part of staff, they were unsuccessful in their attempts:

*Can I ask you what you think about school assemblies?*
Oh my Gawd! They are SO BORING. ... when we have to say, like, prayers, no one closes their eyes and no one says "Amen" or anything like that, and it's just a total waste of time to have a prayer at the end of assembly. And it's so boring because they try and make them relevant, yeah, like the Bible passages. And they go: "Well, Jesus said this", and everyone's just going: "What!" Know what I mean? You're there in a daze and then you sort of wake up and that's the end of it and you say: "What was that all about?". Oh, it's just so boring and you can't understand what they're going on about.

*Do you think they could be made more interesting?*
Yeah, stop having them! [Alison, Atheist, Low].

Also, as far some youngsters were concerned, to join in an act of worship would simply be hypocritical in that they did not believe in God. As such, any feigned act of worship would mitigate against the principle of authenticity, which is one of the important dynamics of immanent faith. The problem of irrelevancy, however, did not just affect those with lower Christian commitment; it affected the interviewees with high CR scores too. The difference was that those with low CR scores found assemblies too religious whereas those with high scores did not find them Christian enough. These young people felt that the Christian content had been 'toned down' to suit the less committed students but that in doing so the Christian message had been undermined and lost some of its clarity.

They're supposed to take a Christian view but they don't really [Brian, Free Church, High].

It's mostly like I was saying before about teachers with Christian beliefs trying to compromise that with what the world believes, and what people who aren't Christians believe. ... they start saying something Christian and they just fall short of the point they are trying to make. I think part of that's like ... being afraid of what people there think of them. Compromise with what everyone else wants who don't believe.

*What about the other young people in the ... assemblies, how do they react to them?*
Well, from a non-Christian point of view, some of my friends think it's silly anyway, because assemblies end up not making sense by the end
of it. They started off on a Christian theme and then they go on to a non-Christian theme and none of it makes sense. They can't figure it out.

*So perhaps if it was all Christian?*

Or all non-Christian then at least it would make sense, yeah. [Julie, Free Church, High].

Secondly, there was some confusion as to what the main point of the school assemblies was in the first place; they apparently seemed to try and serve two purposes. On the one hand, there was the 'religious' or 'moral' input which constituted the 'collective worship' aspect of school assemblies. The form of this varied. Sometimes a class of youngsters themselves led the assembly, perhaps using drama to make a particular point. Sometimes teachers took the assembly and made comments on current news events, gave a 'thought for the day', a Bible reading or led the young people in prayers. In addition, the church schools sometimes held more formal services in the form of Mass or Holy Communion. On the other hand, there was the 'secular' school business input, that consisted of school announcements and notices. It was the latter which seemed to carry the most weight as far as some of the youngsters were concerned:

... all they should have assemblies for is just really to tell us what is going on in the school and that [Peter, Uncertain, Low].

It just seems to be wasting time more than anything. I think it's, you know, having announcements and that which is pretty important, but I find it quite boring sitting there and sort of listening to what they're saying [Samantha, Agnostic, Medium].

Notices had an element of direct relevance to the youngsters which they often did not see in the religious/moral content of assemblies. Bringing together these religious and secular aims, rather than linking the immanent with the transcendent realm caused confusion and detracted from the significance of the conventional religious element. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, associating school with Christianity could for some young people be a cause for rejecting it. School assemblies did not help in this respect insofar as dealing with school business in this context could, in some instances, lead to a feeling of 'us' and 'them' between the young people and staff.
Assemblies were a means of social control - school notices were given, school uniform was checked on entry to the hall, the young people were made to sit in rows (sometimes on the floor), and were told to sit quietly. All of this made it clear that the staff were in charge and the young people were there to do as they were told. This could go against the values of freedom and autonomy which the young people held. In addition, the religious part of assemblies was 'on cue' from teachers, which again counters the value of autonomy and goes against the principle that religion should not be forced upon people. School assemblies were therefore potentially a target for rebellious behaviour and, indeed, some youngsters did show a degree of hostility to school expressions of Christianity. Generally, however, any such rebellious feelings were not actively manifested and the majority of young people reacted to assemblies in a passive way. The interviewees suggested this lack of participation had more to do with the boredom and the irrelevance of conventional religion than with non-compliant resistance to the teacher's control. The young people selectively 'switched off' or opted out of what was going on when it was not of interest to them and made their own entertainment to while away the time:

I try to catch up on my sleep [in assemblies] ... or we'll sit there and take the mickey out of the teachers [Simon, Agnostic, Medium].

I don't think many of the pupils take in what's going on, mainly because all their friends are there ... people do sit there messing around concentrating more on what other people are doing rather than what's going on. 

*What sort of things do they do when they mess around?*

Oh they just sit there whispering. When someone starts speaking they change all the words round and make fun of them. That's mainly the sort of thing that happens. Get a piece of paper and give it to people. They concentrate on that more than what was going on unless it was an interesting assembly or something like that ... I think it's hard to make a Mass really interesting if people don't believe [Godfrey, Roman Catholic, Medium].

For the most part, therefore, the young people were not put off making the link between immanent and transcendent faith because assemblies created hostility or resentment towards conventional religion, it was more the case that the young people simply did not take in the conventional religious elements of assemblies which would
allow them to make such a link – they had decided not to listen.

A final factor which inhibited the young people's appreciation of assemblies was their perception that the whole thing was rather childish. Alison referred to closing one's eyes when praying (see above), and Maggie said that she refused to bow her head and join in the prayers, both of which suggests that the rituals of assemblies were associated with primary and middle school. Furthermore, as indicated above, Christianity and religiosity did not generally carry much social status as far as the young people were concerned. Given that teenagers are in a situation of continually negotiating their identity and monitoring their acceptability in relation to their peers as part of developing immanent faith, Christianity was not something to shout about, much less sing about, in assemblies!

For these reasons then, assemblies were not conducive to a worshipping situation that would help the young people locate their immanent faith in a transcendent reality. The schools for their part were not insensitive to the youngsters' difficulties in this regard and had gone to some lengths to meet their needs. For example, aware of the irrelevancy of conventional religion to a lot of the pupils, they sometimes weighted the balance of assembly content in favour of secular themes rather than overtly religious ones. Several of the young people indicated that assemblies were not as 'religious' in the upper school as they had been in the lower school. Hymn-singing was, for example, reduced. Whilst this may have been more practical and less embarrassing for all concerned, it had a down-side in that it made assemblies irrelevant to the committed Christians and it reinforced the view that conventional religion and worship was something for young children, something which they had grown out of and could now forget:

Well, when you sort of get into the upper school you're sort of coming on 15 and you don't really want to stand there singing do you [Kay, Atheist, Low].

On the other hand, where the assembly was a more formal service (Mass or Holy Communion), the schools put a lot of work into providing a relevant liturgy for the
young people. At the time of the fieldwork the Roman Catholic school, in particular, had a well organized and committed liturgy group who sought to provide their young people with meaningful styles of worship. For example, modern songs accompanied by a music group sometimes replaced more traditional hymns and at least one of the interviewees appreciated this change from the practice at his previous school. The young people were also involved in the assemblies through giving class presentations and a couple of them indicated that these were not so boring as less participative ones. Moreover, there were one or two teachers within each school who were identified by the young people as being able to take a 'good' assembly and hold the young people's attention, very often because they put across their message in a humorous way. Generally, however, school assemblies did not help the young people form a bridge from immanent to transcendent faith. These comments should not be taken as a criticism of the participating schools in any way, but they do indicate the size of task teachers face in providing a meaningful act of worship in which the young people can freely participate. As Taylor argues: "You cannot legislate belief" (Taylor 1993:1).

7.5.3 Religious Education (RE)

Religious education was the third aspect of school influences considered in this study. RE offers a specific and overt contact with transcendent ideas. Moreover, since RE, with a few caveats, is compulsory under the 1988 Education Act, it is the main introduction to conventional religion for many young people. However, the set purpose of RE is not to 'convert' or 'indoctrinate' but rather to inform and give young people an opportunity to address questions of moral significance and ultimate importance. Given that RE lessons may be the main or only time these sorts of questions are formally discussed by young people, it was important in terms of the present study to find out what the youngsters thought about their RE lessons. On the whole their comments expressed the same lack of interest in conventional religion noted throughout the previous chapters. Overall only 31% of the young people went so far as to say that "lessons in school about religion are usually interesting" and only 22% agreed that "lessons in school about religion help me form my religious beliefs". The three main objections to RE put forward by the young people are by now
Familiar: the compulsory nature of RE, irrelevance and uncertainty.

Francis and Kay in their study found that opinion amongst young people was divided as to whether RE should be taught in schools – 33% agreed that it should be compared to 31% who thought that it should not (1995:187). The comments from the questionnaires and interviews in the current study showed that some of the young people resented the compulsory nature of RE in their schools; being forced to do anything challenged their individual right to autonomy and freedom of choice:

I do not think that religious education should be a compulsory subject and everyone should have the right to choose if they want to do it or not [Greta, Agnostic, Low].

At school ... you are forced to believe in God and if you try to argue the point the teacher always answers you back with a smug grin. For example: "I don't think God made the world, I think it was the Big Bang". "But who made the sun or comets which made the big bang?" [Leslie, Agnostic, Medium].

The second objection the young people had was related to the first. Just as RE teachers were expected by the youngsters to be 'religious' so RE lessons were seen as being most appropriate to 'religious' young people. As the majority of young people did not have a transcendent faith they felt RE was irrelevant to them. The youngsters did not in this sense show any signs of a 'seeking' nature which wanted to explore the transcendent. They did not indicate a conscious need to make the bridge from immanent to transcendent faith. For the most part, their immanent faith was apparently sufficient for ontological security. Indeed, several suggested that they could be doing other subjects, which would enhance their immanent faith by increasing self-realization were it not for having to do RE. They felt that the time they spent doing RE could be better employed studying subjects which were of more obvious practical use to realising a chosen career, or subjects which they enjoyed and offered a means of achievement and self-expression:

I think that people who don't have any beliefs in any God shouldn't do RE. Even if it is a Church of England School, they should respect how
people think about religions [Guy, Atheist, Low].

People who don't go to church should not have to go to do RE [Robin, Uncertain, Medium].

You do not get any choice in doing GCSE RE because it is a compulsory subject which I find totally absurd as I do not even believe in God. I could be spending the little spare time we get on more important subjects that would help me out in the long run! [Clive, Atheist, Low].

Furthermore, in terms of faith development it was also apparent from the comments that when the young people did find RE interesting it was because they were studying more sociological than theological issues. That is to say, they were most interested in issues of immanent rather than transcendent faith. In this respect Giddens argues that the social sciences are an important tool in the reflexive project of the self. Insofar as RE lessons brought a transcendent dimension to this information it could possibly help the youngsters form the bridge between the transcendent and immanent. Phyllis' comment below is a case in point. However, several of the young people, like Ben, suggested that the extra dimension was unnecessary:

... they're [RE lessons] much better now because you talk about all different things like capital punishment, drugs and things like that. And I think that's a lot better to be involved in because a lot of it still has to do with Christianity and religion, but I think it's important to, like, involve things like drugs and that because it's, like, really important to know about it. It's quite a good subject to relate it all to I suppose, so I don't mind it. ... I think sometimes we get a bit bored with all, like, Bible readings. I think we'd rather learn about an actual subject like capital punishment and things like that [Phyllis, Non-Denominational Christian, Medium].

I think they [RE lessons] should be about people's beliefs rather than about telling you what's right and what happened ... More about social studies sort of thing.

Did you look at any sort of social issues in RE?

Yeah. Things like bullying and punishment for crime and that often was supported by the Bible – didn't like that. Sort of said: "And so there's four different views of punishment, like in the Bible, blah, blah, blah ... quote from the Bible". I didn't like that, because I think people try to influence you with quotes from the Bible. I don't think you should be influenced by things like that. I think you should be
influenced by what's happened in the world, what you know, otherwise you can just totally do the wrong thing [Ben, Atheist, Low].

The apparent lack of relevance of RE to some of the young people was also expressed in their attitudes and behaviour in class. Several commented on the fact that classes were boring and often disrupted by students fooling around during lesson time - taking the mickey rather as they did in assemblies. It was also telling that some of the young people preferred RE teachers who did not make the subject too serious:

*Can you tell me now what you think of RE lessons?*
Quite boring. It's more or less the teachers. Not Mrs Bloggs, because I think Mrs Bloggs is really good at teaching it, but we used to have a teacher that, she didn't really, she just sort of told us and not really going into great depth and everything. Since we've been with Mrs Bloggs it's quite a bit better because she doesn't take it so seriously. She seems to put a bit of a joke into it and everything [Samantha, Agnostic, Medium].

When it's with Mr Smith it's really good. From my test results you can tell that I'm a lot better with Mr Smith and I really enjoy them [RE lessons]. He makes them better [than other teachers] ... he starts off normally with a joke and goes from there. [David, Roman Catholic, High].

The third objection to RE, which was raised by young people with high as well as medium or low CR scores, was that RE led to some of the uncertainty mentioned in earlier chapters. This is partly because RE has been affected by the liberal theology of the 1960s and 1970s and also by an increasing awareness of pluralism in society which has led it into a somewhat relativist position. Young people can be taught that certain groups of people believe something to be true but not that a particular religious belief actually is true. 'Truth' lies with the believer. Cox suggests this can hamper young people in making a link between immanent and transcendent faith:

Failing to take into account the truth claims of religions has two consequences. Practically it means that the teaching is confined to the externals of religions, their places of worship, their cult objects and their festivals. Their deeper beliefs which justify those places, objects and festivals are carefully avoided in case they raise truth claims. Such
teaching can give the impression that religion is a more superficial set of customs practised by those who happen to like them. More profoundly the avoidance of truth claims can suggest that no type of religion can have any deep significance, or lead to truth, and therefore that religious education is not an imperative study, and can be indoctrination into agnosticism (Cox and Cairns 1989:19).

The critical study of religion, as I mentioned in Chapter 4, also raised doubts in the young people's minds, especially when they did not have a firm Christian faith in the first place which was supported by plausibility structures outside the school.

I don't know if I believe in him [God] one hundred percent. It depends, because in RE in school we are asked questions: "Do we believe in God?" and all this. And it's based on information and answers on what you've read. And some of the information you just have to put down that you don't, based on that information [Godfrey, Roman Catholic, Medium].

A couple of the youngsters with high CR scores would have preferred a more definite teaching on Christianity too, though retaining the right of the individual to believe what they want:

I think sometimes, like, RE teachers these days, like to compromise with, like, what the world wants. They don't always put forward the Christian point of view strongly enough. Whereas I think it's important to put forward other religions, people make up their own minds, keep an open mind about it. But, I mean, if the RE teacher puts forward the Christian point of view strongly enough, I don't think people should have a problem in deciding! [Julie, Free Church, High].

... when it comes to doing the questions, it's, like, silly questions. They're not stretching, Christian things. I know they're meant for non-Christians as well, but they're not really very good [Brian, Free Church, High].

Critical thinking is, however, essential to developing a mature faith and when handled sensitively can stimulate young people to think through what they believe. Keith was a case in point. Brought up in a Free Church tradition with a strong Christian identity, he was beginning to think about some of the assumptions his faith rested
I've always accepted things from the way I was brought up ... The Bible is true. Everything about Christianity is completely true, there's no way anyone can question it because it's all proved. If it's not proved then it shouldn't be and you should just accept it because everyone else does. And recently, mainly due to RE I think (strangely enough, I think I owe something to RE), I started thinking that perhaps it wasn't right, you know. Perhaps the fact that it wasn't proved may mean that it's not right and it's just, like, questions, that sort of, the one's that roll around your head at the back of your mind, you know. And it's not that you sit down in a dark room and think about them. They just, kind of, crop up. Just things you think about, mainly when you don't even know you are. And recently I started just thinking about what I really believed in ... I think it was the revelation that there were such people who actually didn't believe in the Bible, because I've always, sort of, like, been in a family where everyone's religious and all our friends were. Oh yes, very religious, you know. And I've never met anyone who's said "God doesn't exist, you're speaking rubbish". That just didn't happen to me. And it was in one of the textbooks and we had to write about the conservative and the fundamentalist and all the other ones, and the liberal or something, I think. And the one who sort of, like, said: "This didn't happen, you're speaking rubbish" type-thing ... And I was, like, reading it sitting there thinking: "How can you say this? This is sacrilege". And as I was doing this work I was, like, reading it thinking maybe he's right, you know. And it was just something that I was completely ignorant of. I hadn't thought that perhaps it was all wrong. I just completely, just followed the herd. And they're things which take a great deal of thought. I don't think I'll ever find the answers to the questions I've got kicking around in my head. [Keith, Free Church, High].

Whatever the young people's opinions of RE, for many of them these lessons were their main, or only, explicit contact with Christian teaching. It was on the basis of what they had learnt from RE that they made their own decisions about belief in God. For those concerned with the long-term survival of the Christian sacred universe it is perhaps a little worrying that many of the young people indicated that their understanding of Christianity was fragmented and confused, yet they felt they knew enough from their lessons to make an informed judgement without further investigation:
Do you think you've got a lot of information about God? Well from RE and stuff, I reckon a fair amount. I reckon I can make a judgement, you know [Alison, Atheist, Low].

7.5.4 Young People's Perception Of The Influence Of School On Faith

Overall then it seems that the school is one of the main institutions which brings young people into contact with the transcendent realm expressed in the form of Christianity, indeed, it may be their only contact. However, the affect this actually has upon their faith depends to a large extent on external factors. If young people come to school with a high degree of Christian commitment supported by family and friends then the school can formally re-affirm this position and bring extra information to the young person to help test and build their faith. Even so, the young Christian has to be firm in the face of the more informal influence of peer opposition at school. For those young people with medium to low commitment the formal provision of the school on its own is unlikely to bridge the gap between immanent and transcendent faith, since it remains unsupported elsewhere. Schools would seem to have the greatest effect in terms of strengthening existing bridges between the immanent and transcendent faith referents rather than actually making the link in the first place.

7.6 Influences On Faith According To Gender And Religious Identity

7.6.1 Gender

Table 7.3 suggests that, with the exception of finding RE interesting and thinking that the church is useful, there were no significant differences between the girls and boys in terms of the influences they perceived to have affected their faith. Generally, across all these variables the perceived influence for both boys and girls was quite low, with less than a third of the youngsters seeing the items as particularly relevant. Of course, this does not indicate the effect these influences have actually had on the young people. It does suggest, however, that the young people believe they are
primarily responsible for their own faith and that autonomy is just as important to girls as it is to boys, despite cultural stereotypes which might suggest otherwise.

Table 7.3  Influences on faith by gender – % agree (n=100%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influence</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Cramer's V (p&lt;0.01)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My parents have been a great help in forming my religious beliefs</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>0.06*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=531)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(548)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television/radio programmes have little effect on my religious beliefs</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>0.07*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=532)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(549)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious leaders (eg vicars) have been a great help in forming my religious beliefs</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0.04*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=532)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(552)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth leaders have been of little help in forming my religious beliefs</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>0.06*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=528)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(550)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Church seems useless for life today</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=533)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(547)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some school teachers have been a great help in forming my religious beliefs</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0.04*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=535)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(551)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lessons in school about religion are usually interesting</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=534)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(551)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lessons in school about religion help me form my religious beliefs</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0.05*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=533)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(550)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School assemblies are usually boring</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>0.07*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=534)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(552)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Not significant at the p<0.01 level.
### 7.6.2 Religious Identity

#### Table 7.4: Influence on faith by religious identity – % agree (n=100%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influence</th>
<th>RC</th>
<th>FC</th>
<th>CoE</th>
<th>Non-Denom</th>
<th>Ag</th>
<th>Ath</th>
<th>Uncert</th>
<th>Cramer's V (p&lt;0.01)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My parents have been a great help in forming my religious beliefs</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television/Radio programmes have little effect on my religious beliefs</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>0.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious leaders (eg vicars) have been a great help in forming my religious beliefs</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth leaders have been of little help in forming my religious beliefs</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>0.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Church seems useless for life today</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some school teachers have been a great help in forming my religious beliefs</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lessons in school about religion are usually interesting</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lessons in school about religion help me form my religious beliefs</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School assemblies are usually boring</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>0.09*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Not significant at the p<0.01 level.

Key: RC = Roman Catholic; FC = Free Church; CoE = Church of England; Non-Denom = Non-Denominational Christian; Ag = Agnostic; Ath = Atheist; Uncert = Uncertain of Religious Identity.
Table 7.4 indicates perceived influences on faith according to religious identity. From this it seems that Free Church members have been most influenced by all the variables with the exception of the media. Free Church members on the whole tend to have the greatest Christian commitment according to the CR scale used in this study. The results in Table 7.4 were therefore to be expected since they suggest that in order to bridge the gap between immanent and transcendent faith the young person has to be involved in a number of institutions which will back up the plausibility of the faith in an otherwise sceptical world. The more 'plausibility structures' the young person has access to, the more the transcendent dimension will be reinforced. The survey results also suggest that Christian faith is established primarily in the home under the influence of parents. For the non-Christian groups parental influence was seen as being less important, especially in comparison to the influences of the media. This suggests that the Agnostics, Atheists and Uncertains probably have religiously uncommitted parents and a much more autonomous attitude to their faith than the Christian groups. In comparison to the Christian groups, the non-Christians acknowledged the influence of the media which I have argued expresses common religious ideas more readily than conventional ones. Media representations of common religion do not require the individual to adopt a whole body of doctrine, but allow him/her to decide selectively upon those transcendent beliefs which are most attractive to them. It is also noticeable from Table 7.4 that the young people had similar ideas about assemblies regardless of their religious identity. Though the Free Church members were slightly more likely to find them interesting there was no significant difference between the groups.

7.7 Bridging The Faith Divide

The purpose of this chapter was to consider the link between immanent and transcendent faith, that is, what influences cause the young person to add another dimension to their faith structure? This is one of the most important questions facing the Church since in its answer lies the future of the Christianity. The above discussion suggests that bridging the gap is a difficult process and, overall, relatively
few young people do this and successfully establish transcendent faith. Several points, however, can be made. Firstly, belief in the transcendent realm is inextricably linked to the basic immanent faith structure. Trusting relationships are needed to establish the plausibility of the transcendent realm. For the young people in this study, this primarily was established by religious socialization through committed Christian parents. Learning to be involved in trusting, intimate relationship with others is also a part of the process of learning what it is to trust the transcendent and be in relationship with God. Without these trusting relationships affirming the transcendent realm, faith is likely to stay immanent and at best transcendent referents will take the form of customary or common religion (as described in Figure 5.2) - that is, transient and without commitment. For this reason, it is unlikely that many young people will develop a transcendent faith with a common religious referent as the centre of faith in the foreseeable future, because there simply are not enough groups around to offer plausibility in an essentially rational, empirical world. It was also clear from the youngsters that they had to reach their own decision about their beliefs. In other words, whilst supported by a social network, the youngster's decision to bridge the immanent–transcendent divide is an autonomous one. This confirms the reflexive nature of the self seen through out this thesis.

The second point to be drawn from this chapter is that institutional expressions of Christianity through the Church and school are important for those young people who are trying to maintain a conventional Christian faith, especially in terms of building up trusting relationships in Christian groups (church youth groups, Christian Unions, etc). School assemblies, RE lessons, etc, are less important in comparison and, indeed, may inhibit Christian belief for those who do not yet have a transcendent faith. For many of the young people in this study the institutional expressions of Christianity were associated with indifferent or negative attitudes and were not particularly helpful in linking immanent faith to transcendent referents. In this respect, common religion is potentially a more attractive transcendent realm for young people to incorporate into their faith structures. Peers are more likely to discuss common religion, and media representations of common religion are more interestingly presented than conventional Christianity. However, as I have just suggested, the fragmented nature of common
religion which encourages a 'pick-and-mix' attitude to belief, means that it is very difficult to build this form of transcendent referent into the faith structure itself. Common religion, like customary Christianity, is therefore used as a resource from time-to-time to reinforce immanent faith but does not itself become a permanent part of the faith structure.

Finally, there was very little suggestion of outright hostility or rebellious attitudes towards conventional expressions of transcendent faith. The young people did not like other people 'forcing' their religious ideas on them, but the taboos against peers speaking about conventional religion meant that this was largely kept in check anyway. In relation to the Church and formal expressions of Christianity through the school, the young people with medium to low Christian commitment were generally very passive and endured the experience rather than rebelled against it. This passivity was also apparent in that the young people did not show many signs of engaging in a positive 'spiritual quest' either. Their interest in common religion did not appear to be a post-modern search for meaning and 'higher values', it was more a passive absorbing of what they were presented with on television and through magazines. In other words, they were searching for entertainment rather than seeking out a transcendent truth.

The implications of these results for our understanding of religion in late modernity are discussed in the next chapter.
Chapter Eight

YOUNG PEOPLE'S FAITH IN LATE MODERNITY

Having considered the empirical data relating to young people's faith, it is now time to return to the original research questions and locate the results of this study in the general sociological theory outlined in Chapter 1. It is also important as far as the project aims are concerned to consider some of the implications the findings of this study might have for the Church as it looks forward to the new millennium.

8.1 Questions Answered

To recap, I began this research with an interest in young people's faith in late modernity. Drawing on social theory, particularly that of Luckmann and Giddens, I took as my starting point the proposition that all human beings have to have some sort of faith. Faith in this context was defined as: the organisation of trust which sustains ontological security, that is to say, which provides the individual with existential meaning, hope and purpose. In other words, it was suggested that at some level all individuals address four existential questions:

(i) What is the purpose of life?
(ii) How should I relate to others?
(iii) Who am I?
(iv) What happens when I die?

Given that all people have faith along these lines, the research problem was then to find out how that faith is organised - what does faith 'look like' in late modernity? The literature in this respect seemed to be offering conflicting opinions based on differing perceptions of where contemporary Western society stands in relation to the modernization process. On the one hand, the classic secularization thesis holds that modernity is associated with a declining significance in conventional "religious
institutions, actions and consciousness" (Wilson 1982:149) and that this trend is continuing as modernity advances further. Durkheim, Luckmann, Giddens and others have indicated that themes revolving around the individual self become of central importance in late modernity and have largely taken over from more traditional sources of faith such as conventional Christianity. They suggest rationality and pluralism render conventional religion implausible and redundant. On the other hand, the desecularization thesis holds that, having declined in importance in early modernity, religion in late modernity is now re-emerging as we enter a post-modern era. Modernity, as it were, has collapsed in on itself and a sacred void opened up ready to be filled; hence the rise of various religious fundamentalisms, interest in new religious movements, pagan and New Age religions, etc.

Thus the literature presented a confusing picture as to how faith might be organised in contemporary society. The main research problem was broken down into five specific questions. The first three addressed the structure of faith and the last two were concerned with the process of faith in terms of its outworking in daily life and transmission:

(a) What role, if any, does Christianity have in the faith organisation of young people today? Is denomination a significant variable in this respect?

(b) Are common religious themes part of the organisation of faith, or is rationality in terms of science and technology the basis of faith?

(c) Are there any other 'invisible' faith referents which are not included in the above? If so, what are they?

(d) How does the organisation of faith affect the young people's moral outlook on life?

(e) What influences the type of faith structure the young people adopt?
To this was added a subsidiary question concerned with how answers to the above differed according to gender.

Chapters 3, 4 and 5 explored the first three questions and concluded with two main models of faith: immanent faith and transcendent faith.

8.1.1 Existential Questions And Immanent Faith

Immanent faith (see Figure 5.2) was the form of trust organisation which characterised the majority of the young people in this study. Immanent faith suggested that existential meaning, hope and purpose were for the most part derived from an internally referential system of trusted relationships with family and close friends, and the reflexive self. According to this form of faith the four existential questions were 'answered' as follows:

(i) What is my purpose in life?

For most of the young people the purpose of life was to secure personal happiness and maintain ontological security through trusting relationships with family and close friends, and through various means of self-realisation such as personal achievement and self-expression. In the short-term personal happiness generally meant 'having a laugh with friends' and passing GCSE exams. The young people's hope for the future then lay in one day having a family of their own (or at least a special, trusted and committed partnership with another), a job they enjoyed and a reasonably comfortable lifestyle. As part of the reciprocal nature of trusting relationships, purpose also lay in helping others in their immediate social network to find happiness and ontological security too. This narrow focus meant that the young people were less concerned about the wider society and so there was very little evidence that the young people derived any purpose in life from trying to achieve political aims. They were not, for instance, particularly involved in campaigning for social or environmental issues.
How should I relate to others?

The question of how to relate to others refers to the moral outworking of faith, the ethics behind meeting one's purpose in life. In terms of immanent faith, morality was marked by relativism and took the form of 'situational ethics'. For most of the young people there was no ultimate or legitimate institutional authority to guide moral decisions. All moral decision had to be made by the individuals concerned relative to the circumstances surrounding the problem. Consequently a particular course of action (such as abortion) may be right in one situation but the same action could be wrong under different circumstances. Ultimately it was felt to be up to each individual him/herself to decide upon the moral criteria that would determine his/her own behaviour. However, advice was sought from trusted individuals within the immanent faith structure and decisions took into account some of the affects a particular course of action would have on them. Given the significance of the reflexive self, autonomy was an important part of immanent faith; the young people felt it important that they be given the freedom and independence necessary to make their own moral judgements. Authenticity was also important in that when it came to making decisions the individual needed to be 'true to him/herself'. This meant that the young person had to establish a strong enough sense of identity to know what 'being true to oneself' actually meant. Where the 'true self' has not been securely constructed, peer group morality could take precedence.

Tolerance was another key feature of morality amongst the young people. According to most young people, providing an action did not undermine the ontological security of another (for example, by betraying or harming another and so breaking the bonds of trust in the faith structure), it should be tolerated. Tolerance is important since it helps to maximize the number of practical ways in which an individual can try and sustain their own ontological security. For example, as noted in Chapter 1, sexual intimacy can be an important means by which the reflexive self establishes identity. By adopting liberal attitudes towards sexuality the young people in effect maximized
their potential for exploring the question of 'who am I?'\textsuperscript{1}. Similarly, whilst some of the young people objected to drugs on \textit{pragmatic} grounds, they generally did not have a \textit{moral} objection to them. If people wanted to take drugs as part of 'having a good time' and others were not adversely effected by that behaviour, then why not?

Licence to 'do your own thing' was therefore part of the young people's outworking of immanent faith. However, the young people recognized that sometimes apparently legitimate actions could conflict. The general prioritising of the moral order expressed by the young people then reflected the parochial nature of immanent faith. Thus, in the eyes of the youngsters, the wellbeing of self and family came first and then close friends. The interests of others outside the immanent faith structure were considered last by the young people. As noted above, this prioritizing meant that moral consciousness tended to be local rather than national or global. In this respect it was the mass media campaigns which successfully brought the moral dilemmas of other people across the world into the privacy of the youngsters' homes and linked moral conscience to entertainment and family events, which were most influential on the young people's notion of social morality.

(iii) Who Am I?

Immanent faith, as Giddens suggests, primarily locates identity formation in the relationships between the self and trusted others, and in the internal reflexive processes of the self. The key elements for positive identity formation during adolescence, according to the experience of the young people in this study, lay in the unconditional acceptance of the individual by trusted family members and friends. Where this unconditional acceptance was forthcoming, these referents of immanent faith provided a sense of positive identity and a sense of belonging or 'having a place in the world'. It was noted in Chapter 5 that from a theoretical perspective the unconditional nature

\textsuperscript{1} The exception that proves the rule here was the relatively intolerant attitudes the boys in this study had towards homosexuality compared to the girls. The boys tended to perceive an attitude of tolerance in this respect as tantamount to an admission of a gay identity for themselves. As such, tolerance in this instance threatened the boys' own ontological security and therefore a more conservative opinion was deemed appropriate.
of these faith relationships was important. Giddens proposes that in late modernity relationships come more and more to approximate 'pure relationships' rather than the traditional kinship ties of pre-modern society. 'Pure relationships' are conditional in that they exist only for as long as they remain mutually satisfying to the people involved and as such are inherently unstable. 'Pure relationships' are characterized by reciprocity, equality and reflexivity since both partners are consciously and actively involved in forming and maintaining the relationship.

Evidence for the development of 'pure relationships' was beginning to be apparent amongst some of the young people in this study, for example, in their 'acceptance' of divorce as a normal part of reality; and, in some cases, their mistrust of marriage. Nevertheless, the young people still retained an ideal of what family 'should' be and it was this ideal which tended to make family members a reliable referent in the immanent faith structure. Family were a suitable locus of faith, precisely because they potentially offered what 'pure relationships' could not provide, that is, permanent unconditional acceptance of self. The ideal of family suggested a situation in which the young person was known intimately and, regardless of any faults s/he might have, was accepted and supported. The youngster did not have to prove his/her worth within the ideal family context. Accordingly, 'pure relationships', where none of this acceptance and commitment to the self can be taken for granted, would seem to be a less suitable locus of faith.

Of course, as mentioned in Chapter 5, not all of the young people in this study came from happy, stable family relationships at home; many did not. Nevertheless, the interviews showed that all the young people had at least one family member whom they trusted and ultimately looked to for support. Close friendships could act as an additional faith referent or substitute source of faith when family relationships failed. Friendships had more in common with the 'pure relationship' model than the idea of family did. Even so, it was clear from the young people's comments about their close friendships that they too had some form of normative control. This gave the close friendships a degree of acceptance and permanency not easily achieved in the model of 'pure relationships' described by Giddens.
(iv) What happens when I die?

For the most part, therefore, the young people's faith was organized around a basic immanent faith structure of family, close friends and reflexive self (as in Figure 5.1). This was an essentially secular form of 'invisible religion' in Luckmann's terms. The organisation of faith, however, became more complicated for these youngsters if and when the bonds of trust in that faith structure were weakened or broke down entirely. An experience of bullying, family breakdown, or most especially, death, are all examples of events which can undermine the bonds of trust in the basic immanent faith structure and so weaken ontological security. Bullying, for instance, suggests that the self is not acceptable and is to be rejected. Family breakdown and death takes an individual out of the immediate social network and can leave the young person with a sense of uncertainty, loss, abandonment or betrayal. As a result of such threats or breaks in the bonds of trust in the immanent faith structure, the 'protective cocoon' which brackets out existential angst is 'punctured' and dread potentially becomes a problem. It is in this respect that the inherent instability of 'pure relationships' can be seen as problematic as a basis of faith. The transient nature of these relationships makes for a weak 'protective cocoon'. Thus Giddens notes that:

... shorn of external moral criteria, the pure relationship is vulnerable as a source of security at fateful moments and at other major life transitions (1991b:187).

Given the potential threat these sorts of events are to ontological security it is not too surprising that some of the young people had chosen not to think about them at all, especially death. According to Giddens, society aids this denial process by sanitising death and taking it out of the realism of everyday experiences. Young people may be familiar with death mediated through television news programmes, films or computer games, but as part of the tangible reality of everyday life, death is confined to hospitals and hospices. This process of removing threats to ontological security by institutionalization is referred to by Giddens as the 'sequestration of experience'. Insanity is another example of a 'sequestered experience'. Such threats, however, cannot be completely removed from real life experiences and young people have to
develop ways of strengthening or repairing their 'protective cocoon' if they are to continue with 'the courage to be'. The results from this study suggested two means by which the young people might strengthen their immanent faith structure:

(a) take extra care to sustain the remaining parts of the immanent faith structure and/or develop new immanent relationships; and/or

(b) look beyond the immanent to the transcendent realm as a means of 'patching up' ontological security.

The first of these strategies required the youngster to engage in activities which affirmed the self and confirmed his/her existing relationships, or to engage in activities which would introduce the young person to new immanent relationships. The data from the young people in Chapter 5, for instance, suggested that part of the process of confirming existing relationships was consciously to ensure time was spent with the people who comprise those immanent faith referents. Thus it was important to make time for friends or, in the case of parental divorce to maintain his/her relationship with the parent who moved away from the family home. Alternatively, a young person might seek reflexively to affirm the self either through achievements or by seeking out that which gives pleasure (drugs or alcohol could be used in this respect temporarily to blot out existential angst).

The second approach to strengthening the basic faith structure was to look beyond the immanent relationships to the transcendent realm. In Giddens' terminology this amounts to a "return of the repressed" (1991b:202). The data described in Chapters 3 and 4 suggested that whilst few young people invested faith in the transcendent realm as such, they nevertheless were aware of the possibility of some sort of 'X-factor' and were reluctant to disregard it altogether. From time-to-time the young people could draw on transcendent referents expressed in terms of common or customary religion (as illustrated in Figure 5.2). The time when these referents are most likely to be used is when the young people try to come to terms with death. Relatively few of the youngsters were content to accept the proposition that 'when
you're dead; there is no life beyond the current one'. Since death is beyond life it is by definition transcendent and usually requires some sort of transcendent 'explanation'. Thus when ontological security is threatened by death the tendency is to draw comfort from ideas such as heaven, the possibility reincarnation or belief in ghosts. The key point to note here, however, is that, as with other aspects of immanent faith, the self remains in charge. The self, under some influence of family and friends, chooses the form of transcendence to which reference will be made and is free to exercise autonomy by subjectively interpreting those referents. Moreover, once the young person has regained the 'courage to be' the referents can be dropped from consciousness. Under immanent faith young people do not have to have a long-term commitment or obligation to the transcendent realm. Thus, the transcendent referents were generally irrelevant to everyday life and a temporary aid to faith rather than a faith referent \textit{per se}.

Immanent faith tends to 'answer' the question of finitude by affirming life through the remaining immanent faith structure and by temporarily tapping into transcendent referents. One of the main reasons why common religious themes did not become permanent and incorporated into the faith structure in the form of transcendent faith was a lack of a plausibility structure. Generally, the main basis for plausibility amongst the young people was empirical rationality or 'science'. The young people wanted transcendent beliefs to be 'proved'. Some of the young people suggested, in accordance with Martin and Pluck's work in the 1970s, that the appearance and language of scientific rationality were perhaps of more significance to them than that the beliefs actually were rational in reality. In other words, the youngsters were by no means rational in all that they believed, but they could tolerate irrationality provided it could be articulated in quasi-scientific discourse. Some of the common religious themes in this respect were 'justified' by the young people and, indeed, by the mass media, in quasi-scientific terms. Bruce (1996) makes an important comment in this respect when he notes that plausibility does not necessarily mean that something is true:

\begin{quote}
Being right and being believed are not the same thing and the first does
\end{quote}
not always lead to the second. What is important for the career of any ideas or body of ideas is the environment of social circumstances and social relationships that makes them more or less likely to be believed (Bruce 1996:230).

Science was the main language of plausible belief and without 'scientific' backing, or where scientific backup was not sufficient, the young people needed trusted individuals actively to confirm belief in the transcendent realm in order to give it the degree of credibility required for a permanent transcendent referent. Transcendent faith is therefore bound up with the basic immanent faith structure of trusted relationships². It is not enough, for example, for a young person to know that the Archbishop of Canterbury or the Pope believe in God. They need to know that somebody they know and trust personally believes in God. Finney's (1992:39) report into the factors leading to adult conversion makes the same point. His study indicated that for men the main influence leading them to make a Christian commitment was the faith of their partner and for women it was Christian friends. The people in the basic immanent faith structure provide a 'plausibility structure' for transcendent belief in that they provide social confirmation that the transcendent realm is a reality. For most of the young people in this study, however, it seems that these 'significant others' demonstrated only indifference towards the transcendent. Moreover, the young people also faced the problem that institutional plausibility structures, such as the Church, were generally at odds with the values inherent in immanent faith and so were viewed in an indifferent or negative light. For example, some of the young people found the Church to be intolerant or hypocritical, and many thought church life boring and lacking the sense of joy or personal happiness that they sought.

² This is not to discount the possibility that a young person might have some sort of independent religious experience that initially leads them to transcendent faith. What it does mean, however, is that whether an individual comes to transcendent faith independently or through family and/or close friends, social contact with other trusted believers is required at an early stage to fully establish that transcendent faith if it is to act as a basis for ontological security.
8.1.2 Existential Questions And Transcendent Faith

The exception to the majority of young people displaying immanent faith were, of course, those who had successfully bridged the gap between immanent faith and the transcendent realm (see Figure 5.3). All the young people who fell into the category of high CR scorers, or 'committed Christians', had people around them who could provide social support for belief in the transcendent. The important point about transcendent faith, therefore, was that it involved a committed relationship on two levels. At one level these young people had a relationship with God which they described as intimate and trustworthy. That is, there was some correspondence between how God was described and how the most trusted relationships were described in the immanent faith structure. God fulfilled all the elements mentioned in Chapter 5 of a trustworthy confidant. God was the ultimate 'best friend'. This contrasts with how the other youngsters, whose faith was of an immanent nature, referred to the transcendent realm. With immanent faith the temporary transcendent referent was essentially impersonal and non-relational. In this respect the nature of the relationship most of these young people had with God was significant in terms of our understanding of faith, for it was the direct opposite of Giddens' model of 'pure relationships', more so even than the ideal of family relationships. God is complete in himself and was not, in this respect, regarded as needing the young person; nevertheless he was still seen as loving them unconditionally – sins were forgiven, acceptance was complete. When it came to the existential questions, because transcendent faith is incorporated into the basic immanent structure, some of the 'answers' were quite similar to those of the bulk of the young people. However, they usually then had an additional 'transcendent' slant which marked out the Christian commitment.

(i) What is my purpose in life?

As with the other young people, the high CR scorers valued personal happiness and achieving good exam grades and jobs in the future. Seeking the wellbeing of family and friends was important to these young people too. Family in particular came
through in the interviewees' comments as being especially significant. The difference between those youngsters with the transcendent faith and the others, however, was that some of them set the purposes of life in the context of serving God. For instance, doing all things for the 'glory of God', or evangelising at work. It was also noted that some of the young people with transcendent faith already felt an obligation to tell others about Christ. For some of these young people the specifically transcendent element of life's purpose was left unarticulated but their comments suggested it formed the backdrop of their aim to help others. In achieving their purposes, the youngsters' transcendent faith meant that they felt able to call upon God to help them through life's difficulties.

(ii) How should I relate to others?

The young Christians in this study tended to adopt more conservative views in relation to moral issues than the other young people, and in reaching their decisions they did sometimes refer to an ultimate authority in terms of God or the Bible. Thus, since the transcendent was a reality in its own right and not of the young person's own choosing, transcendent faith meant that the young person had to give up some of his/her autonomy and take up his/her responsibility and commitment to God and to others. Even so, for the most part the associations between the morality items on the questionnaire and CR score were fairly weak. The strongest correlations were those relating to Sunday trading (which some of the high CR scorers took to be breaking the Sabbath) and sex outside marriage, where the committed youngster were much more conservative than the medium to low scorers. On an individual level the interviewees with high CR scores also indicated that they tried to have a lifestyle of which God would approve. This meant that they sometimes refrained from joining in 'normal' peer activities such as drinking alcohol. These young people, however, still noted that it was not always easy to resist peer pressure. Moreover, they were very cautious about being seen to 'force' their values on others and so tolerance was important to this group as well as those with immanent faith.
(iii) Who am I?

Transcendent faith seemed to have an important effect on the young person's identity. Being a Christian was a significant part of their identity which linked them with both the transcendent and immanent referents in their faith structure. In terms of transcendent referents, the committed Christian young people derived a sense of personal worth from the unconditional acceptance they believed they received from God. Several of the interviewees, for example, were very much aware that God had died for them, which gave them as sense of being 'special'. Thus, within a supportive environment, transcendent faith conferred positive identity. A 'Christian' identity was also derived from the immanent relationships of family, close friends and the wider church network. Thus in some respects these young people gained their identity from trusted family and close friends in the same way that the youngsters with immanent faith did. However, in addition, believing family and friends could locate that identity in a Christian context. Through attendance at their church, Christian youth groups, etc, these young people's Christian identities became very salient and they gained a sense of belonging in those group contexts. These networks offered intimacy and support and so acted as additional sources of ontological security. Praying for the young people in this sense was a form of intimate contact which served to recognize the youngster as somebody worth taking an interest in. Being given responsibility within the church context also indicated to the young people that they were being taken seriously and of value. These Christian networks provided the means of explanation which could give life's difficulties a transcendent interpretation and maintain the Christian identity. For example, it was noted that interpreting bullying as a form of persecution could reinforce the Christian identity. Transcendent faith therefore was a significant contribution to identity formation for the young people in this group.

(iv) What happens when I die?

The young people who adopted transcendent faith were more certain about life after death. Indeed, it was with a view to securing a place in heaven that some of the
young people decided to adopt a transcendent faith in the first place. In this respect the young people were much less subjective in their faith than the young people of immanent faith who used similar referents on a temporary basis. Furthermore, there was also evidence that transcendent faith gave death a broader meaning apart from providing comfort in terms of a loved one being alive in an afterlife. Rebecca, for instance, explained how her faith enabled her to interpret her suffering through the death of her father as part of a broader divine plan to bring her closer to God. Even so, some of the youngsters with transcendent faith still had some inconsistencies of belief. For example, in Chapter 3 it was noted that more young people said that they believed in heaven than were prepared to admit there is life after death.

On the whole, therefore, transcendent faith provided answers to the existential questions which had some accordance with immanent faith but also gave them some extra 'ultimate' significance as well by relating them to the Christian sacred cosmos.

8.1.3 Answers To The Research Questions

Given these two models of faith, the answers to the five research questions can be stated as follows:

(a) Christianity retains a place in the world of late modernity, but for the majority of young people it has only a superficial, transitory and tangential significance to the organisation of faith. It tends to be used as a temporary source of comfort when ontological security is under threat. Very often the young people are uncertain about Christian referents and, if they should think about them, they tend to be decontextualized and subjectively interpreted. The majority of young people who made reference to Christian ideas in this study could best be described as 'customary Christians'. Only a minority of the young people actually invested faith in Christian transcendent referents and derived some of their ontological security from them. Even amongst these young people there was a degree of uncertainty in relation to traditional
teaching. Denomination was significant in that it was mainly Free Church members who showed strong religious commitment. The other religious identity groups had a greater proportion of young people with nominal belief. This has implications for the form the Church might take in the early part of the next millennium (see Section 8.3).

(b) Common religious referents do not appear to be used as an alternative source of transcendent faith. However, as with customary Christianity, these referents can be useful as a temporary means of reinforcing ontological security when necessary. Empirical rationality in the form of science is an important basis for judging the plausibility of belief. There was a general consensus amongst the young people herein that faith referents should not be completely at odds with science and an acceptance of mystery was largely absent from the young people's beliefs. The prevalence of uncertainty in this respect did not amount to an awareness of mystery in the universe but simply to a lack of understanding on the part of the youngsters. However, science itself is not a sufficient basis for faith. The young people did not answer the existential questions and gain ontological security by reference to scientific principles.

(c) Faith would seem to be, in Luckmann's terms, 'invisible'. For most of the young people faith was organized around family, close friends and the reflexive self. These were the referents which formed the basic immanent faith structure which gave the young people existential meaning, hope and purpose. This basic immanent faith structure was also an integral part of the transcendent organization of faith for the minority of youngsters who were committed Christians.

(d) The organization of immanent faith suggests that the majority of young people's moral decisions tend to be quite narrowly focused, putting the wellbeing of self, family and friends before others. Relativism and tolerance, autonomy and authenticity are important characteristics of decision-making based on immanent faith. Transcendent faith has a more ultimate authority in
terms of God and the Bible by which to reach life decisions. However, the young people with high CR scores implied that tolerance and the right of others to make up their own mind is also an important aspect of transcendent faith too. This reflects the fact that transcendent referents are integrated into the basic immanent faith structure rather than forming a separate organization of faith.

(e) The main influences on faith are the trusted individuals in the immanent faith structure. That the majority of the young people's faith was immanent, largely reflected a lack of interest in the transcendent realm amongst family and close friends. There tended to be an indifferent or negative association of the transcendent realm with institutions such as the Church or school. Institutional expressions of religion were regarded as boring and irrelevant by the majority of young people. By way of contrast, common religious themes were more attractively presented by the media and of more interest to the youngsters. However, common religion lacked the social network necessary to establish these themes as permanent transcendent referents in the faith structure. The minority of young people who did adopt transcendent faith had a strong social network of family and/or friends contributing to the plausibility of Christian referents. For them, institutional forms of Christianity were important as they formed part of that network.

The subsidiary question to the above was whether or not faith varied according to gender. The data in this study confirmed the findings from most other research that women and girls tend to be more open to the transcendent realm than men or boys, both in terms of conventional and common religious beliefs. I argued in earlier chapters that this seems to be due to the processes of socialization and the development of gender identity along fairly traditional lines. In Chapter 6, for instance, it was clear from the career choices of the young people that they were still following old gender norms. The choices of occupations for girls tended to be caring roles whereas the boys were aiming at technology, managerial or sports based careers. It was also argued in Chapter 6 that the girls seemed more inclined generally to take
responsibility for the ontological security of others than the boys (ie emphasising the self-family, self-friends bonds of trust rather than the reflexive self-self bonds of trust). The ideal masculine identity amongst boys was still found to be one of a strong, self-reliant individual who is in control of his life, rational, not gullible or emotional. Girls were allowed to be vulnerable, dependent, emotional. It seems that, on the whole, whilst it is becoming more acceptable for girls to enter the public world of men, it is still not acceptable for boys to enter the more private world of women. Since religion has tended to be associated with the private world (Levitt 1995), boys are less keen on associating themselves with it for fear of being regarded as weak or lacking in masculinity. This attitude meant that it was even more difficult for boys to talk about religion and they were immediately at a disadvantage compared to girls when it came to exploring and establishing the plausibility of a transcendent realm. A further factor which operated against boys in particular regarding church attendance (apart from the fact that they found it boring\(^3\)), was that other activities, which were acceptable to male culture, were going on at the same time as church services. For example, Sunday morning football and rugby. Even in late modernity it seems that gender norms are surprisingly traditional and the basis of a distinction in terms of faith. Having said that, however, Chapter 7 showed that the girls and boys themselves did not show much difference in their perception of the influences on their faith.

8.1.4 Faith And Invisible Religion

So, in terms of ontological security, were those with transcendent faith phenomenologically any better off than those with immanent faith? In this respect there is some psychological evidence to suggest that belief in God is associated with a slightly higher likelihood of a sense of wellbeing (Francis and Kay 1995:491). However, this difference only becomes apparent when different faith groups are compared. As far as the young people individually were concerned, those with immanent faith in this study did not give the impression that they missed having transcendent existential meaning, hope and purpose in their life. These young people

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\(^3\) In this respect Levitt (1995) argues that Church activities for young people tend to be more orientated towards female preferences than male preferences.
did not, in this respect, appear to be engaged proactively in any form of spiritual quest. Indeed, it seems there was a large degree of religious apathy on the part of most of them. Their 'exploration' of the transcendent realm where it did occur was passive and amounted to what they learnt at school, or Sunday school if they had been taken there by family members, and what they picked up from television or magazines. This accords with Cottrell's argument and contention with Luckmann's thesis discussed in Chapter 1, that most people seem to be quite happy to go through life without a sense of transcendent cosmic meaning. However, in contrast with Cottrell's interpretation, the results of this study suggest that this does not negate the concept of 'invisible religion' because the young people still had at least implicit answers to existential questions which prioritized their choices and integrated them into society. In other words, they were not living life purely on the basis of proximate meaning as Cottrell argues, even if that general meaning was somewhat inarticulate. The results of this study therefore confirm Luckmann's prediction of invisible themes, and also confirm his view that religion in late modernity does not take the form of a socially coherent universe:

The assortment of religious representations – a sacred cosmos in a loose sense of the term only – is not internalized by any potential consumer as a whole. The 'autonomous' consumer selects, instead, certain religious themes from the available assortment and builds them into a somewhat precarious private system of 'ultimate' significance. Individual religiosity is thus no longer a replica or approximation of an 'official' model (Luckmann 1967:102).

In this respect, Luckmann's functional definition of invisible religion, expressed in terms of faith as defined herein, seems legitimate from a sociological perspective. Provided young people have a relatively stable immanent faith structure it seems that they have enough ontological security to give them the 'courage to be'. Existential problems are only likely to come when this structure breaks down. In this respect, the main potential source of radical doubt and existential angst appears not to be a growing distrust of scientific rationality, for that still seems to be strong, but rather a decline in the normative expectation that family relationships should be permanent, supportive and offer unconditional love. Thus, a stronger move towards Giddens'
model of 'pure relationships' as a basis of faith is likely to be problematic in terms of establishing an immanent faith structure suitable for maintaining ontological security. Under such circumstances young people might consider the transcendent realm more seriously, but without social support it will be hard to establish this as transcendent faith.

8.2 Late Modernity - Secularization Or Desecularization?

On the basis of the above we can now return to the broader theoretical perspective and the question as to whether or not late modernity continues the trend of secularization. It would seem that there is very little evidence to challenge the secularization thesis as far as the data from the young people in this study goes. Only a minority of the youngsters displayed transcendent faith. In terms of Christianity the cut-off points between high, medium and low CR scores were arbitrarily divided into thirds along the CR scale. This in effect provided quite a wide range of scores which would count as 'high'. Nevertheless, only 16% of the youngsters fell within this range, and most of them were clustered towards the 'medium' end of the range. For most of the youngsters faith was therefore 'down to earth', rooted in the immediate, material context of self-realization and trustworthy relationships.

The continued presence of religious themes, and even some interest in religious ideas expressed through common religion in terms of New Age or pagan spirituality, did not support the idea of desecularization. As I have argued throughout this thesis, faith was not directly invested in these transcendent themes - they did not provide the young person with a permanent source of existential meaning, hope and purpose. Indeed, the way in which these themes were understood and used by the youngsters merely provided further confirmation of secularization. Most of the young people displayed uncertainty in relation to conventional religious themes. The traditional Christian symbols had been decontextualized and lost their original meaning. As such they were reinterpreted from traditional understandings and used in a subjectively relevant way. In terms of conventional religion, Hornsby-Smith's (1991) description of 'customary Christianity' was a particularly apt description of this form of faith.
Common religious beliefs were also used subjectively and, indeed, could be used in conjunction with customary Christianity without any sign of cognitive dissonance on the part of the young people concerned. Dissonance was only to be felt when the transcendent was perceived as irrational.

As far as the secularization process is concerned, the selective and subjective interpretation of transcendent referents can only help to continue the declining significance of conventional religion in the immediate future. This is because subjectivism further fragments any remains of a socially coherent understanding of the transcendent, or, to use Walker's (1996) description, it allows 'gospel amnesia' to set in. A unique configuration of referents and their transitory significance means that the individual is not in a position to share his/her understanding with others. Without shared understanding, as I have already indicated, the plausibility of the transcendent is undermined and once a shared memory of the transcendent has been lost it becomes very hard to re-establish. Bruce is clear on this point. He argues that when a religious culture fragments and the link between ethnicity and religion is lost, it is then practically impossible to re-establish it as a shared religion with a central place in society (1996:123). Hervieu-Léger's (1993a) analysis of religion in France, and in particular her study of French youth (1994), is significant here too. She defines religion in terms of a chain of believers who make up a community with a shared set of memories. For her, secularization amounts to a failure in modern society to maintain this shared memory. Davie's (1996) commentary on Hervieu-Léger's work picks up the crucial significance of low levels of church attendance in the promulgation of secularization. Chapter 7 in the current study indicated that low church attendance was a fact amongst the youngsters in this study, so her comments are of relevance. Davie writes:

Episodic attendance at the turning points in life cannot replace the week by week repetition of liturgy which involves physical presence at a particular place and regular contact with religious personnel (Davie 1996:110).

However, as one might expect from Bruce's comments, Hervieu-Léger's study of the
World Youth Gathering in Poland organized by the Roman Catholic Church suggests that young people are resistant to institutional attempts at establishing that memory. Her analysis of this event in this respect further supports the secularization process. Thus in relation to the secularization versus desecularization debate, the analysis of the current research and other work suggests that Bruce's views are an accurate reflection of the late modern world as it applies to most young people:

We have not all become committed rationalists; rather, in the phrase popularized by Weber, most of us have become religiously 'unmusical'. Like the truly tone-deaf, we know about music, we know that many people feel strongly about it, we might even be persuaded that, in some social sense, it is a good thing, but still it means nothing to us.

Belief in the supernatural has not disappeared. Rather the forms in which it is expressed have become so idiosyncratic and so diffuse that there are few specific social consequences. Instead of religiosity expressing itself in new sects with enthusiastic believers, it is expressed through piecemeal and consumerist involvement of a cultic world. To pursue Weber's music metaphor, the orchestras and mass bands with their thunderous symphonies have gone. Handfuls of us will be enthusiastic music-makers but, because we no longer follow one score, we cannot produce the melodies to rouse the masses (Bruce 1996:234).

Does the mid to long term future therefore hold any place for institutional articulation of the transcendent? In other words, does the Church have a future?

8.3 Immanent Faith And The Church

8.3.1 The Church In The New Millennium

In the end, only time will tell if Western society will become fully secularized in terms of the complete disappearance of the transcendent from the conscience collective but on the basis of the current thesis this scenario seems unlikely. Whilst it may be almost impossible to re-establish a shared transcendent realm in late modern society, as Bruce suggests, given the basic immanent structure of faith it would also appear that people are reluctant to do without it completely. As indicated above, the basic
the form of churchmanship which appears to be growing compared to an overall
decline in other styles (Brierley 1991:142; Brierley, Hiscock and Longley 1994).
Evangelical churches have a strong emphasis on teaching and usually provide a
conservative interpretation of the Christianity. Of particular importance in the context
of the current thesis is the emphasis that is placed on the individual's personal
relationship with God. This provides a context in which young people can develop
an intimate friendship with God, as the young Christians did in this study. Intimacy
with God is no doubt enhanced by charismatic experiences such as those described by
Rebecca and Brian (see Section 3.1.3). Hervieu-Léger's analysis of young people's
religiosity is relevant here in that she suggests that young people tend to lay a great
deal of emphasis on experience, immediacy of image and personal fulfilment (Hervieu-Léger 1994:125). Charismatic experiences in this respect can provide an
important experience for some young people and contribute to the intimacy which is
vital for faith in late modernity. Charismatic experiences in this sense would seem
to be very much in tune with the climate of late modernity as outlined herein.
Another explanation Hervieu-Léger (1993b) gives for the growth in charismatic
churches or, to use her term, 'emotional communities', is that by focusing on the
emotional rather than intellectual aspects of religious experience one can by-pass the
conflict that exists between the rational 'scientific' language used to interpret the
everyday world and the non-rational language of traditional religious teaching; a
conflict which many of the youngsters with medium and low CR scores expressed in
Chapters 3 and 4. Thus Hervieu-Léger writes:

The recourse to collective emotion makes it possible to save the call
for coherence, in all its religious intensity, without encountering the
problem of the symbolic language in which that coherence was
historically articulated (1993b:143).

Hervieu-Léger's thesis would seem to be plausible in that most of the young people
in this study did look to the language of science in the first instance to understand the
world about them. However, another reason of the popularity of the charismatic
movement implied by the young people herein was that, rather than by-pass the
rationality conflict, it actually colluded with it. In other words, the young people
looked upon their experiences as empirical 'proof' that God was a reality.

The exact form that intimate expression takes, however, is less important than the fact that it takes place at all. During her interview Julie, for instance, described a very intimate relationship with God yet was opposed to any physical manifestations of the Holy Spirit as described by Rebecca and Brian. Indeed, the significance of dramatic charismatic experiences should not be over-emphasized, especially for youth growing up in churches where charismatic experiences are fairly 'normal' occurrences. Richter (1996), for instance, notes that 'second generation' charismatics are just as likely to succumb to boredom and apathy as youth brought up in any other church cultures. In this respect, he notes Roberts' (1994) point that even with the intensity of the 'Toronto Blessing' many teenagers do not "think what's happening is 'cool'" (Roberts 1994:80). It is also important to bear in mind that charismatic experiences alone are unlikely to lead to transcendent faith as understood herein in terms of prolonged emotional and cognitive commitment to the transcendent referent. Hervieu-Léger's work on emotional renewals also suggests that charisma alone will not sustain transcendent faith. Emotional communities are easy to enter, but they are also easy to leave:

Notions of obligation and permanence are, generally speaking, alien to the religion of emotional communities. Participation is normally a personal choice and lasts only insofar as it brings personal satisfaction to the individual concerned. (Hervieu-Léger 1993b:132)

Manifested in this way, religious intimacy becomes another expression of customary religion and, indeed, Hervieu-Léger's comment above would seem to resonate with Giddens' description of a 'pure relationship'. The evangelical emphasis on teaching, however, contextualizes this intimacy in the cognitive realm of belief. It may even become slightly routinized. For example, many commonly used songs of worship in evangelical churches draw upon images of intimacy with God (Percy 1992:188). For example:

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4 This was the name given to the charismatic revival which was taking place in many churches at the time of this study.
By your side I would stay  
In your arms I would lay  
Jesus lover of my soul  
Nothing from you I withhold  
Lord I love you and adore you  
What more can I say  
You cause my love to grow stronger  
With every passing day (Richards 1989)

The conservative interpretation of Christianity most evangelical churches adopt provides a sense of assurance of belief which counteracts notions of irrationality and also encourages participation in a strong social setting which will further reinforce the plausibility of belief. Thus, apart from a strong emphasis on the Bible and a 'personal relationship' with God, evangelical teaching also is quite clear and demanding in relation to lifestyle, and especially family life. Theadvocation of certain lifestyle behaviours (for example, only having romantic relationships with other Christian believers, reading the Bible and praying every day, tithing money to the Church, etc) means that the young people who take up that advice are kept in a context where the Christian reality is continually being reinforced on a daily basis. It ensures the memory is maintained and 'gospel amnesia' does not set in. Furthermore, the evangelical emphasis on family (Ward 1996) means that the church culture is one which is conducive to intimacy and acceptance at an immanent as well as transcendent level. A large degree of contact with the 'Church family' through regular, frequent church attendance builds up an environment conducive to intimacy and trust. In particular, it provides a context for sharing faith through 'personal testimony' which is both an intimate expression of faith (since the speaker usually talks about a personally significant experience) and a means of reinforcing the social acceptability of a transcendent reality. In this respect, as mentioned earlier, Hervieu-Léger notes that personal testimony was the experience the young people most appreciated when they attended the World Youth Gathering in Poland.

The emphasis evangelical Free Churches often place on a 'personal relationship with Jesus' as a condition for full church membership is also significant. This is because, as I argued in Chapter 3, it means that church membership is not ascribed but is the
result of a careful personal decision and one which is often based on some sort of personal experience. This notion of belonging is compatible with the late modern emphasis on authenticity. Those who do not believe, do not join. The conscious decision to join the Church in this way also meant that the young people were more inclined to be committed to all aspects of the Christian sacred cosmos rather than selectively supporting parts of it in the manner of customary religion. To a certain degree, the rite of confirmation in the established Churches encouraged commitment and, indeed, a few of the young people in this study had refused to be confirmed in recognition of this fact. However, there was also still a sense (perhaps now declining) that confirmation is something young people in the established Churches could just do as a matter of course, without too much thought, and therefore was not an exact equivalent of Free Church membership.

Evangelical churches, in fostering a sense of certainty and intimacy, are perhaps best placed to maintain Christianity as a basis for ontological security in a world where immanent relationships are fragmenting and where the transcendent is otherwise too uncertain to invest faith in. Certainty and intimacy, of course, are not the exclusive property of evangelical churches. However, on the basis of young people's church attendance in Britain they do seem to offer the most successful expression of this at the moment and are likely to be the main model for the form the Church might take at the beginning of the next millennium.

8.3.2 Implications For Church Today

How the Church should respond to the predominance of immanent faith is a matter more for the theologians than sociologists. However, one or two points can be made:

(1) Where immanent faith is weakened, young people need something to repair the damage to their 'protective cocoon' and whilst the Church is not the first place they turn to for help, this need not necessarily be the case. Most young people have not dismissed Christianity outright and if young people were to see the Church in a more positive light it might become more accessible as a place of
support.

(2) One of the main barriers to young people taking Christianity and the Church seriously is its perceived irrelevance. This would suggest that the Church as a whole (both lay people and Church leaders), need to make a positive and articulate contribution to society. Young people need to see the relevance of Christianity in day-to-day living as well as understand it if they are to use it as a basis for their own faith. Young people require action to counteract any preconceived ideas of hypocrisy in relation to the Church; and they need a coherent, reasonable explanation of the motivation behind that action so that they can see the plausibility of Christian belief. In this way irrelevance and uncertainty might be reduced. In other words, only if Christianity is taken seriously in society beyond church confines is it likely to regain its plausibility; and the whole of the Church has a responsibility in this respect. This also suggests that the Church needs to take a lead in terms of clear moral guidance both in relation to social justice as well as personal morality, and again it is important that church members practise what they preach. Such guidance, however, has to recognise and take seriously the real world decisions young people have to make and the pressures they are under. In particular, young Christians need support in living out their Christian lives in the potentially hostile secular world of school. This is perhaps especially so for Christian boys who are the most likely to suffer ridicule at the hands of non-believing peers. In this respect, the Church would seem to lack strong positive male role models with whom teenage boys can identify.

(3) In responding to young people on their own terms, the Church also needs to be aware of the difficult circumstances many young people face. In particular, the experience of family breakdown would seem to be important in relation to faith. At one level the Church could offer a supportive environment for young people, a place where they are welcomed and listened to, a place where they are unconditionally accepted for who they are. Beyond that, specialist training in terms of provision for pastoral care to young people and their families
would seem to be appropriate for some church members working in the community. In this respect, a representative of Relate has noted that "there is very little on offer for children suffering the effects of divorce" compared to that provided for adults (Watts 1995). Once again, it has to be emphasized that when it comes to sustaining plausibility, provision of a supportive environment for young people is the responsibility of the whole Church. Whilst all church members cannot be youth counsellors they all need to be welcoming of young people if teenagers are going to invest trust in the Christian God and the Church as a basis for faith. Anything less appears hypocritical to young people.

(4) Beyond establishing the relevance of Christianity through personal relationships with other people, the Church has also to nurture the young people's sense of a personal relationship with God. A clear and coherent teaching framework which emphasizes the loving nature of God is important to establish a sure foundation for faith, but it is equally important that young people be allowed the opportunity to explore and develop their own expressions of this faith in order that they may fully realize themselves within that transcendent relationship.

(5) Following on from the (4), the model of immanent faith developed herein suggests trust is reciprocal and, therefore, needs to be invested in young people if they are going to trust the Church. This means that within a supportive environment young people may well benefit by being given real responsibilities which allow them to develop a sense of self-worth and to articulate the Christian faith in their own language in such a way as to make it relevant to them on a daily basis. Regarding the latter, it would seem from the comments of some of the youngsters herein that Church services need to be more endowed with a sense of joy and life if they are to attract young people. Young people's sense of self-worth, a positive identity and sense of belonging can also be fostered by adults taking an interest in what young people are doing outside as well as inside the church context. In this respect,
acknowledging achievements and offering help when things go wrong would seem to be important.

None of these points are new, of course, but they do suggest that an understanding of immanent faith has implications for the Church in late modernity.

8.4 Questions To Be Addressed

I hope this study has contributed to a sociological understanding of religion in contemporary society, especially amongst its youth. In some ways the findings are quite familiar. Indeed, they very much fit in with Francis' work on youth and religion in the 1980s, Martin and Pluck's study in the 1970s and Loukè's study in the 1950s. Martin and Pluck, for instance, noted that:

... open-mindedness, individuality and the private nature of belief was a near-universal feature of the interviews. So also was the assumption that the most natural focus in anyone's interest was the private sphere of personal relationships and the individual's life trajectory (1977:49).

This study also bears out much of the work on invisible religion carried out amongst adult populations. At first sight this consistency was a little surprising given all the technological, political and social changes over the last 30 years. However, this thesis has argued that faith is relationally based and it seems that the ideals of relationship perhaps change more slowly. Of key importance for the future of faith, and an area for further research, will be any developments in the 'transformations of intimacy' (Giddens 1992). In other words, what will be the effect on faith if 'pure relationships' become normative? For example, if a transformation of intimacy encourages a re-evaluation of gender stereotypes this could impact on the constitution of churches. If men are allowed access to the emotional sphere then perhaps a church context will become more acceptable to them. Alternatively, will the democratic nature of 'pure relationships' encourage women to become more like men, self-reliant and less willing to admit to belief in the transcendent realm? In this respect, the long-term effect of
women priests on faith in the established Church of England would be an area for further investigation. Another current question which seems to be under researched, especially in relation to young people, is how homosexual identities relate to faith in late modernity. In this respect Yip (1995) has done some important work, but the current study suggests more needs to be done. In Chapter 3 I noted that one other area which seems to be under researched in the context of youth is how young people understand and relate to the Holy Spirit. Given the significance of intimacy in faith that this study has highlighted, and the fact that charismatic churches are the ones which seem to be growing at the moment, young people's charismatic experiences would be an important area for future research. The reverse of this would be to consider in more depth why young people continue to leave the established Churches. This study has highlighted irrelevance and boredom as being significant factors which keep young people away from the Church. However, it would be useful to explore this more fully. North (1997) has begun work in this area and promises some interesting results.

Apart from transformations of intimacy the effect of other social changes on faith might also be significant. For example, whilst the results of this study would seem to have something in common with studies on youth in Europe, the effect of greater political unity in Europe on the organization of faith would be an interesting area for investigation. This could be especially interesting bearing in mind the apparent parochial nature of immanent faith. Indeed, greater integration on a world-wide level may also affect faith and it would be interesting to see how the models of faith described herein apply to non-Western countries and other world religions. In addition, changes in social policy might impact on faith. For example, changes in levels of unemployment could be significant, since employment prospects were an important aspect of self-realization identified by the young people. High levels of unemployment are likely to have a detrimental affect on ontological security. In addition, one could also ask how policies such as 'Care in the Community' affect faith, in that, previously people with mental health problems were taken out of everyday

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5 Various studies in this respect were presented at an International Workshop on 'Youth, Values and Religiousness' in Vienna, May 1997, and a publication of the papers is forthcoming.
contact (Giddens identified mental illness, along with death, as one of those 'sequestered experiences' which raise existential questions), but they are now expected to be integrated into the community. Increased experiences in this area might therefore have an affect on faith.

Longitudinal work on the development of faith according to life experiences is another area which would widen the scope of the current study. In this respect Fulton (1996) and his colleagues have begun work which relates closely to the theoretical basis of the current study, but is concerned with young adults aged 18 to 35. The long-term effects of family breakdown on faith is another obvious area for research in the light of the current thesis.

Methodologically the investigation into young people's faith could also be developed. This study adopted the method which was deemed to be most appropriate for the project (see Chapter 2). However, ethnographic investigations of various aspects of youth culture would seem to be an area which could be useful for developing a further understanding of faith. How, for instance, are transcendent referents interpreted and incorporated in popular youth culture? Does communication on the Internet generate a different form of trust which could impact on faith?

Finally, Giddens' work suggests other areas which in themselves would be worth developing in the context of religion. For example, his distinction between guilt and shame in late modernity might have implications for notions of forgiveness. Indeed, beyond the religious context Giddens' theoretical basis could perhaps be subjected to a more critical empirical investigation than this study has been able to adopt. In this respect, the purpose of the current investigation was to investigate religion and Giddens' work helped to build a useful theoretical context for analysis. It was the 'launch pad' for investigation rather than the focus of the study. Having said that, however, on the basis of this study, Giddens' description of late modernity would seem to be a very useful one and certainly was helpful in the current context.

Thus, whilst this study has, I believe, contributed to an understanding of young
people's faith it is apparent that there are still questions left unanswered.

8.5 And Finally...

So, in conclusion, as we approach the 'gate of the new millennium' and stand to face the unknown, it would seem that very few young people are putting their trust in a transcendent God. Rather, their faith is in themselves as autonomous individuals and their immediate family and friends. Only time will tell whether this faith will stand up to the challenges of the future.


Fulton J (1996) 'Young Adult Catholics: Contemporary Culture And Religious Orientation' paper presented at the British Sociological Association, Sociology of Religion Study Group, Religion, Culture And Ideology Conference, St Mary's University College, 3rd April.


Levitt MAS (1996) 'Nice When They Are Young: Contemporary Christianity In Families And Schools Aldershot: Avebury.


Martin B and Pluck R (1977) Young People's Beliefs General Synod Board of Education.


North K (1997) 'Catholicism And Young People: Some Ethical Considerations' unpublished paper presented at the British Sociological Association, Sociology of Religion Study Group Religion, Modernity And Ethics, University of Bristol, 3rd April


Appendix One

YOUNG PEOPLE'S BELIEFS QUESTIONNAIRE

This appendix gives the final version of the Young People's Beliefs Questionnaire used for the survey and constructing the CR scale. It has been annotated with the frequency percentages for each item. The percentages given are those before adjustment for missing values and therefore correspond to all 1090 respondents. The percentage of missing values on each of the individual items was small. Question 5 had the largest number of missing values (7.5% of the 1090 respondents). 2.2% of the Christian young people in the survey missed out Question 6. 5.8% of the young people did not answer Question 50. On all the other items the percentage of missing respondents was 1.4% or less.

The source of questions and variable labels for the items are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Variable Label</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Source (* question wording modified from the original)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>RELIGION</td>
<td>Self identified religion</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>DENOM</td>
<td>Christian denominational affiliation</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>BIBLE</td>
<td>Frequency of Bible reading</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>PRAY</td>
<td>Frequency of praying</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>CHURCH</td>
<td>Frequency of church attendance</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>GROUPS</td>
<td>The number of groups connected with religious beliefs that the young person belongs to</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>GOD</td>
<td>Concept of God</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>RELIMP</td>
<td>Religion is important to me</td>
<td>Francis (1984)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>MEDIA</td>
<td>Television/radio programmes have little effect on my religious beliefs</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>ABORTION</td>
<td>Abortion is wrong except where the life of the mother is at risk</td>
<td>Hornsby-Smith &amp; Lce (1979)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>YOUTH</td>
<td>Youth leaders have been of little help in forming my religious beliefs</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>BIBUSE</td>
<td>The Bible seems useless for life today</td>
<td>Francis (1982)*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

282
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Variable Label</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>HELL</td>
<td>Hell is a real place</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>ENVIRON</td>
<td>Protecting the environment and avoiding pollution is less urgent than often suggested</td>
<td>European Values Survey (1990)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>PARENTS</td>
<td>My parents have been a great help in forming my religious beliefs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>DRUGS</td>
<td>It's alright to use soft drugs like marijuana (hash or pot)</td>
<td>Francis (1984)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>SEXREL</td>
<td>It's wrong to have sexual intercourse outside marriage</td>
<td>Francis (1984)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>SONGOD</td>
<td>Jesus Christ is the Son of God</td>
<td>Francis (1984)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>UNEMP</td>
<td>People who are unemployed should have to take any job available or lose their unemployment benefit</td>
<td>European Values Survey (1990)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>DEVIL</td>
<td>The Devil is just an imaginary person</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>HORO</td>
<td>I believe in my horoscope</td>
<td>Francis (1984)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>DEATH</td>
<td>There is life after death</td>
<td>Francis (1984)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>CREATE</td>
<td>God really did make the world in six days and rested on the seventh</td>
<td>Francis (1984)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>TRUE</td>
<td>Christianity is the only true religion</td>
<td>Francis (1984)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>COMFORT</td>
<td>It is comforting at times to believe there is a God</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>LESSON</td>
<td>Lessons in school about religion are usually interesting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>REINC</td>
<td>When people die they come back to life again as someone or something else</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>RESURREC</td>
<td>Jesus really rose from the dead</td>
<td>Francis (1984)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>ASSEMBLY</td>
<td>School assemblies are usually boring</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>HEAVEN</td>
<td>Heaven is just an imaginary place</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>GODIMP</td>
<td>God is important to me</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>TEACHER</td>
<td>Some school teachers have been a great help in forming my beliefs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>PLANETS</td>
<td>There is probably intelligent life on other planets</td>
<td>Francis (1984)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>JGOD</td>
<td>Jesus Christ is God</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>LUCK</td>
<td>There is really no such thing as luck</td>
<td>Francis (1984)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>SCIENCE</td>
<td>One day everything will be explained by science</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>CHURUSE</td>
<td>The Church seems useless for life today</td>
<td>Francis (1984)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>REBELIEF</td>
<td>Lessons in school about religion help me form my religious beliefs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>VICARS</td>
<td>Religious leaders (eg vicars) have been a great help in forming my religious beliefs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>WATER</td>
<td>Jesus really did walk on water</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BIBGUIDE</td>
<td>I use the Bible to guide the way I live my life</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>WAR</td>
<td>All war is wrong</td>
<td>Francis (1984)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>HOMOSEX</td>
<td>Homosexual (gay and lesbian)</td>
<td>Francis (1984)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>WEALTH</td>
<td>Rich nations should have a lower standard of living to help poorer nations become wealthier</td>
<td>Hornsby-Smith &amp; Less (1979)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>SHOPPING</td>
<td>Shopping on Sunday is wrong</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>GCSE</td>
<td>Hopes to take Religious Education GCSE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dear Student

I would very much like to include you in a project I am doing on young people's beliefs. In this booklet there are some questions which ask about your beliefs. Please work your way through the questions and answer them as honestly as you can. Please put your name on the questionnaire below in case I need to ask you some other questions later on. Everything you write down will be treated as confidential so that nobody apart from myself will know who has written the answers in this booklet. Please remember this is NOT A TEST. It is what you personally think that is important, so please use this as a chance to say what you really believe. Thank you very much for your help.

Please state your:–

(1) Name: .......................................................................................................................... 

(2) Age: .................................................................................................................................. 

13 yrs = 21.5% 14 yrs = 37% 15 yrs = 30.9% 16 yrs = 19.9% 17 yrs = 0.1%

Church of England School = 43.3% Roman Catholic School = 35.9% County School = 20.8%
Year 9 = 38% Year 10 = 32.5% Year 11 = 29.5%

(3) Form/Class: ..........................................................................................................................

(4) Please tick ONE box to show whether you are male or female: Male [49.2] Female [50.8]
(5) Please tick ONE of the boxes to show which of the following best describes you:

A Christian [50.7]  An Agnostic (somebody who thinks we cannot know whether or not there is a God) [19.4]
A Muslim [0.4]  An Atheist (somebody who does not believe in God) [11.9]
A Hindu [0.3]  A Jew [0.0]  A Sikh [0.1]  A Buddhist [0.3]  I don't know which of these categories describes me best [9.3]

Satanist 0.1%

I am none of the above, I am a (please state) .......................................................................................

(6) If you are a Christian, please tick ONE of the boxes to show which denomination you feel most a part of:

Methodist [0.8]  United Reform Church [0.8]  Evangelical [0.6]
Community Church [1.7]  Pentecostal [0.2]  Don’t know [12.9]

Other (please state): ........................................................................................................................................

How often, if ever, do you do the following things because YOU WANT TO (ie not counting times when your teachers or family make you)? Please tick ONE of the headed boxes next to each of the items 7, 8, and 9.

(7) Read the Bible [1.4]  [6.3]  [7.8]  [11.3]  [23.8]  [44.2]

(8) Pray [11.7]  [17.3]  [8.5]  [8.6]  [20.7]  [28.1]

(9) Go to Church [0.2]  [15.2]  [10.8]  [10.0]  [38.7]  [22.3]

(10) If you belong to any groups connected with your religious beliefs please write them below (for example Christian Union, church groups, prayer groups, charities)?

No groups = 66.2%  1 group = 9.8%  2 groups = 28.3%  3 groups = 0.6%  4 groups = 0.5%  5 groups = 0.1%  7 groups = 0.1%

(11) Please tick ONE of the boxes to show which of the following statements comes closest to your belief about God?

I believe in a God who is someone I can know personally ......................................................... [24.5]
I believe in some sort of Higher Power or Life Force, but not in a personal God [17.5]
I don't really know what to think ......................................................................................... [40.2]
I don't think there is any sort of God, Higher Power or Life Force ................................ [11.8]

None of the above are close to my belief about God. I believe (please write down your beliefs):

..............................................................................................................................................................
Listed below are a number of sentences which look like this:

Religion is important to me ............................................................. 1 2 3 4 5

1 means I Strongly Agree. 2 means I Agree. 3 means I am Not Certain. 4 means I Disagree. 5 means I Strongly Disagree. Please read each sentence carefully and think "Do I agree with it?"

If you Strongly Agree put a ring round ........................................ 1 2 3 4 5
If you Agree (but not strongly) put a ring round ............................ 1 2 3 4 5
If you are Not Certain put a ring round ........................................ 1 2 3 4 5
If you Disagree (but not strongly) put a ring round ....................... 1 2 3 4 5
If you Strongly Disagree put a ring round .................................... 1 2 3 4 5

Please circle only ONE answer for each sentence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Sentence</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Not Certain</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Religion is important to me ..... ..................................................</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>32.5</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Television/radio programmes have little effect on my religious beliefs</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Abortion is wrong except where the life of the mother is at risk ..........</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>16.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Youth leaders have been of little help in forming my religious beliefs</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>The Bible seems useless for life today ...........................................</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>32.6</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Hell is a real place .......................................................................</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>17.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Protecting the environment and avoiding pollution is less urgent than often suggested</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>36.6</td>
<td>39.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>My parents have been a great help in forming my religious beliefs .........</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>20.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>It's alright to use soft drugs like marijuana (hash or pot) ...............</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>It's wrong to have sexual intercourse outside marriage .....................</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>43.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Jesus Christ is the Son of God ....................................................</td>
<td>28.5</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>People who are unemployed should have to take any job available or lose their unemployment benefit</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>31.2</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>The Devil is just an imaginary person ...........................................</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>45.3</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>14.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>I believe in my horoscope ..... ..................................................</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>21.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>There is life after death ..................................................................</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>43.6</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>God really did make the world in six days and rested on the seventh ......</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>46.4</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>19.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Christianity is the only true religion ..........................................</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td>31.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>It is comforting at times to believe there is a God ..........................</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>37.7</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PLEASE TURN OVER
Please circle only ONE answer for each sentence

(30) Lessons in school about religion are usually interesting .......... 3.3 27.6 19.9 27.2 21.6

(31) When people die they come back to life again as someone or something else ...................................................... 6.6 12.9 49.3 15.9 15.1

(32) Jesus really rose from the dead .............................................................. 15.0 21.0 42.0 10.0 12.3

(33) School assemblies are usually boring ....................................................... 45.5 36.1 7.2 6.9 3.9

(34) Heaven is just an imaginary place .................................................................................... 6.6 129 49.3 15.9 15.1

(35) God is important to me .............................................................................. 16.3 20.0 28.0 19.4 15.6

(36) Some school teachers have been a great help in forming my religious beliefs ................................................................................... 4.7 14.3 25.0 33.9 21.7

(37) There is probably intelligent life on other planets ........................................... 15.6 25.4 42.6 8.9 6.6

(38) Jesus Christ is God .................................................................................... as 9.5 39.3 24.2 17.8

(39) There is really no such thing as luck ............................................................. 5.5 9.1 22.4 41.7 20.6

(40) One day everything will be explained by science ......................................... 8.6 20.7 37.4 20.2 12.5

(41) The Church seems useless for life today ......................................................................... 9.2 11.0 30.8 33.2 14.9

(42) Lessons in school about religion help me form my religious beliefs 3.3 18.6 24.7 33.9 20.5

(43) Religious leaders (eg vicars) have been a great help in forming my religious beliefs ................................................................................... 4.1 12.6 23.6 34.1 24.9

(44) Jesus really did walk on water .............................................................................. 7.4 11.8 46.0 15.7 18.4

(45) I use the Bible to guide the way I live my life .................................................. 3.0 7.0 11.7 35.4 41.6

(46) All war is wrong ................................................................................... 36.3 22.0 18.3 13.9 8.3

(47) Homosexual (gay and lesbian) relationships are wrong .......................... 20.4 11.5 21.7 23.5 22.6

(48) Rich nations should have a lower standard of living to help poorer nations become wealthier ................................................................. 13.7 28.0 35.8 12.4 9.3

(49) Shopping on Sunday is wrong .............................................................................. 4.7 7.3 15.0 31.7 40.8

(50) Please tick ONE box to show whether or not you hope to take Religious Studies/Education GCSE: Yes [45.0] No [49.2]

(51) If you would like to add any thoughts you may have which are not covered by the questions or comments on the questionnaire itself, please write them below.

....................................................................................................................................................................................

....................................................................................................................................................................................

....................................................................................................................................................................................

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP
Appendix Two

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE QUESTIONNAIRE
(To be read to the young people by the Administrator)

You will see that you have been given a questionnaire booklet. This forms part of a research project which is giving young people a chance to say something about their religious and moral beliefs. I would like to include you in this project so please could you work your way through the questions in the booklet and answer them as honestly as you can.

Some points to remember as you are filling in the booklet:

(1) This is NOT A TEST. The questions should be treated seriously but it is what you personally think that is important. As far as the research is concerned there are no "right" and "wrong" answers.

(2) Please read the questions carefully. Some of the questions are quite difficult so if there is anything you don't understand please ask for help from me [or your teacher].

(3) In order to make the project worthwhile, please answer the questions as honestly as you can.

(4) Your answers to the questions are private. Please respect your neighbour's privacy and do not look at each other's answers.

(5) Please could you put your name on the front page of the questionnaire in case I need to ask you some other questions later on. Nobody apart from myself will know who has written the answers in the booklet.

(6) The questions are mostly based around Christian beliefs. This is because the project is mainly concentrating on this faith in order to keep it to a manageable size. Please accept my apologies if you are of another faith. I would still like you to answer the questions from your own religious position as honestly as you can.

(7) When you have finished the questionnaire please check that you have answered all the questions as far as possible.

(8) If you would like to make any comments or clarify your answers there is space on the last page to do so (Question 51). You may also write on the back of the booklet pages.

(Please encourage students to feel free to write down any additional comments they may have about their beliefs or the questionnaire in general. All comments are welcomed whether positive or negative.)
 Appendix Three

YOUNG PEOPLE’S BELIEFS INTERVIEW GUIDE

1  Self

What do you most enjoy doing – why?
What sort of things make you happy – why?
What sort of things make you angry – why?
  + Can you do anything about them?

What are your plans/hopes (ambitions) for your future?

How would your friends describe you?
  + Do you think this is accurate (if not, what is an accurate description)?

What would you most like to be remembered for after you die?

2  Personal Values

Who do you most admire (from any time in history) – why?
Who do you least admire (from any time in history) – why?

What would you say is the most important thing in life – why?

What would you say is the most significant, important or memorable event in your life so far – why?

What do you understand by the terms 'good' and 'evil'?

What does 'love' mean to you?
3 Beliefs

Do you have a set of beliefs of any sort by which you lead your life (Christian, etc - moral guide lines)?
+ Where do these come from do you think?

Do you have any superstitions – what are they and why?

Would you say you were a religious person – why?
+ What does 'religion' mean to you?
+ What does 'Christianity' mean to you?
+ How would you describe 'a Christian'?

Do you believe in God at all – why?
+ Have you always believed/did you ever believe in God?
+ If there was a change: What made you change your mind?

4 Influences On Belief

Who/what do you think most influenced your beliefs (eg family, friends, teachers) – how and why?

Do you discuss religion with friends/family – why/why not?

Can you describe what your family and friends think about religious things?

Within the school, what do you think about RE lessons?
+ How, if at all, could they be improved?

What do you think about school assemblies?
+ How, if at all, could they be improved?

What sorts of expectations or ideas would you have if I said I was going to introduce you to a 'church-goer'?

What do you think about the Church?
+ When would you go to church – why?
+ If you get married would you like that to take place in a church – why?
+ How, if at all, could church be improved?

Do you ever pray – why/why not?
5 Social Goals

Thinking about society: Do you think young people are happy with the way things are – why?
+ Is this your view too?
+ What changes, if any, do you think should be made?
+ Would you change any laws?

The questionnaire had a statement: "Rich nations should have a lower standard of living to help poorer nations become wealthier". What do you think about that? (It does not matter if you cannot remember what you wrote on the questionnaire.)

6 Personal Morality

Do you think that basically people make selfish choices?
+ What about you (give an example)?

Do you think it is ever justified to lie in your own interest – when and why?

The questionnaire had a statement: "It's wrong to have sexual intercourse outside of marriage". What do you think about that? (Again, it does not matter if you cannot remember what you wrote on the questionnaire.)