An Investigative Study into Faith Based Youth Work
and the Role of Spirituality in Youth Work
in Northern Ireland.

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Abstract

The research took place over an eight month period and the study investigates Faith Based Youth Work and the role of Spirituality in Youth Work in Northern Ireland. The study outlines and examines existing literature on Youth Work, Faith, Spirituality, Religion and Faith Based Youth Work, attempting to provide the reader with background information on the key areas.

The researcher used a range of methods within this research such as desk research, focus groups, questionnaires, interviews and case studies.

The research suggests that the area of Faith Based Youth Work lacks a sense of clarity and understanding regarding not only its definition but also in terms of the role Faith groups play in Youth Work delivery in Northern Ireland.

By examining five key areas of Youth Work, Faith, Spirituality, Religion and Faith Based Youth Work; the researcher has attempted to offer some definitions and models of work in relation to these key areas.

Faith, Spirituality and Religion play a big role in society and in particular amongst young people as they search for meaning, purpose and fulfilment in life. Through research carried out the researcher has been able to unpack the dimensions of Youth Work theory and methodology which relate to Faith work and Spirituality, allowing conclusions to be made regarding the future role these themes may have in Youth Work in future.
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Finally, I would like to thank my close friends and family and my colleagues at Strandtown Christian Fellowship Church who have supported me throughout this course. I wish to dedicate this dissertation to my wife Vic for all her love and patience.

Thank you.
Declaration

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Chapter 1: Methodology
1.1 Aims and Objectives

The aim of this study will be to analyse the nature of Faith Based Youth Work in the wider field of professional youth work practice in Northern Ireland. It will be the intention of the researcher to identify the current range and scale of faith based youth work in N. Ireland and to explore the role of spiritual development in Youth Work practice and in the Youth Work Curriculum for N. Ireland.

The main aim of this study will be reached by:

- Speaking to Youth Workers involved and those not involved in Faith Based work.
- Speaking to 18-25 year olds who currently volunteer or have experience of Faith Based Youth Work.
- Exploring what relevant literature shows, relating Youth Work theory to relate the areas of Faith Based work and Spirituality.
- Drawing on the practical experience and knowledge of the researcher and Youth Initiatives as an organisation who deliver Faith Based Youth Work.
1.2 Aims and Objectives of the Agency

Youth Initiatives (YI) is a cross community Youth Work organisation, based in West Belfast, Northern Ireland. Over recent years, YI has expanded their work to East Belfast, Downpatrick and Banbridge, with the overall goal of becoming a regional youth organisation in the province.

YI is an organisation founded on the Christian Faith and for many years has battled with the difficulties of being viewed as a stereotypical Christian group by the secular Youth Work world, focussed on converting young people, whilst also being seen in a somewhat unclear light by many Church groups who are not sure of exactly what they are doing.

YI has been running for 20 years, and remains unattached to any particular Church denomination whilst also accessing trust and government funding to deliver Youth Work in areas of high social need and deprivation.

Therefore, it is hoped, from an organisational viewpoint, that Youth Initiatives can begin to unpack the whole concept of Faith Based Youth Work and Spirituality, in an attempt to break down some of those stereotypes and views of such work, particularly in a N. Ireland context.

YI is keen to have this research carried out to also attempt to understand their role as an organisation, with the ambition of becoming a regional body, being clear of who they are, what they do and more importantly how to communicate this with the Youth sector and funding bodies.
1.3 Research Rationale and Placement Context

The researcher currently works for Youth Initiatives, a faith based youth organisation based in West Belfast. Youth Initiatives has played a role in the YouthNet faith based Interest Group from which MacCauley Associates published a report in 2006 detailed the scale and scope of faith based youth work in N. Ireland.

As a Christian, the researcher believes in the work of Youth Initiatives and feels all Youth Work agencies have a role to play in the Spiritual Development of young people. Both the researcher and Youth Initiatives believe that the Youth Work Curriculum for N. Ireland should incorporate Spiritual Development as one of the key areas, if Youth Work is to address all of the core needs of young people today.

The researcher is keen to do some research in this field because it is of value to his employers, understanding of the nature of youth work in N. Ireland as well as enabling Youth Initiatives to gain some further insight into their role within the voluntary youth sector in the future.

Through this research there will opportunity to meet with many youth workers throughout the province, develop strong relationships with key agencies on a local and regional level through which it is hoped will improve the general awareness and knowledge of the sector as a whole.

N. Ireland has a mixed political and religious background and for many years the two have sat beside each other hand in hand. In recent years however, many in the Youth Work sector and those involved in informal education have came to realise that one of the areas young people crave to explore is that of spirituality and faith. This area is one concerned with self awareness, values, personal and social development and self mastery.
Spirituality and Faith play a big role in young people’s decision making skills and value base and for this reason it is important for the voluntary and statutory youth sector to work towards incorporating this topic in their work.

Over recent years there have been numerous reports produced on a local and national level looking at various aspects of Faith Based Youth Work, Spirituality in Youth Work and the links between Youth Work curriculum and informal education. The majority of this has been highly valuable, but that there is still more work, research and discussion needed around all of these areas.

For this reason, it is hoped that this dissertation will add to the field of knowledge in this subject and with recent developments at Belfast Bible College now delivering a Youth Work and theology degree with professional validation it is valuable to discuss further what role faith based youth work and spirituality does and should play in the future.
1.4 Research Methodology

Questionnaires will be used to gather qualitative and quantitative data from young people, youth workers and agencies relevant to the study. The intention is to also gather statistical data from local agencies regarding the scale of faith and non faith based organisations in N. Ireland.

Focus Groups will be used to consult with relevant sample groups such as young people, youth workers and agencies which can provide a representative sample of youth work across N. Ireland. However, ‘The challenge is to translate the ideas for focus groups research into the language and constraints of the world of education’ Bers (1989) and as Wilson (1997) goes on to point out; ‘there are practical, ethical and theoretical issues to consider’.

Semi Structured Interviews will be used as a means of providing some structure to discussions in the focus groups and individual interviews. Semi Structured Interviews will also allow some freedom and flexibility for interviewees to expand on each area and to encourage an open atmosphere and allow room for flowing conversation and open dialogue.

Analysis of 2005 data from the YCNI Geomapping System of all youth groups registered with the five Education and Library Boards in Northern Ireland. This includes Church based Youth Work and Faith Based, community group youth work delivered by groups that are not members of the YouthNet Faith Based Interest Group.

Desk Research will be used in order to source relevant agencies, contact groups and reports which will provide a foundation for our study. This method will also be used for reviewing current statistics and research available.

It is proposed that as wide a sample as possible will be drawn upon, incorporating groups from across N. Ireland - Faith based and non Faith based. The plan is to carry out research
with samples of young people from a mix of groups, again from across the province. There are some issues here to consider such as ensuring the sample is fairly representative of a cross section of workers and young people and that there is an even mix of those connected to and not connected to faith based organisations.

Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis methods will both be employed in order to add to the validity and reliability of the study. The hope is to compile data that can be used in conjunction with SPSSx as well as compiling written stories and case studies, accounts and details of conversations from focus group work and individual interviews. It is essential for this study to have elements of both qualitative and quantitative analysis in order to produce a more robust piece of research.

As Denscombe (1998) states: “Alternative methods allow the findings from one method to be checked against the findings of another”, for this reason the intention is to employ each of the methods mentioned above to provide an accurate, valid and reliable piece of research.

There are a range of ethical issues concerning this proposed research topic. There are issues around collecting information and that a request may put pressure on particular respondents but also in seeking consent, especially from groups of young people. It will be important at the interview and focus group stage to request the appropriate consent from parents.

It may also be worth considering offering incentives to participants for taking part in each stage of this research; however this could also influence the validity and reliability of the data obtained.

It will be important for the interviewer to be aware of requesting sensitive information from worker and/or young people. Some requests, if used may be seen as an invasion of privacy,
especially when looking at the issue of Spirituality for which many personal views and experiences may be recorded.

In relation to each participant, it is essential that the researcher ensures confidentiality throughout. This is an important aspect of any research however it may be necessary to identify certain groups of participants to put my findings into context.

The researcher will need to maintain a level of independent bias, the area of research chosen is one of personal interest and of interest to Youth Initiatives as an agency and therefore it will be crucial to present a fair and accurate piece of research, excluding any personal bias. However as Grix (2004) says: “No one can be fully detached from any type of research or offer value free analysis”.

Ethics are essential for any researcher to consider and for this dissertation the plan is to ensure that each of the above areas is considered to improve the quality and accuracy of any findings.
1.5 **Timetable**

September 2009 - December 2009 - Desk Research/Background Reading

January 2010 - Questionnaires, Focus groups and Interviews

February 2010 - March 2010 - Compilation of data, analysis and draft report

April/May 2010 - Final writing stage and hand in.
Chapter 2: Literature Review
The following literature review has been divided into five key sections, taking into consideration the many facets of this piece of work. The five areas are:

- Youth Work
- Faith and Faith Development
- Spirituality and Spiritual Development
- Religion
- Faith Based Youth Work

2.1 Youth Work

Youth Work is a term which has become increasingly difficult to define and measure. ‘Most definitions are neither theoretically or practically satisfactory’ (Infed.org: 2003). Traditional Youth Work is part of a community’s response to the needs of young people, however not everything in a particular community equates to Youth Work. Youth Work is the response to the moral obligation of enabling young people to live the good life which has three strands:

- The development of personal qualities
- The freedom from resource constraints
- The freedom to live the good life (being politically involved)

This document suggests that the automatic transferring of the label ‘Youth Work’ to ‘informal education’ is too quick a move. Mark Smith (2002) in his article ‘Youth Work: an introduction’ has recognised that Youth Work comes in many different forms but at the same time those involved in this vocation, work from ‘commonly agreed characteristics’ (Smith: 2002). Aston and Moon (1995) are in agreement with Smith; they suggest that Youth Work is similar to going to the supermarket in that there are so many different types and varieties
and state that: ‘Wherever you look, it is being done differently, the choice is bewildering’ (Ashton & Moon: 1997).

According to the Youth Work Strategy for Northern Ireland (2005)…

‘Youth Work is distinctly educational and involves constructive interventions with young people in non formal settings. Youth Work is primarily concerned with personal and social education and is characterise by the voluntary engagement of young people. As an educational activity it is most effective when it is planned and delivered with clear objectives and informed through continuous monitoring, evaluation and critical reflection on the processed and practices employed.’

Youth Work is not only an educational process, Youth Work is an area of work with focuses on the lives of young people and in particular, developing relationships between a young person and a Youth Worker. Indeed, Doyle and Smith (2002) expand their definition to include things such as focusing on the young person, the idea of voluntary participation and relationship, Youth Workers being friendly, informal and acting with integrity whilst also having a concern for the education and welfare of the young person.

The National Occupational Standards (2008) also have a definition set out:

‘Youth Work should enable young people to develop holistically, working with them to facilitate their personal, social and education development, to enable them to develop their voice, influence and place in society and to reach their full potential’

This definition illustrates that Youth Work is much more than education - it is holistic, it is to be a facilitative process, enabling young people to reach their potential. The Northern Ireland Youth Work Strategy (2005) goes on to state that:
‘The mission of the youth service is to promote the development, well being, rights and participation of young people by ensuring that high quality Youth Work is inclusively and effectively delivered to facilitate the personal and social development of young people within a supportive public policy framework. Youth Work may engage in all aspects of a young person’s development - personal, social, educational, political, cultural, Spiritual, physical and vocational.’

On the following page is Fig 1, a copy of the ‘Model for Effective Practice’ (2005) which is part of the NI Youth Work Strategy. This was introduced to bring a standard approach and a value base to good practice Youth Work. This work was produced in 2005 by the government to develop a Strategy for the Delivery of Youth Work in Northern Ireland 2005-2008. Again, in this piece of work the vision, mission and values of Youth Work were modified and set out.
A Model for Effective Practice

YOUTH WORK VALUES
incorporating EDI

EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INTERDEPENDENCE

CORE PRINCIPLES
to guide practice

CENTRAL THEME
Personal and Social Development

• Commitment to Preparing Young People for Participation
• Testing Values and Belief
• Promotion of Acceptance and Understanding

CURRICULUM AND PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT CYCLE
Young People’s Involvement in Developing Curriculum, Content, Programmes, Actions, Activities, Reflection and Evaluation

EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INTERDEPENDENCE
The value base underpinning the strategy was:

1. Personal and social development
2. Promoting rights
3. Protection
4. Participation
5. Peace building
6. People
7. Partnership.

This was an attempt by government to provide a standard framework for Youth Workers across the country to adopt. Under the curriculum review three core values have been outlined as being central to Youth Work:

- Personal and Social Development
- Participation
- Acceptance and Understanding of Others.

At the very heart of these sits the concept of empowerment, which is concerned with bringing young people to a point where they feel able to challenge and call into question the values and authorities governing their lives.

Underlying these core values is the importance of relationships. Relationships are a defining feature of Youth Work where there is an onus placed on the Youth Worker to develop positive, meaningful and helping relationships with young people.
A Youth Worker-young person relationship must be person centred and it must be voluntary if the goals of participation and empowerment are to be realised. Morgan and Harland (2005) comment, ‘...therefore the quality of the physical, emotional and interpersonal relationship between young people and adults is as important in adolescence as in the early years.’ It is therefore necessary for Youth Workers to be properly and professionally trained to fully understand the importance of helping relationships and to realise their contribution in the work towards core Youth Work principles.

Carl Rogers (in Campbell and McCready: 1997) also places emphasis on relationships: ‘Change comes through experience in a relationship which is real, accepting, understanding, unconditional and leads to freedom to explore’. Kerry Young (1999) suggests ‘...it is through reciprocal relationships, engagement and conversation that young people can best be supported to become aware of their values, gain the critical abilities needed to mediate those values and grow in their ability to make decisions which can be sustained through committed action’.

Relationship establishes commonality and understanding between workers and young people, providing a level playing field were trust and respect can develop over time. ‘Youth Work is and always has been concerned with the development of young people’s values and a commitment to improve the Spiritual and mental condition of young people’ (YMCA: 1844). The purpose of modern Youth Work is to support young people in their moral deliberations and learning. This comes through exploring values, interrogating principles and making rational choices that can be sustained through dedicated action.

This process, as discussed is not mindless or mechanistic, it is based on logic and rationality and the framework and basis for this process is the relationship with morally good persons,
engaging with the real lives of young people and using conversations to encourage and foster the power of thinking critically.

Michael Howard (1992) said that values ‘are the most formidable challenge facing western democracies’ and it is amidst this backdrop that Youth Work should recognise the major role it must play in addressing and impacting the value base of young people. It has also been argued that ‘If Youth Work is to seriously address the position of young people in society, then its value base should reflect a more radical approach’ (Campbell and McCready: 1997) and through meaningful relationship the values of participation and empowerment can radically affect change in the lives of young people.

It is the role of the Youth Work to ‘Make the world more understandable and a better place’ (Jeff’s and Smith: 2005). Youth Work must work towards supporting young people to reflect on their moral judgements, encouraging participation which is informed consent to engage in the learning process and foster a mentality of empowerment through sustained growth. This process will help young people in ‘Developing the ability to overcome the external situations and the internal forces constraining their lives, actions and imaginations’ (Banks: 1999).

Through looking at these key areas, a picture emerges of the purpose of Youth Work and the role of a Youth Worker. For the purpose of this research, the definition below of ‘Youth Work’ will be used as a basis for critical analysis:

‘Youth Work is a relational process, based foremost on developing meaningful relationships with young people. Youth Work is primarily designed to address the needs of young people in a holistic way. Employing informal educational methodology, the aim of Youth Work is to address the personal, social and Spiritual Development of young people, to enable the young person to realise their potential as a full and living human being’.
2.2 Faith and Faith Development

Faith, especially in the western world, is largely connected to Christianity and Religion. The idea of following a particular Faith tradition, often stirs up ideas of proselytizing, Churches trying to ‘talk’ people into believing in God or evangelism in the form of the ‘turn of burn’ mentality of many traditional Churches over the years.

Faith, as a non Religious term is synonymous with words such as ‘trust’, ‘reliance’ or ‘confidence’. Faith is the confident belief or trust in the truth or trustworthiness of a person, idea, or thing. Faith in Christianity is based on the work and teaching of Jesus Christ. Rather than being passive, Faith leads to an active life of obedience to the one being trusted. It sees the mystery of God and his grace and seeks to know and become obedient to God. To Christians Faith is not static but causes one to learn more of God and grow, it has its origin in God. In Christianity Faith causes change as it seeks a greater understanding of God. Before the Christian has Faith, he must understand in whom and in what he has Faith. Without understanding, there cannot be true Faith and that understanding is built on the foundation of the community of believers, the scriptures and traditions and on the personal experiences of the believer.

Faith is a gift from God to the Christian and Faith can be increased by the growth of the ‘believer’ through the Bible and through various actions detailed in this. Faith is not to be confused with ‘belief” as these are two separate and distinct words. People can and do believe in many things, but may not have the Faith for salvation. Belief has action but without Faith there is no substance or platform from which to move or act upon.

A helpful definition comes from David Hay and Rebecca Nye (2006) which states:
‘Faith is the positive outworking of someone’s Spirituality through the vehicle of their chosen Religion’.

Faith is a concept best placed within a Religious context:

‘Faith can be seen as a trustful response to the object of Religious worship. It is included within Religion, however there are many aspects of Religion which are not best thought of as concerned with Faith’ (Hull: 1999)

Fowler (1981) also believes that ‘Faith is a broader term of the human potential for responding to life in a certain way’. Indeed, amongst many Christian believers, having Faith in something or someone, in the form of God is what brings hope to difficult life circumstances. Faith is more than hope, as hopes can fade away and change very quickly whereas Faith is a constant, solid presence in someone’s life.

Faith was originally a Christian term, but is now a term which needs careful application. Hull (1999) also states that Faith is an attitude. It is the subjective aspect of Spirituality and is seen as a positive response to the issues raised by Spirituality and Religion.

Some would argue that Faith is an integral part of life which young people will question and is an area youth practitioners must be prepared to address and tackle. However, at present Faith Development and addressing issues of Faith is largely left to Churches, Faith based organizations (FBO’s) and those with a Faith ethos.

In Northern Ireland, Faith Development is implicit in Christian Youth Work, and as summed up by Pugh (1999) is characterized by:

- Faith,
- a sense of calling/vocation,
God as sustenance, guidance and provider of inspiration for Youth Work

There is no denying that for most (if not all) Christian groups and FBO’s there is a goal at some level that participants will make a commitment to Christ, and through the example of Youth Initiatives, an FBO, the researcher will be able critique this issue at a later stage.

Urban Saints, a national Christian organization, formally called ‘Crusaders’ specialize in Youth Work training for volunteers and staff and they suggest there are four ‘models’ for Faith Development:

**Model 1: Based on the work of Westerhoff (1976)**

This model focuses on how one might grow in Faith within a Christian community, and sums up the experience of many Churches and Church based youth groups. This model is set in four stages:

- **Seeing** - young person feels welcome to the group and quickly feel safe and secure in the environment with a sense of belonging. They see the Faith of leaders lived out, but at this stage the young person doesn’t really understand at it is about.

- **Joining** - young person’s commitment to the group grows, they begin to associate the values and Faith of leaders with security, friendship and acceptance. They enjoy and may take on some of these values themselves.

- **Searching** - young person feels challenged by the Faith of the leaders. Through their lifestyle, values and teaching. They begin to question issues of Faith and searching for meaning in their own life. This stage often has many ups and downs.
d. **Owning** - young person has a realization that they need to have a personal Faith of their own and it is not enough to copy or draw from the Faith of leaders. Personal commitment may follow and then begins the lifelong ‘Faith journey’ as they grow and mature Spiritually as part of the Christian community.

**Model 2: Based on work of Engel (1975)**

In this model are three main strands to consider:

a. **God’s Role** - as he works in mysterious and unseen ways in someone’s life.
   Before someone has made a Christian commitment then God reveals himself to them and convicts them of their sin. After someone becomes a Christian, God works in their life to help them become holy and more like Christ.

b. **The role of Christians** - through evangelism - this is not just teaching about the Christian Faith, but witnessing to it through lifestyle, attitude etc. when someone has made a commitment then mature Christians will help them to live as a disciple of Christ.

c. **The response in a person** - as God reveals himself and Christians share their Faith with them. Engel uses a scale, shown in Fig: 2, to measure and illustrate this stage.
This shows that as a person responds to the work of both God and Christians, and their level of Faith and understanding increase, then they progress down the scale.

Many Christians can relate to this model from their own experience and research shows that for the majority it took five years or more for them to progress down the scale. It can be a useful model when considering where on the scale a young person or group might be in terms of their Faith Development, in order to design programs best suited to meet their needs.

**Model 3: Based on the work of Fowler (1981)**

In this model there are seven identified stages of Faith. Fowler speaks of Faith in the widest sense and not specifically in terms of Christian Faith. Fowler claims that few ever reach the sixth and final stage. Movement in this model is usually triggered by some unexpected event
that causes a re-think about life, the self and Faith in God. Faith Development is seen as being intertwined with all aspects of one’s’ development as a person.

It is also important to note that the stages in this model overlap in age:

Birth — Pre School — Primary — Secondary — Adult

Stage 0  **Foundation Faith** - Child learns the importance of putting trust in those that look after them - something that is of value throughout life

Stage 1  **Unordered Faith** - Child exploring and interacting with world, countless new events are experienced as they discover more about what it means to be human. There is little order or meaning, child depends on role models, especially in family. Expressions of Faith seen in others are copied rather than ‘owned’ by the child.

Stage 2  **Ordered Faith** - Child begins to order its own world. They try to separate out truth from fantasy and can see the difference between real life and fiction much better now. In issues of Faith they tend to want to experience things as part of a group rather than individually.

Stage 3  **Conforming Faith** - With a growing ability to think in abstract ways, the young person begins to sort out their own moral viewpoints, values and beliefs. Young person is developing a sense of self-identity and personal value, and so will start to challenge the beliefs in others as they struggle to sort out issues of belief and Faith for themselves.

Stage 4  **Choosing Faith** - Now the step away from following the Faith of others to owning a personal Faith. However, once this step has been made there is a
tendency to think that the process of Faith Development has finished. Faith has yet to mature and there is a lot of learning still to be achieved if the personal Faith of the individual is to develop.

Stage 5  **Balanced Faith** - Few people reach this stage as it often comes after some sort of personal tragedy or major difficulty on one’s life. The simple, immature Faith of stage 4 has to be re-evaluated after the realization that the needs that Faith addresses are more complex than first thought. More balanced Faith results, which recognises that some of life’s questions must probably remain unanswered.

Stage 6  **Selfless Faith** - Someone who reaches this stage will have a vision to take their Faith out into the world in order to bring about change in the world. They will be deeply committed to this vision and will follow it whatever happens.

Fowler’s research also suggests that the Faith of many adults has never developed beyond stage 3 - conforming Faith. *' Individuals develop in their Faith through a series of stages throughout their life and emerging adulthood tends to be the period in which individuals are in the process of separating their identities from their world view and “demythologising” their experiences’.* (Fowler: 1997)

These models outline and indicate there are many aspects to the Faith Development of young people. These models suggest that all humans are on a ‘Faith journey’, all at different stages, but that Faith plays a pivotal role in the life and development of every human being.

Bunge (2008) argues that Faith is not something that can be ‘taught’; rather it is something which should be ‘caught’ by young people.
Therefore, the following definition has been adopted for further critical analysis through research:

‘Faith is the outworking of a deeply held set of values and beliefs. Faith may or may not directly imply connection to a particular Religion or institution, but acts as a motivational tool to those with a ‘Faith’ which leads to action. Faith is a trust or belief in something or someone, which brings a sense of purpose and hope. Faith Development is best described as a journey of which each and every human is taking. This journey is one of discovery and exploration of the world around us, the search for truth and the realisation of one’s potential’.
2.3 **Spirituality and Spiritual Development**

Spirituality is a term, in today’s world immediately generates thoughts of the New Age movement, self help books, star signs and psychic mediums. Some do associate Spirituality as a valuable, important aspect to the human being. This is evident through recent decades with a decrease in the membership of organised Religion and an increased interest in the Spiritual as people continue to search for connection to a force, power, energy or spirit.

Indeed within the world of self help groups, looking at issues of health and well being, Spirituality plays a central role. In this context, Spirituality is seen as the search for the development of inner peace or the foundations of happiness which is essential for personal health and well being.

‘*Spirituality, like Faith, is a slippery concept to define as it cannot be held, tasted or heard but relates to an interior perspective*’ (Green: 2005). Spirituality can be viewed as a personal and unique ideology but is something that is described by English et al (2003):

‘*Spirituality is the greatest issue facing us, and it commands our attention and that of our learners. It is time for educators to give more attention to the issue of Spirituality*’.

Zaeheuer (1997) states that there are four main types of Spirituality:

- a. Loving union with a personal God
- b. A sense of awareness with the absolute and the world
- c. A sense of being separate from the world
- d. Becoming one with ones real self.
Maxine Green (2005), who has carried out research into this particular area, argues that Spirituality is something which is integrated into the community and offers the following set of definitions:

Spirituality is:

- About the ‘other’, either in terms of God or a transcendent being or in terms of being different to the more mundane areas of life.

- Is not separate from life, but flows through life almost as a different but essential dimension.

- Is squeezed out of people’s experience because of present cultural expectation of achieving fulfilment through having, rather than being.

- Connected to crises and peak experiences in people’s lives.

- To do with relationship and connection, both with people in community and with the environment and the world.

- Is an internal sense of meaning and story, a deep understanding of ‘who I am and my place here’.

- Is not necessarily cosy or warm but can be awesome and unsettling.

- Is about being ‘fully human’ integrating and balancing different aspects of self to live to one’s deepest potential.

- Is about inner truth and deep self knowledge.
Spirituality, as illustrated can take into account a wide range of ideas and thoughts which leads to a difficulty in firming up a clear, concise definition. One might see Spirituality as providing a sense of balance within the human.

Hull (1999) says: ‘...to the question of Faith. Religion and Spirituality are not attitudes. Spirituality...is the achievement of humanness and the Religions are the traditions and techniques for achieving this in relation to the transcendent ultimate. Faith, however, has to do with subjectivity. It is the positive human response to the issues raised by Spirituality.’ In this definition, the overlap and connectedness of three terms - Faith, Religion and Spirituality becomes apparent.

Hay and Nye (1998) describe Spirituality as: ‘a notion which is built into the human species and holistic awareness of reality which is potentially to be found in every human being’. Indeed, Hunt (1998) defines Spirituality as ‘a search for meaning and purpose in which there is implicit recognition of the interconnectedness of all things’. However, Scott (2006) suggests not attempting to define Spirituality or face putting an end or a limit on it and that ‘uncertainty seems necessary in the Spiritual’.

Scott goes on to say: ‘the Spiritual is an aspect of inner life, values, morality or being connected to the self. It may include some or all of these, or things yet unknown. They are glimpses or something and are initially accurate ways of forming Spirituality’ and later suggests: ‘the Spiritual is somehow elusive and powerful. A space must be held open to avoid being caught in the grip of knowledge and certainty, yet simultaneously being caught by the spirit of the Spiritual and not the rules of tradition.’

Spirituality in many ways is like the wind, it is there, but needs to be experienced to be realised. Spirituality could be described as a flowing, dynamic force of energy and
experience. Spirituality changes those it touches and requires human beings to be open and receptive to be fully realised.

Canada (1998) suggests the following definition: ‘Spirituality is the human quest for personal meaning, mutually fulfilling relationships among people, the unknown environment and for some, God’. This definition goes someway to incorporating the many facets of Spirituality. Nemko (2006) goes on to say that: ‘Spiritual belief cannot be packaged as easily as a belief in a particular Religion or philosophy, Spirituality is about being aware of our own insignificance in the large silence of things and....is beyond and at the same time, part of organised Religion, specific culture, individual background and everyday life...Spirituality is what we have most in common with other people’.

Nemko (2006) further outlines her view that there are four aspects to Spirituality.

1. **Spirituality is innate**

   All are all born with a Spiritual dimension. Innate Spirituality is heightened awareness of what’s going on both outside and inside us.

2. **Spirituality is a search for purpose**

   One cannot search for the essential purpose in life without a growing understanding of the self.

3. **Spirituality is action in the world**

   It is about engaging in the world in every sense. In the experience of nature and creativity, through relationships and in every intention and action that leads to a more meaningful experience and positive result.
4. **Spirituality is an awe inspiring experience**

Awe isn’t fear; it is more a feeling of deep wonder; wonder of the natural world, God and the supernatural and a realisation of how insignificant human beings are in the large scheme of things.

Hay and Nye (2006) also suggest that Spirituality is much warmer than Religion and is associated with ideas of love, inspiration, wholeness, depth, mystery and personal devotion through prayer and meditation. In their book, they also suggest there is a strong connection between Spiritual awareness and ethical behaviour, linking in theories around the self, care for others, social justice and the environment, which have been illustrated through the definitions outlined.

Hay and Nye (2006) state: ‘Spirituality has a vital social and political function and when it no longer finds an overarching means of cultural expression, social coherence is threatened’.

Indeed, Karl Paher claims it is possible to talk about God without being Spiritual, whilst it is also possible to be Spiritual without talking about God.

Hay and Nye (2006) further outline their own three categories of Spiritual sensitivity:

1. **Awareness sensing**

   This is concerned with being focuses on the here and now of life, where many of us live in the past or the future. This category is about ‘tuning in’ to have a heightened aesthetic experience (Schutz), awareness sensing is also concerned with the ‘flow’, focussing on what one feels and also ‘focusing’ to tap into the ‘felt sense’.
2. Mystery sensing

This category incorporates the areas of wonder and awe and using the imagination and tapping into creativity.

3. Value sensing

This category is about ultimate goodness, finding meaning through circumstances of delight and despair.

These three categories best sum up the subject of Spirituality and how it can relate to each and every human being. In this particular book, Spirituality is described as being ‘relational consciousness, which not only underlies both Religion and ethics but enables one to transcend a divide between the secular and the Religious dimensions of social life to find a common ground in a shared humanity. Hay (2006) suggests all are in danger of having their relational consciousness constricted by common place assumptions and believes this new outlook and approach to Spirituality offers, ‘...a way out of the straightjacket that currently binds our ethical and Religious institutions.’ (2006).

The centre for Spiritual Development (2008) state that:

‘There must be a distinction between the natural capacity for Spirituality and being actively Spiritual. They also state that Spirituality must be experienced and is known as a protection, a force, a process of becoming, of destination and being connected. Spirituality is the way a person looks at life, makes right choices and/or lives into an authentic sense of vocation and is constrained or enhanced by the forces and conditions in a person’s everyday life’.

Clouder (1998) further suggests that firstly, one cannot write a curriculum for Spiritual Development and that the Spiritual dimension must be developed in freedom and eventually
becomes: ‘an individual moral yard stick and cannot be achieved by either confinement or commandment’.

Nigel Spencer (2008) outlines the stance of the National Curriculum with regard to Spirituality:

‘Spirituality is about the journey through life in the deepest sense, particularly special moments and recognises our own inner resources to help us cope with this journey’.

Spiritual Development is the development of insights, principles, beliefs, attitudes and values which guide and motivate us and for many this will have a significant Religious basis. It is about developing an understanding of feelings and emotions which causes us to reflect and learn.

OFSTED (2004) state that Spiritual Development is…

‘The development of the non material element of a human being which animates and sustains us and depending on our point of view either ends or continues in some form when we die. It is about the development of a sense of identity, self worth, personal insight, meaning and purpose. It is about the development of a pupils ‘spirit’. Some call it the development of a pupils ‘soul’, others as the development of ‘personality’ or ‘character’...Spiritual Development relates to that aspect of inner life through which pupils acquire insights into their personal existence which are of enduring worth. It is characterised by reflection, the attribution of meaning to experience, valuing a non material dimension to life and intimations of an enduring reality. ‘Spiritual’ is not synonymous with ‘Religious’; all areas of the curriculum may contribute to a pupils Spiritual Development’.
Nigel Pimlott (in Green: 2005) suggests that Spiritual Development is about:

- A journey/process of discovery
- Existing outside Faith
- A journey toward wholeness
- A deepening understanding of all things not material
- Awareness of self, others, environment and God
- Morality

‘It is a journey that each individual must take’ (Pimlott: 2005)

Spiritual Development is also a never ending process, with a continual sense of ‘becoming’, which fits extremely well with contemporary Youth Work methodology.

‘We need to restore the place of Spirituality in the public as well as the private world, relating it to truth as well as to personal experience. It should be understood as the essential source of character development for a society based on sacrificial love’. (Youth a Part: 2006)

Youth Work is not just about increasing the skills, improving the behaviour and increasing the knowledge of young people, Spirituality and Spiritual Development are part of holistic Youth Work. Furthermore, as Green (2005) says, ‘...maintain an understanding of how and where these occur in Youth Work is one way of ensuring the holistic approach continues’.

Literature illustrates, that although Spiritual Development is not explicitly mentioned or outlined, it is and should be an integral part of personal and social development and therefore contemporary Youth Work Methodology. Spiritual Development is about enabling young
people to have a sense of value in their life journey, where they construct their personal philosophy and sense of meaning.

In order to put the whole area of Spirituality in context, it is important to examine the work of Abraham Maslow (1983) (Fig: 3, below) whose work on human motivation and innate human curiosity sheds some light on the topic. Maslow’s theory (1983) is based on a hierarchy of basic human needs, which apply to all human beings and in particular, for the purpose of this study, young people.

Fig 3:

Young people have basic needs in terms of life such as biological and physiological needs. Up the pyramid all humans have the need for safety such as stability, limits, protection.
Humans have belongingness and love needs such as relationships, esteem needs and most importantly self actualisation needs for growth and fulfilment in life.

The self actualisation stage of Maslow’s model relates to what a person’s full potential is and realising it. Maslow (1983) describes this desire as the desire to become more and more of what one is, to become everything that one is capable of becoming. A self actualised person can clearly see human nature in all its good and evil without the distortion from false social norms. This does not mean these people lack morals, guilt, shame or anxiety; it means they have the ability to remove all unnecessary forms of these processes.

A self actualised person focuses not on how a problem affects them, but focus on the greater good; they see problems as a task to overcome. In self actualisation a person can also be alone in solitude to provide a level of detachment and an ability to remain calm in difficult circumstances. Maslow (1983) also discovered that those who are self actualised are also ethically very strong. They have definite moral standards and can easily discern between right and wrong.

Although Maslow’s model has been the subject of great discussion on how it can be used in education, the overall understanding of meeting basic needs and working developmentally with young people to reach the highest aims is very much part of the Youth Work philosophy.

The linking of Maslow’s characteristics of self actualisation with the wider understanding of Spirituality gives a range of outcomes for which the broad Youth Work process is well equipped. It can be argued that Spirituality is based on broad values which are coherent with those that underpin the youth philosophy.
Green (2005) continues to outline the purpose of both formal and informal education. She claims that formal education is designed to help young people become more in harmony with the external world, whereas informal education is supposed to help young people to be in harmony with his or her self.

Spiritual Development is nearly impossible to measure; as there are no hard outcomes and any outcomes are wider yet individualistic. Spiritual Development is about being a full human being and including these areas in Youth Work methodology will only enrich the profession and the young people involved. Some would also argue that Spiritual Development is a precursor for Faith Development, which may indeed be true, however, as outlined; Spiritual Development does not necessarily lead straight to Faith Development.

Dallas (2009) suggests this metaphor to differentiate between Spiritual Development and Faith Development:

‘Spiritual Development is like a compilation of the greatest hits of the 1990s. This will be broad and include numerous genres. People can listen to all the music or skip that which they dislike. Faith Development is more specific. It picks out a band or songwriter from the 1990s and gets all their albums and becomes slightly biased to that genre of music’.

Benson et al (2003) set out the following definition of Spiritual Development and this will be used as a basis for further analysis by the researcher:

‘Spiritual Development is the process of growing the intrinsic human capacity for self transcendence, in which the self is embedded in something greater than the self, including the sacred. It is the developmental engine that propels the search for connectedness, meaning, purpose and contribution. It is shaped both within and outside of Religious traditions and practices’.
Spiritual Development introduces a focus on Spiritual change, transformation, growth and maturation where the individual is an active agent in shaping their own Spiritual growth. Spirituality and Spiritual Development are areas in Youth Work and indeed in life which are clouded by mystery and the unknown.
2.4 Religion

Religion is a word, in N. Ireland which stirs up images of the troubles, violence, the catholic/protestant divide and so, for many, is a subject loaded with emotion and energy.

Religion for some symbolises Faith, a relationship with God, the role of the Church in bringing life and God’s love to the world. Christianity is the dominant Religion in N. Ireland though the main denominations are organised on an all Ireland basis. The Roman Catholic Church is the largest single Church in Ireland, however, there are a greater number of Protestants and Anglicans overall. The Presbyterian Church is the second largest and the largest Protestant denomination, followed by the Church of Ireland and the Methodist Church. There are a number of smaller denominations such as the Baptist Church, Assemblies of God and a number of new and emerging Free Church movements.

The troubles originated during 1968 lasting to the signing of the Belfast agreement in 1998, however, many of the underlying issues and conflict still exist to this day on a small scale. The conflict developed as a result of the relationship between the mainly Protestant Unionist and mainly Catholic communities in the province and was fuelled not only by politicians on both sides but political activists and paramilitary organisations.

The conflict, therefore, has provided today’s N. Ireland a difficult background, not only in terms of the issues and needs of young people and their families but also in terms of how, where Youth Work takes place.

Traditionally, Churches and Church based uniformed organisations have delivered a high percentage of Youth Work across N. Ireland, both sides of the divide throughout the troubles and continue to do so. However, today, elements of the conflict still exist which have been passed down through generations, resulting in an increase in peace funding which has filtered
through groups over the last 20 years as well as a range of other funding streams, attempting to address the lack of cross community understanding and relations.

As a result, many Faith based groups and Churches have been denied funding opportunities because of the ethos and Faith to which they pertain, and many funding bodies do not want to be seen to be supporting organisations that once were so closely connected to the troubles. However, due to a lack of understanding of the role of Church, Faith, Religion and Spirituality a climate exists where there is no clear strategy which incorporates fully all the different groups, Faiths and denominations whose desire is to deliver high quality youth provision to young people.

Religion is connected to Faith and Spirituality; however, it is also very distinct and separate. Spirituality is a lifelong journey of discovery; Faith is the outworking of this journey, whilst Religion in many ways is the vehicle. Another analogy would be a tree, where Spirituality could be the roots supplying nutrients and life, the trunk and branches could be Faith, and Religion the leaves of the tree.

Religions act with a particular mission and intention in mind, based on a set of doctrine and teaching, however, without the elements of Faith and Spirituality, it becomes merely a set of rules to be observed and followed, whereas Faith and Spirituality are much more about discovery and a journey toward self actualisation.

As Morris and Jagers (2001) discuss: ‘Religion is the beliefs and practices of a Faith tradition and the observance of sacred ceremonies, symbols, expressions or behaviours related to the worship of a supreme being’, another writer says; ‘Religion is a formal institutional context that entails an acceptance of the values, beliefs and practices of a particular Faith community’. (Cascio: 1998 and Canada: 1989).
Bullis (1996) suggests: ‘Religion appears to be focussed on the outward manifestations of Spiritual belief while the concept of Spirituality appears to be a more internal process that can include an immediate connection to a higher power that occurs on an intensely personalised basis’.

There is no doubt that Religious commitment can enhance favourable outcomes in growth and that Church attendance can be a positive factor in the lives of young people, acting as a buffer, protecting young people from the negative influences of the world around them. However, as illustrated, the history of Religion in a N. Ireland context shows how the Church, Faith and Spirituality can be seen as a negative, controlling influence which goes against the fundamental purpose of Youth Work.
2.5 Faith Based Youth Work

The history of Youth Work in Northern Ireland is unclear. Booton (1986) expressed the view that ‘The origins and development of practice have been researched somewhat superficially’ (Booton: 1986). If this is true for secular Youth Work then the same can be said for Christian based Youth Work. Doyle and Smith (2002) in an article entitled ‘Christian Youth Work – A guide to reading’ state, ‘we lack a sustained and comprehensive exploration or Christian Youth Work. For the moment it is necessary to pick and mix’.

Early Youth Work practice stemmed from a Religious perspective. This may have been due to individuals feeling that it was their Christian duty to do something in regards to the growing numbers and importance of adolescence. Carole Pugh (1999) has given an example of this in her article entitled ‘Christian Youth Work: Evangelism or Social Action’. Pugh makes reference to Hannah More in the 1790’s as being the first documented Youth Worker whose Christian duty it was to embrace both evangelism and social action. From this there is little or no evidence of Youth Work practice from the time of Hannah More until the latter half of the 19th Century.

The YMCA came into existence in 1844 and was founded by George Williams. The YMCA ‘was the first dedicated youth organisation’ (Smith: 2002). The work of the YMCA in its beginnings was with a small group of men holding prayer meetings and Bible studies, growing in numbers and strength throughout time.

The YMCA was the first of many organisations that followed suit. The next major movement was that of the uniformed organisations. Robert Baden-Powell was the founder of the scouting movement in 1907. He was less concerned with the Religious life of young people and more concerned with their personal well-being (Smith: 2002). This was a change from his predecessors who were openly out to evangelise and convert. Not only did Baden-
Powell initiate the Scouts for boys but also in 1910 after the requests from girls the Guide movement had been established. These movements were first set up in England but eventually made their way into existence in Northern Ireland over the next number of years.

The term ‘Youth Service’ came into existence in 1939 when the Board of Education claimed responsibility for the welfare of young people (Booton: 1981). The Second World War was an influencing factor in the setting up of the Youth Sector due to the problems that war placed on young people. This service was yet another move away from Faith and Christianity.

In an article entitled ‘The Youth Service and other Youth Provision’ (1981) an opening comment states, ‘the youth service is one of the most complex of British institutions’ which has, to a degree resulted in the ambiguity of Christian or Faith based Youth Work in relation to mainstream youth service and secular youth provision.

Youth Work is a profession concerned with the welfare of young people and implicit in this is the need for a set of values and a moral stand point to guide and support young people through an ever changing world. Faith based Youth Work is Youth Work at a deep level. Faith based Youth Work is about developing and maintaining a deep relationship with young people. Faith based Youth Work, from the example of Youth Initiatives, a Faith Based Organisation (FBO), is Youth Work based on a Christian ethos of love and respect of each and every young person.

Youth Initiatives was founded on a strong Christian value base. Values shape the way one lives, the way humans interact with one another and dictate and guide ones motives and actions on a daily basis, ‘a value is a set of beliefs, attitudes or feelings that an individual is proud of, is willing to publicly affirm, has been chosen thoughtfully from alternatives without persuasion and is acted on repeatedly’ (Raths, Harmin and Simon: 1966).
Youth Initiatives (YI) is a cross community organisation in Belfast whose whole work and ethos is based on values. The aims and purposes of YI are:

- To empower young people to realise their contribution to society
- To encourage cross community co-operation and understanding
- To equip youth leaders for effective Youth Work
- To be an instrument for Spiritual renewal among young people

The YI purpose statement reads: ‘Youth Initiatives exists to reach out to young people and connect them to a positive relational environment where they can grow in Faith and life skills, serve others and honour God with their lives’.

YI employ a person centred approach and through Youth Work methodology, attempt to reach out and build meaningful relationships with young people and through this provide the platform from which they can grow and develop on a personal, social, physical and Spiritual level.

Virtues such as wisdom, justice, courage, temperance and balanced self control are qualities which are essential for Youth Workers to possess and grow in. As an FBO, YI also believe in virtues of Faith, hope and love which may be of equal importance, in showing young people a new and dynamic way of viewing and dealing with life situations and living as part of a community.

The success and impact of Youth Work depends very much on the Youth Worker themselves. Relationship development is crucial to Youth Work methodology and the quality of worker in place determines not only the formation of these relationships but also the quality of results
seen. Youth Workers need to be approachable, genuine, friendly and able to engage young people in meaningful dialogue in order to work towards the key goals of Youth Work.

Jeff’s and Smith (2005) go a step further to say that Youth Workers ‘should be striving to live life well…the basis for our work lies in our ability to build and hold onto moral authority’. The concept of ‘positive role modelling’ is of major importance in encouraging young people to think about and deliberate their values. Attempting to teach young people values doesn’t always work. However, by living them out in the way one treats others, the way one speaks and the way one handles life circumstances, can teach and challenge young people.

‘Moral tone is not sufficient. Knowledge, personality and attitude count a great deal’ (Jeff’s and Smith: 2005). One of the most profound virtues a Youth Worker can possess is wisdom which is evident through actions. Hume, in 1740, wrote: ‘it is one thing to know virtue; it is another thing to conform the will to do it’. In schools and homes, many parents and teachers would say they teach young people good values to live by. However, young people need to know what this looks like, amidst a fast changing, media driven world how can one ‘live life well’, it is through quality, purposeful Youth Work that young people can learn to reflect on their attitudes and make informed, value based choices.

It is the role of the Youth Worker to ‘make the world more understandable and a better place’ (Jeff’s and Smith: 2005). Youth Workers must work towards supporting young people to reflect on their moral judgements, encouraging participation which is informed consent to engage in the learning process and foster a mentality of empowerment through sustained growth. This process can help young people in ‘developing the ability to overcome the external situations and the internal forces constraining their lives, actions and imaginations’ (Banks: 1999).
For this process to work and make a lasting impact there is a need for virtuous Youth Workers who bring integrity and moral authority to relationships and practice settings. Through relationship and conversation Youth Workers can bring foster concern, trust, respect, appreciation, affection and hope to the lives of young people (Jeff’s and Smith: 1996).

Bernstein (1972) stated that there is no such thing as value free or value neutral work and that there are only workers who have not stopped to think what their values actually are and there is an increasing need, through training, for workers to themselves define and explore their own values before working with young people.

Mullender and Ward (1991) say; ‘...a clear statement of values can help transpose well intentioned, committed but undisciplined work into a dynamic and refined approach which can withstand evaluation and scrutiny and sustain a clear commitment to social change objectives’.

Youth Workers, therefore, must live and work by certain values: ‘the way we conduct ourselves around such matters is pivotal to the way we are viewed...and the chances we have to contribute to the learning of others’ (Jeff’s and Smith: 2005).

Youth agencies from all sectors, backgrounds and denominations can work to address the underlying issues and values of society with Faith based Youth Work being one mode. Recently, YI has developed a value statement to provide clear, concise goals of the organisation:
Youth Initiatives Core Values

Equality and Inclusion

- We believe in the uniqueness, value and potential of every young person

Quality and Excellence

- We value professionalism, learning, teamwork and excellence

Social Disadvantage

- We are committed to engage young people from NI’s most disadvantaged communities

Environments for Growth

- We provide environments of encouragement, growth, responsibility and character development.

Christian Perspective

- We base our ethos on Christian principles of hope, love and Faith

Leadership

- We prepare young people to lead in work and civil society

What is apparent from literature is that Faith Based Youth Work is different and unique. However, as illustrated, there is a lack of clarity within the field as to how it is different, what an FBO works to achieve and particularly around the issue of defining what Faith Based Youth Work actually is. Through further research, this will be a key issue to analyse.
Chapter 3: Analysis and Discussion
Research was gathered over a four week period and in the Appendices section copies of the questionnaires used for 18-25 year olds (appendix 1), those used for Youth Practitioners (appendix 2) as well as questions used for the 1-1 interviews (appendix 3) can be viewed.

The findings have been divided into the 5 sub headings of this research:

- Youth Work
- Faith and Faith Development
- Spirituality and Spiritual Development
- Religion
- Faith Based Youth Work

3.1 Youth Work

i. Youth Questionnaire Responses

Out of 30 completed questionnaires, 14 respondents were aged 18 years old and 16 respondents in the 19-25 age brackets, 16 being male and 14 female.

Each of the participants said they attending some form of youth provision every week, 10 saying they spend 0-3 hours in provision, 14 said they spent 4-7 hours in provision, 3 spent 8-11 hours, 1 person spent 12-15 hours and 2 respondents said they spent over 15 hours per week in some kind of youth provision. As you can see below, the researcher has displayed the numbers attending the different types of provision in a pie chart (Fig: 4).
Q. 11: Is there a religious/Spiritual/Faith element involved in the provision you attend?

Some respondents experienced very heavy Bible study type work, other experienced no input at all whilst others wrote about attending Church, youth fellowships, small groups in and out of Church activities as well as some short ‘God talks’ or epilogues at the end of a night of activity. Other respondents described their experience of praise and worship, creative arts as a means for expressing and exploring Faith and Religion whilst others had been part of 1-1 mentoring as well as receiving advice and guidance from staff and volunteers on particular projects.
A selection of comments read:

‘We have sacred space nights once a month’

‘I go to Church’

‘My youth activities are based on the advancement of God’s Kingdom’

‘Beyond the Edge is a more formal time where we talk about God’

‘Not really, leaders give us advice on how to live good lifestyles’

‘No, none’

Q. 12: In what ways has the provision you attend influenced you and your life?

Respondents describe looking at issues such as drugs, alcohol, sex, morals, helping with Faith, developing skills, raising awareness of others and culture etc. Other respondents describe coming to Faith in God, building relationships, having the opportunity to serve as a leader, be involved in residential and international trips. None of the answers recorded were negative, each were positive influences and improvements, some young people saying they had become more organised, gained confidence, increasing their sense of identity as well as helping them live their Christian Faith.

Here are some of the responses:

‘It has shown me the dangers of things where I live’

‘We talk about drugs, alcohol and sex’

‘It helps me grow in my Faith’
‘I became a Christian through it’

‘Keeps me off the streets and out of trouble’

‘It helps me make friends and build relationships with new people’

‘It helped me think more about myself and that life is bigger than my immediate area’

‘It increased my confidence, I am more organised and it helped me have a better way of life’

The results above illustrate the confusion and lack of clarity regarding the terminology and the experiences had by participants involved in a range of provision. As stated; ‘Wherever you look, it is being done differently, the choice is bewildering’ (Ashton & Moon: 1997).

**Q. 13: What, in your opinion, is the main aim of the youth provision you attend?**

Some suggested getting to know God, to glorify God, to grow in Faith, to evangelise, to deepen their relationship with God. In comparison, others stated they felt it was to make friends, to build relationships, to get a new perspective on life to figure out career paths, to deal with difficult issues and life circumstances, to be part of a community and family and to increase their awareness of the world around them.

Some answers read:

‘Help us discover God’

‘To make friends’

‘To make a sense of community/family’
‘To deal with my problems’

‘Open place to share Faith’

‘Discuss career paths’

‘Have fun’

‘To increase my awareness of the world around me’

These results also illustrate the view from literature, Youth Work come in many forms, each providing a wide range of outcomes, method of development and offer a range of experiences. As mentioned, Youth Work is a holistic process, taking in a wide range of targets as The National Occupational Standards (2008) suggests:

‘Youth Work should enable young people to develop holistically, working with them to facilitate their personal, social and education development, to enable them to develop their voice, influence and place in society and to reach their full potential’

ii. Youth Practitioner Responses

Out of a sample of ten respondents, 4 were aged 18-25, 3 aged 26-35 and 3 were aged 36-45, overall 7 of whom were male and 3 were female. Participants were asked to comment on what type of provision they coordinated, which are displayed in a pie chart (Fig: 5, on the following page).
Q. 12: In your own words, please outline your personal definition of what Youth Work is.

Participants suggested Youth Work was about creating safe, positive, open and encouraging environments, allowing young people to explore who they are, allowing young people to feel valued and respected. Others suggested Youth Work was about more than just programmes; it was about relationships, having a positive influence. Respondents also said it was working with 11-25 year olds, walking the journey of adolescence, challenging behaviour whilst not judging.
A sample of answers read:

‘Youth Work is about providing a safe, positive, open and encouraging environment for young people to explore who they are, but ultimately a place where they feel valued and cared for. For me Youth Work equals programmes, but I personally think way past that - Youth Work should be about positive and safe relationships.’

‘Youth Work is trying to have a positive influence on the lives of young people. It includes new experiences and opportunities as well as building relationships and helping young people fulfil their potential.’

‘Informal education in various forms’

‘11-25 year olds’

‘Walking the journey of adolescence with unconditional love’

The results here reflect the unclear definition of Youth Work, and illustrates that Youth Work is made up of a mix of ideologies and methodologies which has given rise to this lack of clarity around definition and the role of Youth Work. Therefore the proposed definition by the researcher is accurate;

‘Youth Work is a relational process, based foremost on developing meaningful relationships with young people. Youth Work is primarily designed to address the needs of young people in a holistic way. Employing informal educational methodology, the aim of Youth Work is to address the personal, social and Spiritual Development of young people, to enable the young person to realise their potential as a full and living human being’.
Q. 13: Is there a Religious/Spiritual/Faith element involved in the provision you are involved with?

Out of the 10 respondents, 6 said there was a Religious/Spiritual or Faith element to their work, 4 stated there wasn’t any input of this kind. When asked to expand, some workers said their centre has a Christian ethos, seeking to empower young people to develop new perspectives on life through Jesus’ example. Others stated that they were employed by a Church, others described providing holistic Youth Work addressing every area of a young persons’ life. Some stated they had specific targets set by government funding which allowed no room for Faith work. Another said this was not a focus of their group but as we are all Spiritual beings it is bound to come up in conversation at some point and at this stage they would address this aspect and discuss.

A selection of answers read:

‘Our centre is a cross community centre with a Christian ethos. We seek to empower young people to develop new perspectives in life through the life of Jesus’

‘A key aspect of holistic Youth Work that compliments and works alongside the mental, physical and social elements of a young person’

‘We have targets set by funders, none of which include Faith based Youth Work’

‘It is not the focus of our groups but because I believe we are all Spiritual beings with a capacity for a relationship with God, you can’t help but for it to come up in conversation’
The results here suggest that Youth Work incorporates the idea of ‘values and beliefs’ in a range of different ways, depending on each group. This suggests, a lack of clarity and focus regarding the area of Faith, however it may also be a positive issue to address. By allowing room for interpretation and individualism, many different groups can and do address issues of values, beliefs, Faith etc in unique and dynamic ways.

As outline by the literature, this is an area which should be addressed across the sector, if Youth Work is to truly be a holistic, developmental process addressing every aspect of the young person - both in the public and private realms. Hull (2001) suggests, ‘Faith is seen as a trustful response to an object of Religious worship’, but as Fowler (1981) further states, ‘Faith is much broader and should be seen as the human potential for responding to life’.

Q.14: In what ways does your provision influence the lives of young people?

Each felt they had a positive influence whilst also saying they may never know the full impact of their work as this is a lifelong process. Others stated they hoped to develop how young people think; addressing issues such a self confidence, directly discussing Faith, praying with and for young people, testing values and beliefs, but overall provision was aimed at developing relationships and the social aspect of the young person.

Some stated:

‘We may never know the impact due to the nature of our Work’

‘I have seen young people dramatically change into wonderful human beings and leaders within our programmes’
‘We hope we develop young people’s minds and views’

‘Address daily issues faced by young people’

‘Testing values and beliefs’

‘Development of relationships and social development of young people is evident’

The evidence here suggests that the outcome seen in Youth Work across the sector is heavily dependent upon the organisation and the value base driving it. Indeed, in questioning the outcomes of FBO’s, Milson (1963) says, ‘The Christian Faith is reasonable and equally valid…it is possible to present it while remaining faithful to educative principles’. This suggestion is reflective in the research, with many practitioners describing outcomes, not necessarily directly linked to Faith.

Q. 15: What, in your opinion, is the main aim of the youth provision you provide?

Some respondents said it was: to love young people, to bring them to Jesus, to develop them personally and socially, to provide opportunities, to enable young people to reach their full potential, others said it was to build relationships and some said it was basically to keep them off the streets.

Some participants said:

‘Help them make better choices in life’

‘To love them’

‘See them reach their potential’

‘Somewhere for young people to go’
'Develop open, deep relationships with young person and their family'

Again from the research, the evidence suggests that the aims of suggested, relate directly to the core principles of Youth Work for N. Ireland whilst also suggesting that not all Faith groups and Church groups are focussed primarily on bringing young people to God.

The aims suggested however appear weak and unclear. Pugh (1999) suggests, ‘The reluctance of many Christian organisations to use secular theory and critical analysis has left Christian Youth Work with a weak theory base’, reflecting the research and illustrating that there is a lack of consistency in Youth Work practice and the language used to communicate the purposes and aims in N. Ireland.

iii. Semi Structured Interview Responses

Q. 1a: What is your personal definition of Youth Work?

Respondents described ideas of building relationships, being young person centred, and development on a social, personal and Spiritual level. Respondents also described Youth Work as purposeful, age specific, being about informal education, testing values and beliefs, providing safe spaces and holistic Youth Work.

Some comments read:

‘Young people developing into who they can be: Spiritually and socially’

‘Intentional organisation of meeting needs of young people in a particular area’

‘Connecting and relating to young people’

‘Programmes, events and activities to help young people’
‘Work with 5-25 year olds’

‘Targeting developmental needs’

As illustrated by these results, Youth Work is a broad term, encompassing a wide range of methodologies and values. What is evident, is the definitions suggested are all connected and spawn from the core principles of Youth Work set out the in Model for Effective Practice (2005).

Q. 1b: What, in your opinion, is the fundamental purpose of Youth Work?

Answers were similar to the first question and to the questionnaires, describing things such as relationships, being part of community, experiences, opportunities, development, fun, renewed vision for life, increase confidence, gain new skills and so on.

Some respondents said:

‘Facilitate growth in young people in a positive way, emotionally, spiritually and personally’

‘Positive relational environments’

‘Making disciples, who love God, love others and those outside the Church - holistic Youth Work’

These quotes and answers illustrate how different Youth Workers and organisations see Youth Work in different ways. This, as we have seen, can be negative regarding the lack of definition and clarity of the profession, but can also be a positive, showing the broad variety of practice which is currently employed in N. Ireland.
Q. 1c: What outcomes are direct results of your Youth Work?

Participants suggested young people gained relationships, confidence, opportunities and a sense of belonging to a group. Respondents also said young people gained new experiences, were able to have fun, gained a renewed sense of vision for their lives and gain a sense of hope.

Some said:

‘It varies from young person to young person’

‘Rich relationships’

‘A better lifestyle’

‘Although they might always be ‘at risk’ our work aims to reduce the degree to which they are ‘at risk’’

Youth Work is inherently difficult to define, but even trickier is the concept of hard outcomes. This is an issue which should be addressed, Youth Work is a profession which is able to address to needs of many young people, yet in terms of recognition and funding, this is an area which leads to most confusion. Society, government and funding bodies should become more familiar with the role and benefits Youth Work has on society.

The outcomes suggested, also suggests that regardless of which group or organisation, the outcomes appear largely similar. This raises questions over the role of Faith Based Youth Work, regarding its uniqueness and definition.
Q. 1d: What motivates you and your Youth Work practice?

Some suggested salary and conditions, whilst most said things such as having a sense of calling and vocation, a love for young people, being part of a team, passion for community relations work, seeing results in large and small ways in the lives of young people and working for a good organisation were all motivating influences.

Some statements recorded:

‘I believe in young people who are often looked down on, who need to feel valued’

‘I love their energy’

‘Having those special conversations, helping and connecting with young people at a deep level’

‘Personal values’

‘Sense of calling and vocation’

‘To change the community we work in’

‘It pays well’

Many of the respondents agreed with much of the literature presented earlier, that Youth Work, as a concept is difficult to define and quantify. Many of the words and phrases used in the questionnaires and interviews held similar trains of thought to that of the academics, some acknowledging that Youth Work was an educational process, concerned the overall development of the ‘whole’ young person.

At one end of the spectrum are those education boards and agencies with no Faith element to their work, focussing on funding targets and numbers of young people. At
the other end of the spectrum are those groups who want their young people to have a relationship with God and participate in the life of the Church.

Somewhere in the middle are those agencies, which hold to a Faith and have some desire at some level for their youth to experience God; however their main drivers and goals are to build meaningful relationships, connect with young people from all backgrounds and to meet their needs. Indeed, Ellis (1990) said: ‘Jesus used the principles now enshrined in informal education to great effect, by creating shared experiences that challenged individuals to rethink their value systems’.

Indeed, when looking to the Model for Effective Practice (2005), there is a useful model for providing holistic Youth Work, but is this truly holistic Youth Work if there is no intentional work to address the Spiritual within a young person? This strategy does use terms such as ‘testing values and beliefs’ but is that what Faith based Youth Work and Spirituality are about? It is also important to question whether or not this area should be part of a Youth Work strategy at all if Faith and Spirituality are elements of life experienced and lived out on a personal level.

The literature suggests that the work of values is and should be of key importance to modern Youth Work practice, and maybe, the current strategy does do enough to allow room and scope to develop work in this area.

Some respondents believed the fundamental purpose of Youth Work was to increase the sense of identity and self awareness within a young person but that it was also concerned with mobilising young people into translating this experience into everyday reality in how they processed difficult life circumstances, made decisions and related to others.
The deep personal motivation of the Church and Faith groups is to be commended, to be able to give above and beyond set working hours, to work harder than a salary dictates is very important in Youth Work, as throughout history it is the Church and Faith groups who have sustained the youth sector. However, the motivational drivers of those secular agencies is also crucially important, to have good salaries, to have boundaries between work and personal life and in many circumstances it is crucial to have a balance between these two extremes.

One FBO in particular was very much founded on a Christian belief but also delivered on targets to funders, setting professional standards in terms of work conditions and is currently working to address the salary deficits between itself and education board positions which is to be acknowledged and applied throughout Youth Work on N. Ireland.

The research has suggested that Youth Work is indeed a unique, valuable profession, which is addressing many of the issue facing young people through employing Youth Work methodology. However, what is evident is, as Pugh (1999) states; ‘The reluctance of many Christian organisations to use secular theory and critical analysis has left Christian Youth Work with a weak theory base’ and this has been illustrated through the research.
3.2 Faith and Faith Development

i. Additional Questionnaire Question:

Write down the first words that come into your mind when you hear the word…Faith.

Young people responded with; hope, God, trust, freedom, Christianity, personal relationship with God, forever, love, difficult and clarity were suggested.

Youth Workers used words such as; relationship, God, Jesus, way of life, belief in something, hard to convey in words, actions and a deep trust in God to describe it.

These initial results display a broad understanding of ‘Faith’ as being a term closely connected to God and Christianity.

ii. Semi Structured Interview Responses:

In this section it is important to note a mix of traditions and Faiths were sampled - Protestant, Catholic, non Faith, Christianity were all represented in this sample.

Q. 3b: What is your understanding of the terms ‘Faith’ and ‘Faith Development’?

Interviewees commented on their view of Faith and Faith Development, saying this was about what you put your trust in, that Faith Development was the outworking of a personal Faith (e.g. sitting in a chair that you know will support you). Others described this as going deeper to understand relationships and to understand God, also having Faith in something or someone, connecting to a living God and that Faith was a subset of Spiritual Development. Faith was mainly spoken of in terms of Christianity but also acknowledged by some that there are many Faiths and many
traditions but it was fundamentally about believing in something and about self actualisation and the power to become.

Some participants stated:

‘Faith is unconditional trust in the living God and that he provides your path’

‘Faith Development is going deeper to understand relationship and trust in God’

‘Faith is what you put your trust in; Faith Development is the outworking of Faith through action’

The definitions suggested, reflect the literature accurately, Faith being a Religious term, mainly connected to Westernised Christianity. However, as investigated earlier, ‘Faith is the outworking of a deeply held set of values and beliefs. Faith may or may not directly imply connection to a particular Religion or institution, but acts as a motivational tool to those with a ‘Faith’ which leads to action. Faith is a trust or belief in something or someone, which brings a sense of purpose and hope. Faith Development is best described as a journey of which each and every human is taking. This journey is one of discovery and exploration of the world around us, the search for truth and the realisation of one’s potential’.

The results do not fully reflect this definition, which again suggests the lack of understanding in the sector and indeed society of this vast term, ‘Faith’. The definition suggested here is comprehensive and fully illustrates what modern Faith is and can be to those who embrace and explore it.
Q. 3c: What role, if any does Faith or Faith Development play in your Youth Work practice?

Some said it played a huge role, introducing young people to Jesus, their creator. Others said they played Devil’s advocate as a way of testing and challenging young people’s views and opinions. Some said their agency had a Faith ethos or Christian ethos and therefore flowed through everything they did. Others said it played an unspoken, personal role and that this was a very deep level, below the surface element to Youth Work.

Participants stated:

‘A huge role - introducing young people to their creator, trusting God and having Faith in a saviour’

‘God is involved in everything that is going on - youth strategy, plans and developments’

‘It underlines everything we do’

‘You bring who you are to every situation’

These results do not reflect in any detail some of the models of Faith Development such as Westerhoff (1976), Engel (1975) or Fowler (1981).

This suggests those engaged in Faith work do not full understand what they are trying to do, but maybe more accurately, are not fully able to describe their work and methods in contemporary form, which is relevant to modern Youth Work methodology. This is a crucial illustration, if Faith Development is to play a role in
Youth Work practice; there must be some kind of theory based approach to inform workers in the field.

**Q. 3d: What, if anything, does Faith Development achieve?**

Respondents described outcomes such as relationship with God, producing well rounded young people, not afraid to question Faith and life, connection to leaders who are always there to help. Others describe outcomes such as connection to a community or family, young people being able to relate to others, moving closer to becoming a whole person and serving others, growing in character whilst also having an increased awareness of God and the Holy Spirit, having an awareness of others and other Faiths as well as having a renewed perspective on life.

A sample of comments read:

‘Relationship - you need Faith to follow God’

‘A movement towards becoming a whole person and serving others’

‘Increased self awareness, of values and beliefs, of who I am and what Faith is’

‘Relationship with a Church’

‘New understanding and perspectives on life’

Many of those who took part in the study understood Faith to be connected to trust, having Faith in someone or something. Many of those from Faith or Church based work described Faith as a belief in God and that Faith Development was the outworking of their Faith, going deeper in ones relationship with God.
Others described Faith as passing on a particular tradition, or learning about world Religions and Faiths without necessarily holding to their beliefs systems. Other practitioners linked Faith Development to Maslow’s (1983) concept of self actualisation.

Church work is very clearly linked to the Christian Faith and in this context Faith Development is very much about using scripture and Biblical teachings to enable young people to grow in their Faith and relationship with God. Those in Faith based work stated that ‘yes’ this was an element of their work, as they clearly believe in the word of God and state they openly communicate their beliefs through their Youth Work, however, also used terms such as trust, belief and actions, not necessarily describing a relationship with God.

Those engaged in non Faith work used terms such as self actualisation, having trust in someone or something, all terms which those involved in Faith and Church work stated as well. It is clear that although the Christian workers wanted to pass on something of their Faith to the groups they work with, they were also willing to acknowledge that the main goal and focus of their work was again the young person.

In further questions, when asked what role Faith played in their day to day Youth Work, the majority of those in a Church or FBO said it played a big role. When asked to expand, some said that this was implicit in the work they did, that their Faith gave them an inner motivation and foundation to work from. Others said clearly they prayed as a staff team, it influenced how they related to each other and the young people. Some managers also said that it changed how supervision was carried out in the organisation, that staff had a deep concern and love for each other regarding work issues but also personal issues which were taken into consideration also.
When asked to further comment on what they felt Faith Development achieved many did say they hoped it impacted the young person’s relationship and view of God. Those involved in FBO’s described outcomes such as connection to a community of people, dedication to work, family and others being clear results of their work. Respondents said producing well rounded, whole young people was a clear outcome of their work, that their young people had a clearer sense of identity, awareness of self and the world in which they live whilst also having new perspectives and understanding of life.

Fowler (1997) states; ‘Individuals develop in their Faith through a series of stages throughout their life and emerging adulthood tends to be the period in which individuals are in process of separating their identities from their world view and “demythologizing” their experiences’.

Faith development is a long process and for young people, a process which takes shape whilst in transition to adulthood. The research reflects what commentators also feel regarding the issue of Faith. Some feel Faith is a religious term, connected to relationship with God and Jesus Christ, others also feel Faith is a more accessible and general term which could be translated to mean many things. Faith, many believe increase one’s sense of vocation and calling to a particular role. In many ways this would stand up against our research, as we previously noted that many of those in Church or Faith work had a strong sense of calling to their youth careers.

No practitioner was able to fully define Faith Development in terms of how this was done and how it should be carried out. If secular provision is to incorporate a Faith element to Youth Work, yet have no personal experience of Faith, nor have a particular model from which to learn from, it then becomes extremely difficult to
employ, unless FBO’s are able to better define and present what their work does and how it works.

Indeed, Pugh (1999) says; ‘There is nothing in mainstream Youth Work training that I is inherently contradictory to Christianity, providing Christians are willing to engage in dialogue and critical reflection.’ This is a crucial point, as discussed earlier, that for Faith work to play a role, it must become and appear more robust and willing to engage in dialogue in the public realm.
3.3 **Spirituality and Spiritual Development**

i. **Additional Questionnaire Question:**

   Write down the first words that come into your mind when you hear the word…Spirituality.

   Young people, used words such as; ghosts, meditation, God, experience, life, Holy Spirit, personal, connection, weird, comfort and unknown came up.

   Youth Practitioners suggested terms such as; openness, connection to God, concentrating on God, the Holy Spirit and life force, Reiki, Wicca and ‘happy clappy’ Christianity.

   The results suggest, again, a lack of understanding of the terminology, but also illustrate the uncertainty and suspicion around this ‘slippery’ concept.

ii. **Semi Structured Interview Responses:**

   **Q. 2a: Do you maintain a Spiritual life? How was this learned and how is it maintained?**

   Many described how they learned and developed this aspect of their lives suggested influences such as youth leaders, friends, Church, self discovery, the Bible, being part of a community or Faith group and having personal encounters and interactions with God and the Holy Spirit.

   The results here, similar to the term Faith, describe a predominantly Christianised, Westernised term. This shows clearly how misunderstood and blurred these terms have become with each group taking a different interpretation, to suit their practice.
Q. 2b: What is your understanding of the terms ‘Spirituality’ and ‘Spiritual Development’?

Phrases such as: what you believe in, mind, body, spirit, personal relationships with God, self awareness, growth, learning, development, search for meaning and purpose all came out. Others suggested Spirituality was a personal thing but that Spiritual Development was a tangible behaviour, attitude and action change in a person. Some described this as being a key aspect to a whole person, describing ideas of connecting to something bigger, connecting with the self and connecting to things around us.

Some said:

‘It’s what you believe and what you value’

‘Spiritual Development is your behaviours and the outcomes’

‘There is a world beyond what we can see’

‘Self awareness’

‘It’s the search for meaning and purpose’

Through these results, the understanding and definition of this concept has expanded to include issues of self, values and behaviours. What is illustrated here has been suggested by Hay and Nye (2006), ‘there is a strong connection between spiritual awareness and ethical behaviour, almost without exception, people link their spiritual experience with a moral imperative’.
Q. 2c: What role, if any, does Spirituality or Spiritual Development play in your Youth Work practice?

Some describe teaching of values, teaching the Bible whilst others suggested experiential learning, personal experiences, and saying that this was not a main goal of their work but it still was a bi-product of development. Some describe it was exploring Faith and God, searching for meaning and purpose in life, questioning rules and authorities and morals in life. Some respondents suggest this area was about relationships and accompanying young people of a lifelong journey.

Statements recorded state:

‘It is encouraging young people to live out Faith ’

‘It is not a main goal or aim, but has a knock on effect’

‘It plays a part of everything - you cannot separate the Spiritual from a person’

‘It informs a way of living’

As Hay and Nye (2006) also state, ‘Spirituality is seen as much warmer, associated with love, inspiration, wholeness, depth, mystery and personal devotion’. This suggests that Spirituality may an individualistic and personal concept.

Respondents felt strongly that Spirituality should play a public role, as it shapes how one acts personally, morally and ethically, it has an effect on one’s ‘Faith’, however this is defined, but that as whole beings, young people need to be guided and encouraged through methodology to explore the inner self, the Spiritual self.
Q. 2d: What, if anything, does Spiritual Development achieve?

Some suggested that it achieves completeness in what you believe, giving young people a foundation of what Christianity is, and it provided increased awareness and experience. Others said that it produced whole young people who understood themselves in relation to those and things around them. Spiritual Development was described as being an enriching influence on relationships and young people and gave rise to discipline and order in life.

Respondents said:

‘It allows young people to embrace concepts which they may return to at a future time’

‘Spirituality is the key to the self, Spiritual Development plays a key role in achieving wholeness’

‘It gives young people focus, vision, hope - not just in the here and now, but in seeing they are part of something bigger’

Many described things such as personal experiences in the world, the universe, the outdoors. Some suggested the work of the Holy Spirit and God within a person, saying Spirituality was a much more personal, reflective tool which gave rise to self awareness, awareness of the world and others. Some agreed that humans were more than just physical beings, with souls and spirits but found this intrinsically difficult to describe or define.

Those in a Church and Faith context felt Spiritual Development connected Faith with everyday life, achieving completeness in what you hold close and believe in.
Respondents also suggested Spiritual Development increased self awareness, contributing to Spiritual and character growth, stating that everything is Spiritual and that is why many young people are concerned with their search for identity, meaning and purpose in life. Others suggested that Spiritual Development gave young people hope, focus and vision for the future, bringing order and discipline to their lives.

Indeed, Wilson (2002) says; ‘when you strip Spirituality out of the Religious dogma so often associated with it, it is simply the system of belief that drives each one of us. It is our understanding of how we’ve connected to others, what we owe them and what they owe us. It tells us how we should behave in the world and help us decide whether our lives have any meaning outside the mere fact of our physical existence’.

Those involved in Church work too found this difficult to differentiate from Faith. Spirituality seems to be an area of work that does overlap greatly with Faith work, but, it is clear from the range of views that the term Spirituality may be more accessible to those involved and not involved in Church or Faith based work.

Some felt Spiritual Development could play a role within Youth Work practice in terms of describing self awareness, challenging attitudes and values, recognising its role in achieving holistic Youth Work and whole young people.

This is reflected in the work of Hay and Nye (2006) in their model which suggested 3 stages to Spiritual Development, including, awareness sensing, mystery sensing and value sensing.

Some writers have described Spirituality as the process of discovery, as a journey toward wholeness, concerned with values, morality and is innate within each one of us. Spirituality may also be a term which best encompasses the work of Church and
Faith based Youth Work in terms of God and Christianity, whilst also allowing scope for the secular world to embrace this aspect of young people.

The Spiritual realm appears to be a slippery concept, being a much broader concept than Faith, but needs a clearer definition, such as the one put forward by Benson (2003); ‘Spiritual Development is the process of growing the intrinsic human capacity for self transcendence, in which the self is embedded in something greater than the self, including the sacred. It is the developmental engine that propels the search for connectedness, meaning, purpose and contribution. It is shaped both within and outside of Religious traditions and practices’.
3.4 Religion

i. Additional Questionnaire Question:

Write down the first words that come into your mind when you hear the word…Religion.

Young people suggested words such as: Jesus, The Pope, Church, RE lessons, the Bible, division, confusion, describing other Religions and traditions.

Youth Practitioners, used words such as Catholics and Protestants, rules and regulations, constraining, war, Church, debates and an awareness of what people believe.

Religion is a term heavily bedded in a context of institutional, formalised Church, doctrine with association to the sectarian divide in N. Ireland, best defined as, ‘a formal institutional context that entails an acceptance of the values, beliefs and practices of a particular Faith community’. (Cascio: 1998 and Canada: 1989).

ii. Semi Structured Interview Responses:

Many respondents said they had a negative view and opinion of Religion, that it didn’t play any role in their Youth Work, that it turns people off, is all about rules and regulations, division and sectarianism. Some also said they worked for a Church and so were naturally part of a religious organisation, whereas those not involved in Faith based work were able to state they had no role for Religion in their work. Those involved in Faith based agencies found this a more difficult question to answer but on the whole did not want to be associated with this term.
Others suggested Religion was of huge importance; particularly those who were involved in cross community work, addressing sectarian division and tension. Many felt Religion was more about culture in N. Ireland today rather than Church. Others employed by a Church stated how they adhered to the policies and procedures set out by their particular denomination and therefore did have a role to play in Youth Work practice.

Respondents suggested a range of answers in relation to what Religion achieved. Some suggested it provided a sense of identity, increased a person’s capacity for devotion, worship and prayer whilst also describing the side of the city you came from. Others reacted against this term saying that it achieved nothing but social control, division, and conflict and acted as a stifling and constraining force on people and were simply a way of labelling people and putting them in a box.

Practitioners said:

‘We don’t need it; we just need to love God’

‘It can be a positive as it outlines the difference in people and allows room to understand these differences, however it is being an has been abused to become divisive’

‘Religion and culture cannot be separated’

‘Religion is a form of social control’

‘Religion describes what side of the city you’re from’

The issue of Religion as illustrated through the findings is a term seen mainly in a negative light by those engaged in Church based and Faith based work. This seems
mainly due to the Church being perceived as being involved in many of the political and religious divides in N. Ireland but also because many FBO’s do not want to be attached to any particular denomination or tradition and see Religion as being a constraining, divisive force in N. Ireland.

Those from a secular viewpoint felt strongly Religion was important as it provided many communities with a sense of identity and heritage. Respondents from all backgrounds felt that Religion was important in terms of community relations work, that this was an area which could not be avoided as it is part of our culture and an important issue to address with young people. This said; many wanted to move away from the conflict, division and segregation and felt that Youth Work in this context needed to be very different to that of previous years.

Respondents viewed Religion as a very separate entity to that of Faith and Spirituality, although acknowledging that Religion was part of the three concepts outlined. Only those Church groups who delivered Youth Work in a Church described what they did as religious but also strongly felt their work was not pure Church based work, that it was something more holistic, incorporating Faith, Spirituality and good Youth Work principles, as illustrated by Hull (2000) in his model of concentric circles (Fig 6, below), where he suggests Spirituality is the concept surrounding everything in life, which is expressed through a particular Religion but which has Faith at the heart.
Bullis (1996) also suggests: ‘Religion appears to be focussed on the outward manifestations of Spiritual belief while the concept of Spirituality appears to be a more internal process that can include an immediate connection to a higher power that occurs on an intensely personalised basis’.
3.5 Faith Based Youth Work

i. Semi Structured Interview Responses:

Q. 5a: What is your understanding and experience of Faith based Youth Work?

Respondents suggested it was about young people relating to their creator, living their lives for God and impacting society in a positive way. Others suggested that God is the source of life and therefore the source and purpose behind what we do. Others involved in this type of work felt it was seen in a negative light by those not involved in it and gave it a bad press a lot of the time. Many interviewees describe their work as being focussed on young people, relationships and that it was extremely difficult to define this term.

Many felt it was much wider than narrow Christian evangelism, feeling that this type of work was well placed to address fully holistic youth provision by being able to explore and tap into the Spiritual aspect of the young person in a very positive way.

Some commented:

‘It is criticised by those not involved in it’

‘It is Youth Work from a Christian ethos and takes various forms; it is explicit in the form of teaching and worship, but also implicit through conversations, 1-1 work and role modelling’

‘It is not just about passing on my Faith’

The research shows, there is a lack of definition and clarity regarding Faith Based work. The phrases and terms suggested are similar to those of Youth Work generally. Therefore, what is different or unique about this form of work?
Q. 5b: What do you feel are the outcomes of Faith based Youth Work?

Workers felt that the outcomes of this type of work were positive, creating young people with more opportunity to experience different things, having young people with a clear set of moral code, increased self awareness, a greater sense of meaning and purpose in life, having developed healthy relationships whilst also, in some instances having young people who are connected to God.

Respondents stated:

‘There is more freedom to talk about God’

‘There is a deeper connection between young person and Youth Worker’

‘We can address the search for meaning, purpose and wholeness within young people’

‘Increased awareness of self, the world and others’

What is apparent from these answers is the suggestion that Faith Based work is delivering core Youth Work principles, in line with the Strategy for N. Ireland and the U.K. The research however also suggests a lack of thought on behalf of practitioners as to what the outcomes are of Faith work, which begs the question, why should there be a distinction between Faith work and traditional Youth Work?

Q. 5c: How are Faith, Religion and Spirituality connected and manifested through Faith based Youth Work?

Many respondents acknowledge that Faith, Religion and Spirituality were all linked and intertwined whilst also having distinct value. Some felt Faith and Spirituality
were closely connected whereas Religion was very much separate, again, one can look to Hulls (2000) concentric circle model for the links.

Some interviewees described how they had members of staff who held to no particular Faith tradition but believed in the same values and ethos of the organisation. Many felt that Religion was to be avoided, Faith was about Christianity and Spirituality was how we manage day by day.

*Some said:*

*They are connected, Faith and Spirituality are vital and Religion is always there around the two’*

*All services come from a desire to help the whole young person personally and spiritually with a focus on the poor and disadvantaged’*

*They are heavily connected yet different and you can’t have one without the other’*

**Q. 5d: How is Faith based Youth Work unique?**

Some said its purpose was to make disciples in a very Christian way, others said it was unique on a constitutional level in comparison to Churches and secular based provision. Some interviewees suggested that the work of an FBO was having a deep desire to impact Youth Work whilst always giving opportunity to explore Faith and that and FBO was able to hit at the very core of our values, beliefs and moral standpoint. Respondents also felt that an FBO was best placed to hit at the core of issues such as identity, vocation and outlook on life.

Many of those involved in Church work or Faith based work said they felt they had a stronger sense of vocation and purpose in their role, that they see their jobs as more
than just a paid position and that secular provision was denying the Spiritual aspect of the young person and therefore was not delivering holistic Youth Work.

Respondents commented:

‘It is unique in a constitutional point of view and in terms of the broader aim and objectives’

‘Secular Youth Work says it is delivering holistic Youth Work, whilst ignoring the Spiritual. FBO’s can address the Spiritual in a real and full way - addressing Faith, Spirituality and Religion’

‘It is similar to secular Youth Work, being young person centred and meeting their needs, but goes further and deeper to make a lasting impact’

‘The desire of FBO’s is to impact Youth Work, whilst always providing space for young people to explore Faith, even if they don’t choose that route’

‘FBO’s get to the core of who you are and why you do what you do’

These results, illustrate that many feel Faith work is unique, but struggle to define how. Spirituality, may be the vehicle, when looking to Hull (2000), to use to address issues of Religion, Faith and the self in terms of ‘relational consciousnesses as Hay and Nye (2006) describe it.

Finally, interviewees were asked to make any additional comments. Some suggested that this area of work is all to be carried out on a personal, private level. However, as Hay and Nye (2006) suggest, this discredits the role of Spirituality. Others suggested they felt that secular Youth Work should be addressing the Spiritual element of life,
allowing young people to ask questions and explore meaning and purpose in life more fully.

Those involved in an FBO felt that ‘yes’ there was a Christian agenda to their work but that it was not the overarching aim or goal of their work. Some suggested they could not define Faith based Youth Work and felt it was given harsh treatment from local communities and funders because of their Christian ethos and commitment.

They felt their goals were centred on self awareness, making whole young people, able to deal with difficulty in their lives, being able to make sound moral judgements and decisions in life. They also felt better placed to help young people explore value, meaning and purpose in life.

When asked to comment on how Faith based work was unique, some participants felt it was in terms of the values driving the organisation and vision. Respondents described they were not concerned solely with connecting young people to a Church, nor solely focussed on numbers, funding and contracts. FBO’s felt their Youth Work was carried out at a deeper level to that of secular providers, having concern and love for the whole young person, always providing an opportunity to explore the boundaries of life, Faith and meaning, even if a young person does not choose a particular path.

Biddulph (2006) says; ‘...this broader consideration of Spirituality could be a valuable tool for developing young people’s understanding of issues of social injustice and the dynamics of becoming disenfranchised from society’.

Workers felt that Faith based Youth Work was carried out on an individual and personal level, again alluding to the contention highlighted earlier- how then this
work can be translated across the youth sector? Spencer (2008) states; ‘Spirituality is in it for the long haul in a person’s life, it’s focus is outward yet is sustained by inner feeding’.

Other issues have arisen from the research in relation to the implicit or explicit nature of Faith based Youth Work. If Faith based work employs Faith in an implicit way, then it is just Youth Work operating within a different framework. However, if FBO’s declare themselves as unique and delivering on Youth Work outcomes more effectively, then how is this done and what makes them different. Therefore, is Faith explicit in a FBO? And if so, how can this translate across the sector?

Spencer (2008) also goes on to say, ‘There are no defined boundaries or directions but there is a visible outcome in that the individual displays traits of a developing Spirituality by their very actions and subsequent lifestyle’.

Faith, Religion and Spirituality are very much interconnected terms, yet distinct. Religion in N. Ireland provides the backdrop and culture within which these groups are active, but what is more interesting is how Faith and Spirituality is interpreted and played out. If these concepts are individualised ideologies then they cannot be addressed or delivered through Youth Work. However, these terms are interpreted in different ways by different groups and what the sector lacks is a clear strategy of Youth Work delivery in N. Ireland which encompasses these intrinsically human elements without detracting from high quality youth provision in N. Ireland context.
Chapter 4: Conclusions
4.1 Conclusions

The aim of this piece of work was to investigate Faith based Youth Work and the role of Spirituality in Youth Work in N. Ireland, through exploring 5 main themes of Youth Work, Faith, Spirituality, Religion and Faith based Youth Work.

Green (2005), says, ‘it is hard to conclude an exploration into the subject...this is partly because of the divergent, holistic nature of the subject which resists categorisation and tidy solutions. It is also because individual Youth Workers have developed the Spiritual dimension of their work bringing their own individual spirit to this work and to try and conflate these into a discipline feels in some way disrespectful’. However, this view has been used in an attempt to ‘back off’ the subject of Faith Based work and Spirituality, which, if continued will result in the loss and disregard behind more easily quantifiable provision and aims.

The literature and research suggests there is a severe lack of clarity amongst youth providers in N. Ireland in terms of understanding and recognising the work of those engaged in secular provision, Faith based provision and Church provision.

Research suggests secular provision is largely restricted by funding outcomes and government led initiatives. Secular providers are predominantly situated in disadvantaged communities of high deprivation and large numbers of NEET young people.

Research shows there is increasing confusion between Church based Youth Work and Faith based Youth Work. Church based youth provision is concerned mainly with connecting young people to a Church community and allowing young people to hear about the stories and life of Jesus and through this come to have a Faith in God. As outlined, there are a number of models for how this can happen, but that there is also no standard set model to ensure this does occur.
The research carried out, combined with the literature suggests that there may be four models of Youth Work;

**Model 1: Christian Ministry Based Youth Work**

The strength of this model of work is its ability to attract large numbers of highly motivated Youth Workers and volunteers who often work for low salaries (or none) out of a sense of vocation. Successful Youth Ministry has a proven ability to effect significant moral and spiritual change in the lives of young people. It addresses the deeper nature of a young person (heart, soul, spirit) and is strongly supported by the Church it serves and connects young people to adults within a Christian community.

However, the weaknesses of Christian youth ministry are often seen as unprofessional and amateurish. It can be accused of using Youth Work as a tool for an alternative purpose, rather than for its own sake or for young people’s sake (i.e., it is only concerned with “saving souls” or adding numbers to Churches). It is normally seen as exclusive in that it only allows committed Christians to work in the ministry and committed Christian young people to be part of its core.

**Model 2: Christians Delivering Social Youth Work**

Many organisations that were at one time seen as primarily evangelistic in nature and fitting within the Christian Youth Ministry model, have in recent years taken on secular funding to enable them to do social Youth Work. Christians in this model, see themselves first as Youth Workers with social Youth Work ends. These workers may witness to their faith by their actions and character, but do not openly evangelise or teach Christian faith in their secular funded youth work programmes.
The main strengths of this approach keep some of the sense of vocation, commitment and character of Christian ministry models and enable the uptake of government and secular funding. It is not inherently exclusive and can more easily reach out to people from a variety of faith and ethnic backgrounds. It challenges the Christian Youth Worker to deliver social Youth Work aims and allows for organisations to sponsor both faith-based and secular programmes.

However, some weaknesses would be that Christian Ministry organisations have lost their distinctive Christian ethos through this model. The pursuit of the aim is commendable, but as non-Christian Youth Workers can deliver the model as easily as Christian ones, these organisations often end up with staff that do not share the organisation’s ethos and end up drifting toward the secular model. Staff are less likely to pray together and having training from a Christian perspective and can thus lose impetus for cohesive teamwork based in a common purpose.

**Model 3: Christian Youth Work in a Pluralist Society**

This is a synthesis model that tries to take the strengths of Christian Youth Ministry combined with best practice of secular Youth Work while limiting their weaknesses. It is based on the moral philosophy of Leslie Newbigin’s work “The Gospel in a Pluralist Society”. It denies that any organisation can take a purely neutral approach (everyone lives by some conviction of what is true). It allows Youth Workers and youth organisations to be true to their Christian convictions and leads to seeking excellence in professional Youth Work for its own sake. It can work in a non-exclusive manner with young people from any background.
The strengths in this approach recognises the reality that Western society is post-Christian and that a pluralist (various traditions living side by side) situation exists. It takes on the strength of pluralism in that it allows Christians to be distinctively Christian in their Youth Work while working non-judgmentally and appreciating and encouraging young people from other traditions. It requires excellence in professional Youth Work as it is only judged successful by the social Youth Work outcomes it accomplishes. It allows for a holistic approach that addresses body, mind and spirit with particular focus on character building and moral choices.

However, the main weaknesses in this approach can sometimes be seen as being too religious for secular funders and too social oriented for Religious supporters. It is difficult to practice and pass on because the balanced and nuanced approach can seem more theoretical than practical and is highly demanding requiring both a high level of professional skill and Christian theological understanding.

**Model 4: Secular Youth Work**

The secular or government model of Youth Work seeks to teach and practice the best knowledge and skill available in Youth Work. It claims a neutral philosophical perspective that both Religious and non-Religious people can learn and practice. Statutory Youth Work takes on concern for the profession of Youth Work and Youth Workers and seeks to address youth issues for an entire country.

The strength of secular Youth Work organisations are they seek to work with young people from whatever background and are intentionally non-exclusive. They are about Youth Work for Youth Work and young people’s sake. Secular Youth Work tries to be as professional and learned as possible. Statutory Youth Work, with its top down approach, can take on an
overall concern for issues facing young people as a whole in an area, a city or country compared to Christian and voluntary organisations that tend to be more locally motivated and concerned.

However, government sponsored Youth Work often experiences the problems of other government funded social enterprise: it can become bureaucratic, administrative and more concerned with policies and procedures than young people. Secular and Statutory youth organisations, in claiming to be neutral, often promote a secular/materialistic philosophical position that shows little appreciation for the faith background of young people and rarely addresses the deeper spiritual and moral nature of young people. Its programmes are often more about giving young people knowledge and information than addressing character and making moral choices.

One of the problems observed is, if Faith is implicit in the work of YI, then can it be deemed a Faith based organisation or is it simply a voluntary youth organisation with a clear set of morals? If YI is to be deemed Faith based and if there is to be a place for Faith based provision in N. Ireland, then it needs to be identified and defined clearly as to what role it holds.

If the Faith underpinning a Faith based agency should be explicit, then, through programmes, conversations and relationships, Faith must be an active agent in change, or such organisations run the risk of being just another statutory youth provider.

The challenge for Faith based groups is how to maintain a clear commitment to Christian values and beliefs yet also deliver Youth Work which can satisfy the professional and funding requirements of trusts and government.
What has been noticed is the deep desire of many of those engaged in Faith based Youth Work to see growth and development in young people across all human aspects - physical, social, personal, emotional and Spiritual. Faith based work seems placed well to be able to have the freedom to explore all of these human elements.

What will become an issue over time is, if such organisations cannot access appropriate funding to continue their programmes because of their beliefs, then how can this work be maintained and sustained?

Literature and research suggest humans are mind, body and spirit, the most difficult to address being the Spiritual element. This has been construed by those outside the Church as a means of converting young people, and the Church has developed reputation of being focussed on a clearly Christian agenda within their work.

Whether one chooses to describe the spirit aspect of the self it in terms of Faith, belief, self awareness or identity is irrelevant. YI clearly states it is a Christian organisation, founded on Christian principles and states that it does have a Spiritual agenda. However, they have an innate ability to fulfil the core principles of Youth Work, access government and trust funding and is able to deliver on Youth Work goals whilst also incorporating Faith and Spiritual Development through its work.

This is too a difficult task which has led to some confusion amongst some FBO’s as to what set of targets they are and should be working towards. In being a value driven organisation, YI has been able to translate their Christian beliefs and teachings into a language that is relevant, clear and meets the needs of some of the most disadvantaged young people in N. Ireland.
Difficulty arises when considering what role Spirituality does or could play in Youth Work across the province. As Spencer (2008) says; ‘Spiritual connection manifests itself best in climates of mutual trust and positive relationships’ he also suggest, ‘If we were all honest and recognised the situation and went ahead and created our own Spiritual climate, then we would all be nurtured from within and that experience in turn would help our own life force to have the energy to cope with our personal and professional working lives’. therefore, Statutory providers should be able to incorporate the Spiritual into their provision, or else run the risk of delivering youth provision which is actually not holistic by denying this aspect of a young person’s life.

With Faith based Youth Work, there may be some lessons to learn in how to do Faith and Spiritual Development. This type of work can take on a clearly Christian slant, but as the research illustrates, it can also be widened to include areas of work such an identity, culture, self awareness, awareness of others and encourage qualities such as sacrifice and service amongst young people today.

As Hay and Nye (2006) suggest; ‘The task of nourishing Spirituality is one of releasing, not constricting, understanding and imagination. It is to help young people to emancipate themselves from the grip of historically created social pressures that damage the wholeness of their personalities’.

Young people continue to search for meaning and purpose in life, to find their place in society and whilst there is a role for the Church in this, the statutory provision and Faith based provision can address these effectively. ‘Whether our personal convictions are Religious or secular, all of us are in danger of having our relational consciousness constricted by common place assumptions about individualism’ (Hay and Nye: 2006).
What is needed however is a clear and inclusive strategy and framework for all of these groups to be part of, to have input into. Church Youth Work, Faith based Youth Work and secular Youth Work need to sit together to discuss and address their differences in order to provide a more comprehensive provision across N. Ireland.

Employing clear definitions of the terms Faith, Religion and Spirituality and acknowledging the role these play in young people, Youth Work in N. Ireland can move forward. Faith based organisations should continue to deliver their work with their ethos and commitment to a set of beliefs as long as these do not become overarching, imposing features in their youth provision. However what needs to happen is a continued transparency in what such groups do and how they do it. Funders too should be willing to enter this discussion to recognise the work carried out by such groups in order to change the negative perceptions put on groups such as Youth Initiatives.

Finally, as Hay and Nye (2006) states, ‘This new approach to Spirituality offers a new way out of the straight jacket that currently binds our ethical and religious institutions’.
4.2 Recommendations

To further this study, there are a number of options worth exploring. What should be acknowledged is the size of the sample used for this piece of work. Future work should attempt to gather data from a wider range of respondents, incorporating a more comprehensive response from all youth providers - Church Based, Faith Based, secular and statutory based. This wider sample should take into consideration a bigger number of views from young people aged 18-15 and youth practitioners.

A drawback for a study of this nature was the lack of respondents aged less than 18 years of age. To further add to the quality in this area, views of those aged 11-18 years old would prove invaluable insights.

What was also a frustration was not being able to facilitate focus groups as part of the research. Providing two focus groups, one for 18-15 year olds and one for youth practitioners would enhance the quality and scope of the data collated.

Whilst the sample taken was adequate for the purposes of this piece of work, for a more in depth analysis, a much bigger sample would be needed.

This research has raised some interesting questions into which much more work could be carried out. One area of work is that of funding streams for the youth sector - how funding is allotted to Church based, Faith based and secular youth providers. Through this work, the role of Faith could be a determining factor in some groups accessing particular funding streams.

More work should be done around the area of outcomes for Youth Work. Youth Work is a profession mainly based on ‘soft outcomes’, but increasingly funders and evaluators are looking to ‘hard outcomes’ to determine success and effectiveness. Research could be carried
out, investigating the outcomes of Church, Faith and secular groups and how this impacts service delivery and funding.

Research could also be carried out to explore the role of world Faiths in relation to FBO’s. It would be worthwhile investigating the role of other Faiths, aside from Christianity, to research other forms of Faith Based Youth Work.

Finally, this study was limited by geography, to N. Ireland. In a more in depth study, taking in data from England, Scotland, Wales and Republic of Ireland would allow for further analysis across a broader location, to draw comparisons and far reaching conclusions.
Appendix 1: Youth Questionnaire

Study Title: Faith Based Youth Work and the Role of Spirituality in Youth Work in Northern Ireland.

Target Group: Young People aged 18 - 25 years old

Section 1: Background Information:

1. Age (Please Tick One)

   11-14 0 15-18 14 19-25 16 26 - 35 0 36 - 45 0 46 or over 0

2. Sex (Please Tick One)

   Male 16 Female 14

3. Highest Educational Qualification (Please Tick One)

   Degree 6 A Levels 13 AS Levels 3 GCSEs 6 KS3 1 11+ 1

4. Ethnic Origin

   White 30
   Irish Traveller 0
   Black Caribbean 0
   Black African 0
   Black Other (Please Specify) 0
   Indian 0
5. Religious Affiliation

I am a member of the Protestant Community

I am a member of the Roman Catholic Community

I am a member of neither the Protestant nor the Roman Catholic Community

6. Under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 a person is considered to have a disability if he/she has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

Do you consider that you meet this definition of disability?

Yes

No

If YES please state the nature or effects of your disability _____________________
Section 2: Youth Provision

7. Do you attend some kind of youth provision every week? (Please Tick One)

Yes [30]  No [0]

8. On average how many hours a week do you spend attending youth provision? (Please Tick one)


9. What types of youth provision do you attend? (Please Tick as many as are applicable)

- Drop in Centre [26]
- Sports Program [9]
- Small Group [15]
- Structured Personal/Social Development Program [22]
- Creative Arts Program [11]
- Church Youth Club [26]
- Church Youth Fellowship [21]
- Mentoring/Discipleship (1-1) [23]
- Uniformed Group [5]
Please describe/expand if necessary…

- I go to Streetbeat
- Boys Brigade
- I lead at youth group
- I attend a small group for my age group once a month
- I’m involved in late love - giving out free tea and coffee to students leaving clubs and pubs in Queen’s area to build relationships and have conversations about God.

10. How long have you been attending this provision? (Please Tick One)

- <1 year 0
- 2 years 6
- 3 years 9
- 4 years 3
- 5 years 5
- >5 years 7

11. Is there a religious/spiritual/faith element involved in the provision you attend?

- Yes 23
- No 5
- Don’t Know 2
Expand on the above answer...

- Bible discussion/Bible studies
- Value based work/Christian ethos
- Sacred space nights
- Attending Church
- My youth activities are based on the advancement of God’s Kingdom
- Church based activities
- Short God talks at end of night
- Beyond the Edge - more formal time to talk about God
- Not clear cut but leaders are all Christians which brings spiritual element
- Praise and worship
- Large element of faith development
- Through creative arts
- Sermon
- 1-1 discipleship and mentoring
- Advice on morals and how to live a good lifestyle
- None
- BB Bible class
12. In what ways has the provision you attend influenced you and your life?

- Shown me dangers of things in the area I live in
- Increasing awareness of sex, racism, sectarianism etc
- Looking at drugs and alcohol etc
- Helped me grow in my faith
- Opportunities to be a leader
- Service opportunities
- Helped me be more responsible
- I became a Christian through it
- Keeps me off the streets and out of trouble
- Stopped me from doing drugs
- Increased my understanding of CR work
- New skills
- Build relationships with new people
- Helped me think more about myself and that life is bigger than my immediate area
- Positive influence on how to live life
- Having leaders I can go to for help
- Make new friends in church
- Increase my understanding of Church and Christianity
- Awareness of cultures and diversity
- I am more organised
- Better way of life
- Increased my confidence
13. What, in your opinion is the main aim of the youth provision you attend?

- To provide excellent quality youth work
- Help people discover God
- To provide caring, loving environment
- To be a friend to young people
- Bring young people to Christ
- Build up young Christians
- Glorify God
- That people care about you and your life
- Open place to share faith
- Build relationships
- Show God’s love though actions
- Empowering young people to discover new perspectives in life
- Love and care for young people
- Personal and social development of young people
- Grow in faith
- Reach out to young people and bring them to God
- Develop young people socially, spiritually and personally
- Make friends
- Career paths made clearer
- Safe place for young people to enjoy
- Holistic young people able to deal with issues in their lives
- To tell young people that God cares for them
- Deepen relationship with God
- Evangelism and discipleship of young people
- Increase awareness of world around us
14. Do you have any concerns about the type of youth provision you attend? If so please state.

- People don’t attend all the time
- None
- Sometimes too inward focused, needs to be more focus on outreach
- Uniformed and discipline aspect unattractive to young people
- Some leaders attitudes
- Hard to keep older young people
- Spiritual element not always talked about, therefore some youth lose sight of what we’re doing
- Outreach programme is limited and doesn’t do enough to reach at risk youth
**Additional Questions:**

Write down the first words that come into your mind when you hear the words…

**a. Religion…**

- Jesus
- The Pope
- Church
- Buddha
- Priests
- RE Lessons
- Holiness
- Prayers
- Bible
- Bad - divisive
- Hate
- Faith
- War
- Denominations
- Structure
- Rules and regulations
- Love
- Trust
- Growing
- Protestants v Catholics
- Jews and Muslims
- What you believe in
- Dogma
b. **Spirituality...**

- Ghosts
- Imagination
- Connection
- Togetherness
- Unknown
- Meditation
- God
- Jesus
- Experience
- Life
- How you act and what your moods are (feelings)
- Faith
- Weird
- Hippies
- Burning incense
- Holy Spirit
- Mind
- Religion
- Calm
- Tranquillity
- Comfort
- Personal
- Connection between me and God
- Exploration
c. Faith...

- Belief
- Hope
- Clarity
- God
- Jesus
- Trust
- Risk
- Freedom
- We walk by faith and not by sight
- Christianity
- Believe in something that we hope for/know is true
- Personal relationship with God
- Being sure and believing in things that can’t be seen
- Spirituality
- Doing things without seeing the consequences
- Forever
- Christ
- Saved
- Seeing without believing
- Love
- Useful
- Gift from God
- Personal
Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. The views and comments recorded will be held in confidence in accordance with the Data Protection Act. Comments or views expressed are also held under the Freedom of Information Act and may be used in research connected with this project if necessary.

Kind Regards,

Mark McFeeters.
Appendix 2: Youth Practitioner Questionnaire

Study Title: Faith Based Youth Work and the Role of Spirituality in Youth Work in Northern Ireland.

Target Group: Youth Work Practitioners

Section 1: Background Information:

15. Age (Please Tick One)

18-25 4  26 - 35 3  36 - 45 3  46 or over 0

16. Sex (Please Tick One)

Male 7  Female 3

17. Highest Educational Qualification (Please Tick One)

GCSEs 0  AS Levels 0  A Levels 2  Degree 5  PGDip 3

Masters 0  PhD 0
18. Youth Work Qualifications (Please State any Youth Work training completed to date)

- OCN level 2 and three Youth Work Training
- BTEC in Community Work
- Certificate in Youth Ministry
- PGDip in Community Youth Work
- Degree in Youth and Community Work with Applied Theology
- PCI Youth Ministry Certificate
- PCI Advanced Youth Ministry Certificate
- Queens Module in Youth Ministry
- Living with diversity Certificate

19. Ethnic Origin

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<td>Chinese</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other (Please Specify)</td>
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20. Religious Affiliation

I am a member of the Protestant Community 7

I am a member of the Roman Catholic Community 2

I am a member of neither the Protestant nor the Roman Catholic Community 1

21. Under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 a person is considered to have a disability if he/she has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

Do you consider that you meet this definition of disability?

Yes 0

No 10

If YES please state the nature or effects of your disability

_________________________________________
Section 2: Youth Provision

22. Please describe the role you play in your organisation.

- Main Youth Worker
- Project Manager - Planning, organising and facilitating various types of youth work
- Project Coordinator - for 15-18 year old project. This is mainly a personal, social development programme which has an outreach element to it. Predominantly
- Coordinator of all Youth Projects in Centre
- Youth Worker
- Centre Manager
- Assistant Youth Worker

23. On average how many hours a week do you work with young people (Please Tick one)

<table>
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<th>Hours</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<td>0-5 hours</td>
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<td>24-29 hours</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>over 30 hours</td>
<td>2</td>
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</table>

24. What types of youth provision are you involved in? (Please Tick as many as are applicable)

- Drop in Centre: 5
- Sports Program: 2
Please describe/expand if necessary…

- Counselling services
- Schools work
- Although I am based in a church context, all but one of my projects would be considered community youth work

25. How long have you held your current position? (Please Tick One)

<1 year 2 2 years 1 3 years 2 4 years 2 5 years 0 >5 years 3
26. In your own words, please outline your personal definition of what youth work is?

- Term can conjure up many different images and styles
- Youth Work is about providing a safe, positive, open and encouraging environment for young people to explore who they are, but ultimately a place where they feel valued and cared for. For me youth work equals programmes, but I personally think way past that - youth work should be about positive and safe relationships.
- Youth Work is trying to have a positive influence on the lives of young people. It includes providing new experiences and opportunities as well as building relationships and helping young people fulfil their potential.
- A relationship with young people that helps them develop personally and socially.
- Informal education in various forms (schools, streets, centres etc)
- 11-15 year olds
- Engaging youth, creating safe spaces
- Role modelling
- Helping young people grow in all areas of life.
- Walking the journey of adolescence with unconditional love
- Challenging behaviour, but not judging.

27. Is there a religious/spiritual/faith element involved in the provision you are involved with?

Yes 6
No 4
Don’t Know
Expand on the above answer…

- Our centre is a cross community centre with a Christian ethos. We seek to empower young people to develop new perspectives in life through the life of Jesus.

- A key aspect of holistic youth work that compliments and works alongside the mental, physical and social elements of a young person.

- I work for a church and part of my role is to encourage young people to challenge the values and beliefs they’ve grown up with, part of this is spiritual and faith based.

- We have targets set by funders, none of which include faith based youth work.

- It is not the focus of our groups but because I believe we are all spiritual beings with a capacity for a relationship with God, you can’t help but for it to come up in conversation.
28. In what ways does your provision influence/develop/impact the lives of young people?

- Positive influence
- We may never know the impact due to nature of work
- I have seen young people dramatically change into wonderful human beings and leaders within our programmes
- We hope we develop young people’s minds and view
- Increase self confidence
- Address daily issues faced by young people
- My personality and faith influence young people
- Praying impacts groups
- Young people can make informed decisions
- Testing of values and beliefs
- Development of relationships/social development of young people is evident
29. What, in your opinion is the main aim of the youth provision you provide?

- To love young people
- Bring young people to Jesus (if they choose not, it doesn’t matter)
- Help them make better choices in life
- Personal and social development
- See young people reach full potential
- Provide opportunities
- Create safe place
- Somewhere for young people to go (keep off streets to a degree)
- Develop open, deep relationships with young person and their family
- Place where young people feel valued and loved
30. Do you have any concerns about the type of youth provision you provide? If so please state.

- Lack of staff to fully address needs and issues of every young person in our provision
- Limited in terms of the number of young people affected as groups can last up to 12 months at a time, excluding other
- Too much youth provision in our area
- No
- Need for more youth providers to take responsibility for the spiritual development of a young person
- Yes - we are very conscious that God calls us to make disciples and not converts. We are concerned that we may just be doing the latter and are seeking to develop discipleship in some way, or in a way that God calls us to.
Additional Questions:

Write down the first words that come into your mind when you hear the words…

d. Religion…
   - Catholics and Protestants
   - Awareness of what people believe
   - Rules and regulations
   - Misunderstood
   - Constraining
   - Man made
   - War
   - Debates
   - Structured Church

e. Spirituality…
   - Openness
   - Connection to God
   - Concentrating on God
   - The Holy Spirit
   - The life force that every person has an the way they use it
   - Reiki
   - Faith healing
   - Wicca
   - Happy clappy Christianity
f. Faith…

- Relationship
- God
- Jesus
- Way of Life
- Belief in God or gods
- Belief in something
- Hard to convey in words
- Deep seeded trust in God
- Actions

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. The views and comments recorded will be held in confidence in accordance with the Data Protection Act. Comments or views expressed are also held under the Freedom of Information Act and may be used in research connected with this project if necessary.

Kind Regards,

Mark McFeeters.
Appendix 3: 1-1 Semi Structured Interview

Interviewer: Mark McFeeters

Interviewees: 8 Full time Youth Workers

1. Youth Work

   a. What is your personal definition of ‘Youth Work’?

      - Young people developing into who they can be: spiritually and socially
      - Developing gifts, talents, strengths and confidence
      - Realise who they are
      - Intentional organisation of meeting needs of young people in a particular area
      - Connecting with young people
      - Relating to young people
      - Young person centred
      - Always ongoing
      - Programs, events and activities to help young people
      - Develop character and skill sets
      - Facilitate growth on all levels
      - Work with 5-25 year olds
      - Purposeful interaction
      - Age specific
      - Targeting developmental needs
      - Personal and social development
      - Participation and empowerment
      - Values and beliefs
- Informal education
- Relationships
- Safe space
- Holistic youth work (personal, social, spiritual development)

b. **What, in your opinion, is the fundamental purpose of youth work?**

- Making disciples, who love God, love others and those outside the church - holistic YW.
- Facilitate growth in young people in a positive way, emotionally, spiritually and personally
- Positive relational environment
- Openness to discuss life issues
- Opportunities to develop
- Person, social, spiritual development
- Skills
- Interaction with others
- Self awareness
- Values and beliefs
- Something outside of me/us - exploration
- Informal education - not school - involving and listening to young people
- Engage young people at risk/in school
- Develop the whole person (socially - not just academically)
- Help create healthy relationships and boundaries
c. **What does a young person gain from engaging and participating in your youth provision? (I.e. What outcomes are direct results of your youth work?)**

- Relationships
- Sense of belonging
- Confidence in their faith and their abilities
- Opportunities to try new things - different experiences from being part of a group
- Connection to youth provision and services in the area
- Parents can engage
- Experience of a positive environment
- Openness, growth and awareness of self
- Increase confidence
- Learn new things
- Build positive relationships
- Opportunities to challenge values and beliefs
- Have fun
- Identity
- Creativity
- Varies from young person to young person
- Impact on and connection to: Family, church, community, work
- Voluntary engagement
- Positive relational environment
- Long term (ideally)
- Short term benefits
- Awaken hope - significant for young people
- Rich relationships
- Testing values and beliefs
- Active participation - community and youth group itself
- Renewed vision for their life
- Better lifestyle
- Reduction of being at risk (although will always be at risk, the level of risk decreases)

d. **What motivates you and your youth work practice?**

- I believe in young people who are often looked down on, who need to feel valued.
- I love their energy
- Passion for youth work
- Seeing the potential in young people
- Special conversations, helping and connecting with young people
- The Glint in someone’s eye
- Enjoyment/smile on a face
- Need
- Call/purpose (individually)
- Love
- Enjoyment
- Experience (family upbringing)
- Personal values
  - Faith
- In order for community to change, we need to breed leaders from within
- Vocation/calling - not just a job
- Visibly seeing change in young people
- Work for a good organisation - team and support

2. **Spirituality and Spiritual Development**
   
a. **Do you maintain a spiritual life? If so, how was this learned and how is it maintained?**

   - Other people
   - Trying
   - Self discovery and working it out
   - Maintained by my need for it (has a direct implication of self and work)
   - Journaling / self reflection
   - Personal encounters with God
   - Church and youth services
   - Personal connection with God
   - Churches, faith communities and Christian events.
b. What is your understanding of the terms ‘spirituality’ and ‘spiritual development’?

- What you believe and what you value
- SD is your behaviours and the outcomes
- We are all made mind, body, soul and spirit
- Personal relationship and interaction with God (Through the Holy Spirit)
- SD is the conscious decision and implementation of spirituality, learning and growing in it.
- Every human is whole - physical and spiritual
- We are not just material - there is a spirit
- There is a world beyond what we can see
- Strive, search, exploration of the unseen
- Coming to faith
- Increase awareness
- Increase growth and development
- Connecting with something bigger
- Connecting with self
- Interaction with God
- Growing, learning
- Body, mind, spirit (YMCA)
- God shaped vacuum in each person
- Search for meaning and purpose
- Could take any form (Christianity, Islam, Buddhism etc)
- Something bigger and beyond self
- Holy Spirit
- Receiving Grace
- Owning relationships with God - personal responsibility
- Key dimension to someone’s life
c. What role, if any, does spirituality or spiritual development play in your youth work practice?

- Teaching values
- Biblical, value based youth ministry
- Encouraging young people to love out faith
- Creating opportunities to live out faith
- Accountability
- Personally, everything flows and comes from spirituality
- Vocation, sense of calling to job and call to youth work
- Not main goal or aim, but is a knock on effect
- Relationship with God comes from relationship with others
- Conversations
- Person is a whole being (personal, social, spiritual) - youth work has to address each of these
- Specifically explore faith - is there a God? Is he worth knowing? Etc some youth work is more overt than others
- Plays a part of everything - you cannot separate spiritual from a person
- Experiences beyond self
- Role not directly with young people now, more with youth workers
- Organisationally it is key - SD of young people
- Huge variety of methods
- Youth workers as individuals bring something to the mix
- Relationships and accompanying young people
- Is there a faith agenda?
- Young people explore faith, outcome is not our control, that’s up to God
- Yes to spiritual agenda
- Key role
- Believe - spirituality has direct effect on relationship with God which impacts life and lifestyle
- Designed for a way of living (code of conduct)
  - Portrayed in all topics looked at
  - Examples from Bible

d. **What, if anything, does spiritual development achieve?**

- Marries spirituality
- Faith without works is dead
- Achieves completeness in what you believe
- Gives young people a frame/foundation of what Christians believe
- Embrace concepts which they may return to at a future time
- Increased awareness and experience
- Growth as a person
- Spiritual growth
- Character growth
- Growth in awareness of others and surroundings
- Everything is spiritual
- Young people think about meaning and purpose in life
- Here and now
- SD helps deal with here and now - different cultures
- Allow room for exploration
- Self awareness
- Spirituality is key to self, SD plays key role in achieving whole person
- New perspective on meaning of life
- Enriches relationships
- Gives young people focus, vision, hope - not just in the here and now but in seeing they are part of something bigger
- Discipline and order in life - having good values and beliefs

3. **Faith and Faith Development**

   a. **Do you hold to any particular faith tradition, please describe and expand?**

      o Baptist church
      o Christianity
      o Personal relationship with the God of the Bible as I see it (each to their own)
      o Different personalities see God differently
      o Christian faith
      o Protestant tradition
      o Don’t hold to any particular denomination
      o Don’t like the word tradition
      o Catholic tradition
b. **What is your understanding of the terms ‘faith’ and ‘faith development’?**

- What you put your trust in
- FD is the outworking of faith through action
- For example sitting in a chair
- Unconditional trust in the living God and that he provides your path
- FD is going deeper to understand relationship and trust in God
- Faith in something or someone
- Weight in something - self, God, job etc
- Connection to a living God
- Religious element
- Learning faith tradition
- Increased knowledge in other faiths without holding to their beliefs
- Subset of SD
- Christianity aspect of faith and faith development (as Buddhism could be)
- Others could describe it as self actualisation (the power to become)
- Belief in something you can’t see - holding true to that, being part of something bigger
- Develop - learning scripture, lives of Bible characters as examples

c. **What role, if any, does faith or faith development play in your youth work practice?**

- Huge role
- Introducing young people to their creator, trusting God and having faith in a saviour
- God involved in everything that is going on (Youth work strategy, plans and developments)
- Faith in God for decisions
- Playing devil’s advocate, making young people think about their own faith
  - Questioning, testing
  - Opportunities to learn and grow
  - Safe place to be open and honest
- Big importance
- Our ethos and purpose statement underline everything we do
- You bring who you are to every situation (sometimes unspoken)
- Line managing staff
- Deeper level/below surface
- Management/strategy - what input we have on our young people
- Christian youth workers
- Key part of who I am
- Taught to pass on faith, regardless of tradition
- Embedded in all we do - ‘pillars’ to build programs on

d. **What, if anything, does faith development achieve?**

- Relationship - need faith to follow God
- Hopefully:
  - Well rounded young people, not afraid to question faith and life
- They have leaders always there to help
  - Ability to read Bible and have their own minds and interpretation of it.

- Community
- Work
- Family
- Church
- Relate to people
- Movement toward being a whole person and serving others
- Growing in character
- Increased awareness of self
  - Values/beliefs
  - Who I am
  - Exploring faith
- Increased awareness of God, Holy Spirit etc
- Relationship with Church
- Increased awareness of other faiths
- Increased wisdom of its importance
- New understanding/perspective on life

4. **Religion in N. Ireland**

a. **What is your understanding of the term ‘religion’?**

- We don’t need it, we just need to love God
- Can be a positive as it outlines difference in people and allows room to understand these differences, however it is being and has been abused to become divisive
- Human built constraint on God
- In N.I. it is a negative thing
- Laws and regulations made by man
- Taken out of context
- True religion is following God
- Turns people off
- Catholics v protestants
- Rules
- Culture
- Negative word
- N.I. - troubles, sectarianism, Catholics v Protestants, fighting
- Dry, routine, dull (not life giving, freedom, faith filled)
- Major world religions (Christianity, Islam etc)
- Classes in schools
- Denominations
- Different Gods and faiths
- Christianity
- The Bible

b. **What role does religion play in your youth work practice?**

- Not a huge role
- I work for a Methodist, protestant church
  - Adhere to rules, regulations of Methodism
  - Child Protection Policy
Questions, queries need rubber stamped by the Methodist Church

Beliefs

- Massive (in N.I.)
- Religion and culture are intertwined and cannot be separated
- Religious practice part of N.I. culture
- Religion has defined our culture and therefore, has defined our communities
- Impacts CR work massively
- Has part to play in youth work, especially in N.I.
- Avoid at all costs
- Wouldn’t talk to young people in those terms
- React against it
- Does play a role, unsure as to what degree, not a major one - more faith and spirituality (hidden role)
- Attitude of understanding other religions but focus on one

c. What, if anything, does religion achieve?

- Similar to answer a. - allows us to see difference but can also stimulate hatred
- Gives sense of identity
- Constraining for others
- Positive in that it provides a framework to work through personal beliefs and doctrine etc.
- Rules and regulations
- Stifles and restrictive
- Makes people aware of where they come from
- Social control (negative side)
- Role of church used to be massive
- For some it is comfort, reliance and consolation in routine (positive)
- Devotion, worship
- Ties to a denominations
- Label
- Put in a box
- Describes side of city/area/community you come from

5. Faith Based Youth Work
   
   a. What is your understanding and experience of ‘Faith Based Youth Work’?

   - See young people trust their creator
   - Live lives for God
   - Impacting society in a positive way
   - Christian perspective - God is central to youth work and is the source for our work
   - In secular this is not the main aim
   - Can be criticised by those not involved in it
   - Seen as having one goal/purpose, to make Christians
   - I have positive experience - learning to develop lots of different aspects of work
   - Relational goals
   - Walk alongside young people
   - Description of youth work underpinned by strong faith ethos
   - Christian ethos - takes various forms - explicit (teaching/worship) and implicit (1-1 youth work)
- Purposeful interaction with a young person underpinned by a faith
- Struggle to define
- Not just passing on faith
- Gets harsh treatment
- FBO stuck in one category, but is wider
- Just one dimension of programs and organisation
- Values and beliefs are strong and at as pillars and a foundation
- From experience, it works and is key to a young person’s growth
- Secular youth work needs to employ spirituality in Model for Effective Practice

b. **What do you feel are the outcomes of ‘Faith Based Youth Work’?**

- Holistic young people impacting the world they live in
- More freedom to talk about God than secular Youth work
- Young people increase their understanding of who God is (through questioning, conversations and dialogue)
- Greater awareness of God and spiritual things
- Deeper connection between young persona and youth worker
- Self awareness
- Exploring self - something beyond me worth getting in touch with
- What’s deep within us v media (success, achievement, image)
- Meaning and purpose - challenging young people to have a different experience
- FBO - counter cultural - character/individual view/others before self
- Healthy relationships
- Broader outlook
- Address all aspects of a young person - key components to a balanced lifestyle
- Relationship with God
- Thinking of being connected to something bigger

c. How are faith, religion and spirituality connected and manifested in Faith Based Youth Work?

- They are connected, faith and spirituality are vital and religion is always there around the two. (This can be divisive)
- Central to what we do and are all connected either through talking or through setting an example
- All services come from desire to help the whole person (poor and disadvantaged primarily) personally and spiritually.
- Organisation do employ people of no faith and no belief in Christianity
- All made in image of God, regardless of belief and tradition
- All connected and intertwined
- Programs and how you relate to culture
- Separate terms which can be lived out differently:
  - Faith - God
  - Religion - rules and regulations
  - Spirituality - brings you alive
- Deeper purpose, conviction and focus
- Becomes a source
- How you build relationships and relate
- People more important than numbers and programs
- Faith is Christianity (just one method)
- Religion is to be avoided
- Spirituality is how we manage day by day
- Faith and Spirituality are linked in youth work curriculum. These are helpful and valuable to youth work in exploring meaning and purpose.
- Heavily connected yet different and you can’t have one without the other
- Key component to a balanced young person
- Relationships
- Sacred space/faith rights
- Churches/communities/faith organisations

d. **How is Faith Based Youth Work unique? (In comparison to: church based youth work, Christian youth work, secular youth work etc)**

- Reconnecting young people to creator to become whole (Wholeness and completeness). Secular youth work claims holistic work but denies the spiritual
- Purpose of FB YW is to make disciples
- Unique in constitutional point of view in terms of aims and objectives in comparison to secular youth work
- Freedom to articulate God and allowed to talk about God
- N.I. - can still talk about God in schools
- Funding is poor for churches and FBO’s
- Similar:
  - as there is a focus on the young person and having a heart for young people
- Is there a financial drive for secular youth workers
- Young people grow and learn
  - Bigger difference between FBO’s and secular youth work
  - Church - connecting young people to a church (not the case for FBO’s)
  - FBO’s - deep desire to impact youth work and always giving people space to explore faith (even if they don’t choose that route)
  - FBO gets to core of why you do what you do
  - Core of identity, vocation, outlook on life
  - Deep and overflows into interactions
  - Secular - sense of potential of young people and betterment of society and positive side of young people, yet don’t need faith or a faith based agenda.
  - FBO - very fundamental and central to the identity of a person at a very deep level and has a deep impact and is deeply embedded.
  - People in job see it as a vocation - more than just a job - calling
  - Balanced perspective and informed choices
  - Secular youth work doesn’t give young people all the options
  - Faith based work not just for churches and communities - it is for all
  - All relationship based (without relationship it doesn’t work)
  - More caring and supportive culture and atmosphere
  - Looks at broader picture that youth work curriculum

Additional Comments:

- It is all personal
- Healing, prayer and reading are all part of FD and SD
- This type of work challenges in built belief systems more than secular youth work

- ELB’s should address the spiritual
  - Connecting to something higher - sacrifice and service
  - Have to ask questions about God and allow young people space to explore
  - Residential weekends
  - Experiences

- Spirit exists with us all:
  - Physical - food, water etc
  - Emotional - love, anger, laughter etc
  - Spiritual
    - experience out of self (e.g. some use drugs, drink to get this)
    - something greater, bigger and beyond self
    - can’t ignore God and faith aspect
Dear friend,

As you may be aware, I am currently finishing my MSc in Community Youth Work at the University of Ulster, Jordanstown. I am currently writing a dissertation, researching: ‘Faith Based Youth Work and the Role of Spirituality in Youth Work in N. Ireland’. As part of this research methodology, I am compiling results from a set of questionnaires aimed at youth practitioners and young people aged 18-25 years old, of which I have enclosed copies.
I am writing to you in order to ask you, if you would mind completing one of these questionnaires from yourself and also to complete some, if possible, with 4 or 5 of your young people (aged 18-25). In order to collect as accurate data as possible I would be extremely grateful if you could take the time complete these and to post them back to me in the enclosed S.A.E. Your data will be added to the larger sample I have selected from across the province and across the youth work sector.

At a later stage I hope to carry out some 1-1 interviews and focus groups based on the data I collect, and if you would be interested in being involved in these then do let me know by including your contact details with your returned questionnaires.

Finally, I would like to thank you for taking the time to read this letter and completing the questionnaires and would be grateful if you could have them returned to me by **Wednesday 3rd March 2010**.

Please note: All data collected will be treated in the strictest confidence and only used for the purposes of this research project.

Kind Regards,

Mark McFeeters.
Appendix 5: Subject Information Sheet

Study Title:
Faith Based Youth Work and the Role of Spiritual Development in Youth Work in Northern Ireland.

Invitation:
You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important that you understand what the research is for and what you will be asked to do. Please read the following information and do not hesitate to ask any questions about anything that might not be clear to you. Make sure that you are happy before you decide what to do. Thank you for taking the time to consider this invitation.
This study is part of the assessment process for a Masters qualification in Community Youth Work, through the University of Ulster for Mark McFeeters.

Purpose:
I believe the Youth Work Curriculum for N. Ireland should incorporate spiritual development as one of the key areas, if youth work is to address all of the core needs of young people today. I am keen to do some research in this field because it is of value to my own understanding of the nature of youth work in N. Ireland as well as enabling my employers to also gain some further insight into their role within the voluntary youth sector in the future.
The aim of this study will be to analyse the role of faith based youth work in the wider field of professional youth work practice in Northern Ireland. It will be my intention to identify the current range and scale of faith based youth work in N. Ireland and to explore the role of
spiritual development in youth work practice and in the Youth Work Curriculum for N. Ireland.

Method:
You have been asked to take part in this research as a young person, youth worker or expert in the field to allow this study to fulfil its purpose and add to the body of knowledge and understanding already in existence in the area of faith based youth work and spirituality. You will be part of a sample of people who will be interviewed, who will take part in focus groups and who will complete questionnaires to provide a solid body of research to add to this project.
The proposed sample will include 20-30 young people, 15-20 youth workers and 5-10 youth agencies will be represented.

You’re Role:
It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep. You will also be asked to sign a consent form. If you choose to take part, you can change your mind at any time and withdraw from the study without giving a reason.

In this project, Mark McFeeters will require you to complete and return a questionnaire and may require you to attend a focus group or an individual interview. Any focus group will happen in a convenient location for you, the subject and will be facilitated by Mark. You may also be asked to take part in an individual interview with Mark and will again happen in a suitable location to you, the subject.
Throughout this project, your identity will remain unknown and any information given will be only used for the purposes of this research project, as required under data protection
legislation. However, the Freedom of Information legislations will allow access to certain non-personal or generalized data. You will also be kept up to date with the progress of this project, if any new information becomes available and the full project will be completed by June 2010.

It is very unlikely that anything would go wrong during the research but any risk to you and the group will be quantified prior to any research being carried out. Any complaints made will be taken seriously, reported to the appropriate authorities and to the chief investigator of the University of Ulster, Jordanstown.

**Additional Information:**

The results of this study will be used by Mark McFeeters in the final writing and production of this Masters paper. The results may lead to further research in the subject area and may inform workers in the field, organisations and groups of recommendations and changes which could be made to their agency, practice and work.

Funding for this project has been secured through the Youth Council for Northern Ireland and the Department of Education Continuing Professional Development Scheme. The project is also supported by Youth Initiatives, employer of Mark McFeeters.

**Contact Details:**

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Mark McFeeters</th>
<th>Tony Morgan</th>
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<tbody>
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</table>
Appendix 6: Consent Form

Project Title: The Role of Spiritual Development in Youth Work in N. Ireland

Chief Investigator: Tony Morgan

- I confirm that I have been given and have read and understood the information sheet for the above study and have asked and received answers to any questions raised.

- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving reason and without my rights being affected in any way.

- I understand that the researchers will hold all information and data collected securely and in confidence and that all efforts will be made to ensure that I cannot be identified as a participant of the study (except as might be required by law) and I give permission for the researchers to hold relevant personal data.

- I agree to take part in the above study

______________________  ______________________  ____________
(Name of Subject)       (Signed)                     (Date)

______________________  ______________________  ____________
(Name of person taking consent) (Signed)              (Date)
Bibliography


**Websites:**


