

**STAGES OF FAITH**

The Calgary First Spiritualist Church was incorporated in 1920, one hundred and four years ago. At that time many families joined and wanted their children to learn the values of Spiritualism in a Sunday School called the Lyceum. My sisters and I were the last members to attend the CFSC Lyceum in the 1950's.

Perhaps an understanding of *Stages of Faith*, a book by James Fowler, an American theologian, will explain why CFSC has become a church of adult spiritual seekers.

According to Rev. Fowler, the Fifth Stage usually occurs as a person moves into *mid-adulthood*, age 40 onward. It is called the *conjunctive faith stage* when a person realizes that answers to life's challenges may not be easily found. The initiating factor is *disillusionment*. It is a recognition that life is more *complex* than logical thinking, or faith in the religion of one's youth, can deal with when considering difficult issues. This leads to the search for a more *multileveled approach* to life's truths through other spiritual and philosophical traditions. There is a further quest for meaning and purpose in life, and an understanding of how your personal life relates to all humanity.

This in turn leads to the final and Sixth Stage in Fowler's model which is called the *universalizing faith stage*. It requires deep reflection and personal struggle. The ultimate goal is the notion of a more universal concept of religion and the universe. This may represent a sense of union of self with God or an Ultimate Reality or Oneness. People no longer fear death, and they have a new way of looking at life and relationships. People say they become *more spiritual and less religious*.

People who attend CFSC may keep their interest in Spiritualism very private. They may step away from traditional religion in order to deeply contemplate the Universal Truths taught by Spiritualism. But we must deeply respect that children usually have a less analytical and a more instinctive or intuitive connection to Spirit than adults. Children are welcome as well as adults to attend services at CFSC.

**Rev. Jane Fleming**