



The MIRACLE of SONNY

Sonny Engelhardt was a mobile health care worker on the streets of New York, serving and hospital programs had to help to open up to the young. Sonny's world was the streets, the fire, the fire, the fire. The message was now clear to him that things were not going to get any better for the young people of New York.

But Sonny changed direction. From the streets of New York to the streets of Queensland, he was now a Christian.

His story was told in "Right Here When It All Began" by Sonny Engelhardt. It was a story of a man who was a Christian and a man who was a Christian. The story was told in "Right Here When It All Began" by Sonny Engelhardt.

Sonny with his wife Julie were on the streets of New York when he was a Christian. He was a Christian and a man who was a Christian. The story was told in "Right Here When It All Began" by Sonny Engelhardt.

Here are the highlights of Sonny's story. The story was told in "Right Here When It All Began" by Sonny Engelhardt.

The story was told in "Right Here When It All Began" by Sonny Engelhardt. The story was told in "Right Here When It All Began" by Sonny Engelhardt.

God's name is Jesus!



Photo courtesy of Sonny Engelhardt

ABSTRACT

Teen Challenge (Qld) Inc. existed as a youth charity and a set of programs in drug rehabilitation. It is also a case study of a regional Christian organisation working out its thinking for 40 years.

Neville Buch

Cognition History globally and in Australia, Queensland, and Brisbane

THE SOCIOLOGY OF TEEN CHALLENGE (QLD) INC.

A Case Study of Queensland Intellectual History
1971-2021



Dr Neville Buch

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The Sociology of Teen Challenge (Qld) Inc.

By Dr Neville Buch, MPHA (Qld)

“With the elements of the organisations’ spiritual and intellectual histories explained, the eighth essay explains the 1990s cultural fall-out for Teen Challenge Australia Inc. and the associated churches. It investigates organisational change which occurred with further new governance and administration. The key question is the impact upon the lives of community members.”

Dr Neville Buch, Essay 1 — Introductory Essay, *The Sociology of Teen Challenge*, Jan. 4, 2022

Methodology

In the biblical *motif* it is the ‘snake’ or ‘serpent’ that tempted Eve. If we took the biblical story *literally* there are serious problems we have in our *modern* world. But if the *uneducated* thinks that a *person* can avoid the *literal* problem by rejecting the *modern* belief system, as in *dismissing it in total*, they are *ignorant* of how much of their own *thinking* is actually *modernly constructed* (most of everyone’s thoughts in the *present*).

Each of the terms in the above sentence has or infers exact meaning, according to *Semantics*, what meaning is in language, and *Hermeneutics*, methodology of interpretation for texts usually but also non-verbal communication. These fields of education are also supported and enhanced by other fields of learning, such as *Presuppositional Analysis* (arguments conveying meaning), *Semiotics* (signs conveying meaning), and *Exegesis* (textual *entries* conveying *true* meaning). It was once presupposed by conservative scholars that these fields are the problem when attempting to defend a literal meaning. In some cases a literal meaning is true, and this is why ‘*the dismissal*’ of *past conservative* scholars is plainly wrong in the other cases. *Neo-conservative* scholars, particularly Americans in the *Heritage Foundation*, have done everything to prevent faithful conservatives understanding this great *distortion* of conservative *beliefs*.



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The distortions arise in the problems *identified* in [American cultural](#) and [intellectual history](#), and, in particular, [anti-intellectualism](#) or the [politics of uncaring \(cynicism\)](#).

For more information, see the essay, "[The Language of Human Snakes.](#)"

The methodology also sets upon the deep work of Dr Buch in "Socio-Anthropological Approaches to Religion" (Buch 2024c; Kim 2024):

Neville Buch engages Marion Maddox (2014) and Cathy Byrne (2014) and seeks to draw out a key argument on how conceptual change is ignored. The literature traditionally goes to the political and legal landscapes but philosophically ignores the language. He points out that such approaches are based on confusing ideological labels. For the field of studies-in-religion, the thinking has changed greatly as conceptual schemas and this is missed for both religious and secular hermeneutics. The author evaluates hopelessly the critical view that the wider humanities keep using traditional categories and that Queensland's debates on religious education are still stuck in the politics of 1989. (Kim: 6)

The current historiography for the earlier era of Teen Challenge's founding (1950-1974), from the conservative religious direction, misses these nuances. The traditions which have been poorer in its educational history, particularly "Pentecost" traditions that emphasize spirit over learning, tend to lack a place for educational schemas (e.g., in Barry Chant 2011). The era to which the Australian Teen Challenge organisations grew (1975-1989) was the era of the theories of Freire and Illich. That had advantages for community education but the educational theories, which found its way into "pocket" applications for Queensland religious/Christian education, would give an inadequate view of the history, particularly from populist ultraconservative outlooks which were at odds with the two liberating movements in the binary formations of global thinking, and thus Australian evangelicalism: the Bible in Schools movement and the early 20th century religious education movement. The methodology suggests also that the '[dismissal](#)' (Buch 2024d) to this analysis is a form of religious bullying, but the analysis also shows pathways to combat bullying (Buch 2023b). See also reference further on, page 8, regarding constructivism.



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Teen Challenge History Project (Source Summary)

The nine essays in the history for the Teen Challenge (Qld) Inc. Project are organised under the following main headings:

- The Spirit (1967-1975)
- The Thinking (1957-1984)
- The Organisation (1970-1980)
- The Development (1975-1985)
- The Challenge (1980-1989)
- A Movement or an Organisation for a New Century? (1990-2020)
- Learning the Lessons for Teen Challenge Inc. Australia (1957-2020)

The [Project page](#) provides the history details and this sociological essay will take the details of the history read and understood, which is at

<https://drnevillebuch.com/projects/intellectual-history/tcq/>

The essay here draws out the states of affairs from the history essays.





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The Sociology of History

The year 1972 was significant for the Australian Teen Challenge (TC) organisations for several reasons. During the year came the American cinema opening of *The Cross and the Switchblade* film in 5,000 theatres. The year also saw the opening of the first Teen Challenge Outreach Centre outside of Queensland, at 87 Macleay Street, Kings Cross, Sydney. It was the first time, for most Australians in this founding era, that the name “Teen Challenge” became known.

The Australian founder's, Charles Ringma's, formative Christian education was at Reformed Theological College, Geelong. Charles and Rita Ringma's other educative process were in mission. When Charles had been appointed probationary minister at Broomehill, Western Australia, in 1967, there is a collision with what Reformed Theology taught and their spirit-inspired experience among the local peoples. It is the classical lesson in missiology. Formal theological categories are shaped in culture, whether in Niebuhr's typology, the Christ is below, aligned, or above. The idea of reformed Christianity is a reformation inside of western culture, and that is not **necessarily** a bad thing. What has been learnt in global Christianity over the past half century, and for Teen Challenge Inc., is not to be satisfied with the surface judgements, and to explore the cultural thinking much deeper.

Charles Ringma brought to the construction of an Australian experience of Teen Challenge Inc. an indigenous experience, while remaining outside the parochial bubble. The word 'parochial' is related to the idea of a church parish. The sad reputational history of local communities is about close-mindedness. In Ringma's leadership, there was the thinking and action whereby God Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, was not to be understood as closed inside any cultural paradigm. This was not, neither, a form of mysticism, although Charles was personally inspired by Christian mystics. Reformed theology could still speak truth, but not without a great scaling off its cultural pretence. This might not be enough for post-Christian readers of the history. Nevertheless, it was something wonderful, renewing, and Christlike. And for that, Queensland society greatly benefited.



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Charles and Rita were among the younger generation, who in 1967, came into an experiential movement, known as the baptism with the Holy Spirit and the use of spiritual gifts (*charismata*). One of the movement's important features was to transcend theological traditions. It is said that it first appeared among Anglicans in 1958, in places such as the United States and the United Kingdom. By 1962 it was recognised among the fellowships of Lutherans, and Presbyterians, and had reached both Methodist and Roman Catholic communities by 1970. The phenomenon would be widespread within the Christian world, but it had an older history which linked the American Holiness and Pentecost movements to the Apostolic tradition of the first century CE.

Incorporation of Teen Challenge was a means to an end, but it did not define the organisation. The different model here, separate to the incorporation model, was another movement, one which overlapped with the *Charisma*. The 'Jesus Revolution', or simply, the Jesus movement originated on the West Coast of the United States. The exact date is difficult since it was a series of spontaneous gatherings outside of any institutions (supposedly). It is said to begin in the Los Angeles or San Francisco areas, among those who were called, Jesus people, or Jesus freaks, originally young people looking for an escape from their drug habit. It was part of the mid-1960s turn to religion as a pop cultural phenomenon. The American West Coast was flooded with gurus of transcendental meditation, and soon joined by Christian evangelists, such as Arthur Blessitt.

There were different intellectual audiences among Teen Challenge staff members, clients, and supporters. Often Christian youth would come to simply to enjoy fellowship. The zealous among them were there to convert. The streetwise-but-unwise were curious, and they could be a mixed lot. Some were drug addicts who were looking for a way out of the 'wayout' experience. Others were simply impoverished by other means and were hoping for charity or their way out (more than charity). There were many opportunities for service, and it was delivered. An important means of delivery was in the LifeLine model. The Elizabeth Street basement was fitted with a 24-hour hotline and counselling facility. The service was an important means of practical help, whether furthering in friendly support of the coffee shop ministry, or the new drug rehabilitation ministry at The Way centre in South Brisbane.



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The Sociology of Spirit

The problem with an especially uneducated reader who is unfamiliar with these terms of the humanities and the social sciences, is that they think the author is saying something **false** because of the constructivist view of history (the historiography). So, let's put all our "cards on the table." What is **not** constructed in thought? Nothing can only be the true answer. Theology is constructed, and faith without theology can speak not a single word. To bastardise Wittgenstein, "if you cannot express your mysteries into communicable words than you are not in the game of telling the story." That might seem unkind, but we have been living in a modern world where nonsense has greatly increased, and the power of education has eroded. Jesus wants to save us all from fundamentalist belief (of any type). Such dogmatic belief is the antithesis of faith. It is hoped that this essay will push to the level of reading commonly for most, what is, for example, a rethink at an undergraduate level for most students in the humanities and social sciences. This is particularly important for Queensland readers of the Queensland story, for populist gossips would have it that we are all bunch of 'dumb-asses' who have no love of serious literature.

Gossip, memes, reference to mere memory, do not come close to capturing the spirit of what needs to be said. Spirituality cannot be captivity or expressed in dogma; indeed, the Holy Spirit does not reside in any dogmatism. Fundamentalism has eroded at Christian education, and, unfortunately, that included education in and around Teen Challenge Inc., albeit against the best efforts of the educators.





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The Sociology of Cognition

The more sophisticated thinking in charity and in 'evangelical social-class lift' is what produced the chief mission of Teen Challenge Inc., drug rehabilitation. City or urban mission, however, has different layers of thinking. In 1968-1969 Charles and the LifeLine managers, led by the Brisbane director, Rev. Ivan Alcorn, were thinking across many issues. There are alcoholics. There are impoverished renters. There are the dispossessed. Different types of abnormal mental health conditions. And then there were increasing numbers of drugged-out 'street youths.' It is to the last group that the attention of Charles' and LifeLine was drawn towards. That was the idea of Charles' LifeLife-sponsored overseas research tour (Holland, United Kingdom, United States). In these years there seemed to be a new social problem – drug habits and overdoses among young people. There was, although, a longer history in the same dark heritage; going back to Oscar Wilde (1854-1900), and even further back. Founder David (Dave) Wilkerson's brother, Don Wilkerson, worked as the director for the Teen Challenge New York operation 1965-1972. This is where the drug rehabilitation programs were designed and developed.

To understand the sociology of cognition for Teen Challenge Inc. a reader has to go to the shifting cognition histories (Buch 2024e). The emerging field of Cognition History and Cognition Sociology has introduced key concepts of Micro and Macro scoping, and principal concepts of Thin and Thick. Other key concepts are introduced for their role of cognition. There is the consideration of a Picture-Image, as an example of imaginary in perception. This leads to challenging the politics of thinking. The neuroscience backgrounds these challenges. So, the question has to be asked, is it, wilful ignorance or is it cultural anti-intellectualism? Finally, there is the deeper conceptual discussion of the wilful ignorance, the existential crisis of the humanities, the anti-intellectualism thesis, and the popular outright rejection of the sociology discipline.





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The Sociology of Organisation

The **organisational** history of Teen Challenge Inc. has been described under the activities and intellectual headings of 'evangelical outreach,' 'Christian community', and 'social work' with both secular and sacred regard for the person. Organisational Teen Challenge Inc. workers across the timelines represented the thinking, collectively, of the triangular thinking of the mission, commune valuing, and working for a better, improved, or transformed society. However, Teen Challenge Inc. was a business from day one, and this was the financial philosophy and strategy to keep the business running.

Much of that work was the role of the Board of Management, and, in the early days, Board members needed to have a more hands-on approach in the Office. Henry Baskerville was the first Treasurer, for the Board of Management, Teen Challenge Inc. He was the finance man with one foot in sacred space and the other in the space for secular operations. He was the Manager at the Newmarket Commonwealth Bank, and also Vice President for Gideons in Queensland. Next came Albert Hall who formally took up the title of the Office Administrator, working closely with Charles Ringma as the Executive Director. Albert Hall was also a Board member and with his secular work connections, the Board in those days met at Shell House, Ann Street in the City (QLD 4001). The role of the Board Treasurer and Office Administrator, whether the same person or not, was as a financial advisor/bookkeeper.

Ringma modelled his directorship from Bob Bartlett, Director, Teen Challenge Philadelphia, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, United States of America. Around Charles was a team of personable directors for different divisions of the organisational work. John Healey was the Acting Executive Director, delegated as Charles' representative. Other Office Administrators worked in the Office in the same period, Peter Jones with Brenda Jones as an office worker, and Dennis Everett. Geoff Job was a Centre Supervisor and an office worker, with Cathy Job as a Secretary. Office workers were conflated as volunteers and stipend paid workers. Full award wages were unheard of in the charity organisation, and it was only Christian trust that kept this small business economy going. The workforce was not unionised, not by principle but by economic necessity, and kept running by the worker's own professional *pro bono* attitude. The arrangement though had reached a critical point, with the economy being little more than the worker's self-serving slave labour.



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The Sociology of Intra-Political Development

Contrary to the unthinking and conventional pew-seaters, politics is inescapable to being a Christian, in a world devoid of the compassion and kindness of Jesus. What is worse for conventional thinking is that ideological framing comes into play. The [Project essays](#) have been sketches with regard to the global response of the Christian New Left to the brutal 'neo-con' (neo-conservatism) masquerading as Christian realism. The Neo-Orthodox Niebuhrs most likely did not intend the type of the cultural centeredness expressed in the writings of William F. Buckley, but American realism of the mid-century grew into something very ugly: – the cultural legitimisation for wars, climaxing in the American staging among the Vietnamese civil wars. Much of the evangelical left or left-of-centre in the 1970s were overshadowed by the neo-con backlash of the 1980s with the ideas that wars of liberation could never be a mistake, and countries of western European heritage were Christian nations which had to be defended to the last man (gender specific).

In contrast to the hypo-conservative reactionary thinking, Brisbane and Queensland were experiencing a Christian scholarly renaissance, with several different writers, but formidably with two of the earliest evangelical street workers, Charles Ringma and Dave Andrews. Charles Ringma was named a joint winner of the 1995 Australian Christian Book of the Year Award presented by the Australian Christian Literature society for the book, *Catch the Wind*. In the last three decades, Ringma and Andrews have been the country's prolific producers of paperbacks on Christian faith, social justice, and flourishing, institutionally-unbounded, spirituality.

Christians can often have funny ideas about spirituality, which do not accord with the critical thinking reading of scripture, tradition, and insight from knowledge depositories. The flawed view is prejudicial, believing that the spirit or the sacred has nothing do with secularity which too easily described as vulgar. The history of Teen Challenge Inc. has shown differently.



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The Sociology of the Disciplines of Learning and Interdisciplinary Learning (“no conflict”, you populist asshole! i.e. the dismissive bullshitter wants conflict!)

Between the radicalism of the 1970s and the full-blown neo-conservatism of the 1990s, the decade of the 1980s was simply conservative with the creeping neo-conservative way of thinking and its schemes. To explain. Radicalism can mean different sets of beliefs but in Christian Thought it has the distinct framing of The Way, or the spirit/ethos/ethics of Jesus of Nazarene. This is the Jesus who is outside the institutional system. He is the prophetic Son of God, sometimes condemning worldly ways, sometimes weeping for those of the world, sometimes shaking the dust from his sandals and walking away from the world. Camus' *The Outsider* (1942) or *L'Étranger*. There is here a love for the outcast, not the pew-sitter.

Conservatism, broadly speaking, is the conventional attitude. It is the general attitude of the shallow thinker (exceptions in the intellectual variant unrelated to the common), and of those who cares little for education, except training for ambition, and who is obedient for success. It is the conservation of obeying your parents, obeying church leaders, and obeying all in authority...religiously. As ethical judgement, the thinking can be neither good or bad, and it can be both good and bad, and that must be teased out. The judgement is contextual with questions of the harm done, fairness and human flourishing.

Neo-Conservatism is something different and it is contentious whether it is really conservative in its stance. From a slight position to the extremes, the ideological outlook is reactionary. The positioning is certainly not Burkean conservatism where Edmund Burke's principles made room for revolutionary thinking, but with a heavy dose of caution and moderation. This thinking is not reflected in William F. Buckley's writings, even as his prose comes heavily with friendly and polite reasoning. In neo-conservatism, the capacity for compromising moderation is replaced by binary thinking, the forces of good and evil, whereby civil rights legislation, argued by Buckley, had the appearance of the good, but therein lurked the evil. Buckley's primary positioning was a militant defence of the American South as the pure stable state, as the mythologies of the South would have it. 'The North' was always the greatest threat (a motif in *The Witcher* series). Civil rights were a Trojan horse to dismantle the South and its culture.



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The New Post-Ringma Governance and Administration in the mid-to-late 1980s inevitably took a firmer conservative turn. Governance and Administration often is more conservative from the perspective of professionals on the ground, who are impatient for needed change. The changing of the guard in Teen Challenge Inc., with the absence of those, who cut their teeth in the organisation with radical gusto, the corporative concerns took centre stage, particularly as the passage through the 1990s and its neo-con spirit. The language of corporation was in transition or entanglement during these years, and several trends followed. It meant a slide into the thinking from broader thinking of conservative business models and ending up in the full neo-con speak on the corporation competing in markets, language of defence and even war.

The year 1989 marked in Queensland society the collapse of a corrupted Nationalist regime. Although the more militant conservative Christians defend the legacy in the long successive governments of Sir Johannes Bjelke-Petersen – by playing on the benevolence of the ‘regime’ (noun 1. a government, especially an authoritarian one) – forgotten is the spiritual damage done among a people.





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Spiral Historiography and Historical Movement

The argument of this history of Teen Challenge Inc. is that the organisation entered a difficult maturing phase of the 1990s. Much of the early twentieth-first century was a massive rebuild to recover from the challenges. The challenges were two, the State and the Society. Both had changed with the year 1989 as a clear marker.

History, Memory, Cognition, and a Model of Time-Space to explain human failure, are the elements which goes into the theory of the Spiral Historiography (Buch 2024 f, g). There is one further element, the Human experience of **Regret** (Buch 2015). Many would come to the same cycle of Regret. It is a natural experience of life for the human species. And there are many responses which persons made to the historian in conversations. One response I got was, “Risk Management”. Another suggested, “Processing”. All are true. In my blog on “[Buckley’s Chance](#)“, the historiographer suggested the ‘spiral history theory of stupidity’.

There is accountability to teachers, mentors, supervisors, and others who guide us through life. Well, at least there once was. Accountability has undergone significantly challenges in the last six decades. On one level it is a perennial theme in “thumbing one’s nose,” not at authority, but each at their own sense of comprehensive responsibilities. Persons always “thumbing one’s nose at authority,” and that is healthy, *if it is also not very effective*. However, responsibilities that one’s owns is far more than the comfort that is given in the “freedom of speech.” To take responsibility, that is, to be accountable, rewards the person with *integrity* of being a person. In other words, it is normative mental health. The challenge is understanding “responsibilities that one’s owns.” Central to holding it together is the truth of the knowable and unknowable. The glue of integrity is knowable and it is also unknowable. Contrary to populist bullshitting, epistemology *has not destroyed* what we might designate as knowledge nor the capacity to know. Any technical epistemic justification, somewhere along the trees of argumentation, would be suffice. So, be accountable, and stop the bullshitting. Still, there are many matters which are unknown, and it is still undecided whether matters will ever be known (so, unknown). The glue chemistry for the unknowable is humility.



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Recent Times

In the last 30 years new life experience and professional skills were added to the Teen Challenge Inc. Board, with appointments of the Executive Directors, Alec Spencer, Alan Le May, and Joanne Hobbs. What was new was never completely new, but the representation shifted with clearer input from the medical profession, different types of private business and public service experience, and an intellectual maturity happening in small pockets of the Assemblies of God.

This final section before a conclusion uses a recent event and the role of the professional historian to discuss the sociology in recent times. The Teen Challenge Inc. Champions Night was held on Saturday 13 March 2021. The formal program ran from 1400 hrs. to around 1530 hrs. AEST. The historian, Dr Neville Buch, had arrived late, around 1450, missing the first 50 minutes. The opportunities to gain information for the task was 1) hearing testimonials and presentations during the formal program (1450-1530); 2a) conversations with *members* of Teen Challenge Inc. during the afternoon tea of the Champions Night event; 2b) conversations with *supporters* of Teen Challenge Inc. during the afternoon tea of the Champions Night event.

The sports references and metaphors featured prominently during the presentations of the formal program. The same framing was present in the organisation in 1983. There is an incredibly positive connection in the use of sports references and metaphors, and as a general principle a sufficient beneficial outcome for the organisation. The reason why it works in the Australian Teen Challenge Inc. model also points to its downside. The cultural ethos of Australians is to be sports related. However, this is a generalisation of the population. There are large sections of the Australian populations who either do **not** like sport at all or are not keen on the sports obsession of the culture. The sports references and metaphors can, potentially, become roadblocks for clients of Teen Challenge Inc. Sports references and metaphors might also generate a cultural mentality of tribalism. Although in Christian theology, tribal thinking has a positive side, there is also a negative one. It is a matter of catering to a mixed audience.



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The most positive side of the formal program was the thrill of seeing lives changed. The emphasis on a second chances in life is incredibly positive. The message that the delay in funding equates to “God wanting for us to know that He is in it” is also double-sided. The theology of funding is difficult and complex, but you do **not** want to encourage a view of God as financial Fate or Luck and some talks of miracles do encourage that view. On the other hand, the positive message you do want to deliver is the success of funding and financial management in Teen Challenge Inc. with inspiration of the Holy Spirit (the theology).

The historian was struck in the formal program on how much “God” Talk there was but no “Jesus” Talk. This may be due to the fitting with a general audience, and perhaps the correct decision. Rob McCubbin’s presentation was highly informative and provided impressions of 20 years of service to Teen Challenge Inc. A particular significance in his story is the move of facility from Charters Towers to Toowoomba. All presentations and testimonials were impressive. Rob McCubbin’s presentation will be remembered. Those who spoke from the New House, Brisbane, New Life Men’s Centre, and New Life Women’s Centre gave significant stories of multiple entries and exits from rehabilitation programs, and the holding of employment in the exiting stage for graduates.

The testimonials delivered for the graduate award ceremonies for 1) New House, Brisbane; 2) New Life Men’s Centre; and 3) New Life Women’s Centre were particularly informative for the history project. Of specific interest, was A) stories of multiple entries and exits from rehabilitation programs, and B) the holding of employment in the exiting stage for graduates. The positive message from the formal event program was seeing family and friends as the vehicle to support students into the Teen Challenge Inc. rehabilitation program.

The testimonials and presentations provided a diversity of belief and passion which is necessary for the history project. It is often said that we need history for the younger people, but this is a case where it is the aging population that is in trouble through the lack of historical knowledge. The 77-year-old husband who the historian was speaking to extensively was convinced, for most of the time, in our approximately 30-minute conversation, that the Australian Teen Challenge Inc. organisation had started in Camden, New South Wales in 1961. It began to dawn on him the historical confusion he had when his wife suggested that he was thinking of an organisation called, ‘Teen Range’, and **not** Teen Challenge Inc.



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There is often a misunderstanding about history. During the formal program, a comment was made about graduates leaving the past behind to move into a New Life future. The point was correct as psychology but often the point becomes a mistake in understanding history, as the experts write it. History is **not** about a static past. The past, in fact, is change gained. Too many in the general population fail to understand that truth in a rush to use history narratives as a refuge to escape into and protect themselves from the change around them. History is not confined to the past tense.

The challenge is marrying the populist understanding of history to what is true history, the expert stories of our lives. In that synthesis is a positive change, one which aligns far better with expert Christian theologies. Since the language of the humanities is so poorly understood among the public, the historian must explain the term “critical”. The critical observations do not refer to matters which are necessarily bad or negative but relate deeper concerns which very often are mixture of good-bad, positive-negative, observations and interpretations.

On paper, reading the heading “Champions Night”, might give the reader a misunderstanding. The historian was pleasantly surprised by the difference between the PR headlines for the event and the reality of the event when listened to very carefully. The term ‘Champion’ had been expressed with deeper meaning during the event than what the general cultural usage would convey. The historian had opportunity to speak, during the time of the afternoon tea, to Board Member, Miranda Reid, and Executive Director, Joanne Hobbs.

The historian had opportunity to talk to two supporters of Teen Challenge Inc. (they appeared to organise a cheque to give to the organisation). They were an elderly couple who lived in the Gatton area, the husband a retired agricultural engineer for the local area. They belonged to the local Baptist Union church. Across the history, the leadership of the Teen Challenge, globally, did eventually deliver a comprehensive type of service. However, the historian must be honest to say it did not come overnight, and there were battles within the organisation between reformers and those who lacked the education. Indeed, the medical fraternity was framed in their initial skepticism. There was a bigger battle between therapeutic medicine and the conventional discipline. Neither side, as it turned out, had the complete and correct picture, and mistakes were made by both sides



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in the unfortunate binary debate. Teen Challenge Inc. made mistakes. Such programs were no longer about moral judgement and overinflated fears of the insane or weird. It was about medical treatment, spiritual support, and holistic healing.

The History Wars, in Australia and globally, has done great damage to person's perceptions of the history profession and what is history. Great stupidity has arisen from cultural warriors hellbent to destroy one school or another for political gain. Peter Ryan's History War casted upon the reputation of Manning Clark in 1993, and it opened the door to John Howard's Cultural-War, and confusion and chaos reigned upon the land. Several Australian historians have been repairing the damaged caused in the last twenty years, but the recovery will take time. This is the Challenge of the historian writing the history of Teen Challenge Inc. Organisations; missions, the purpose of its existence, and in that there is stability, but in how the mission is understood always come great change. Persons do not deal with change as well as their think.





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Concluding Remarks

In the last few years, the historian has been contacted about Teen Challenge (NSW) Inc. There are cases of allegations against the organisation for mis-accountability with historical abuse by staff members.

The TC Sydney operation was **independent**, and collaborations with other capital city operations happened as national events. The first was the Nimbin Folk 'Aquarius Festival' in 1973. The counter-cultural arts and music festival had been organised by the Australian Union of Students, had been previously held three times (1967 Sydney, 1969 Melbourne, and 1971 Canberra). There was also the evangelist's John Hirt's House of the New World in Sydney, which widen the connections in the Teen Challenge networks, in particular, Athol Gill's House of the Gentle Bunyip in Melbourne, and Athol Gill's House of Freedom in Brisbane. These are what historians come to call "Christian intentional communities." These communities and branches of para-church organisational facilities, such as Teen Challenge, operated very independent, but massed as national experiences. This does not mean there was no oversight. The TC Board did have governance and facilities were accountable to the Board. The challenge in the bigger picture is that non-denominational, para-church, organisations involve volunteers and paid staff members from a very wide range of beliefs and ethical thinking. This is a historical fact. Australian intercity missions organisations became 'non-denominational' rather than interdenominational, an outgrowth of the Sydney City Mission's motto 'Need, Not Creed'. Associated with the TC Sydney operation and based in Sydney was the "The Lay Institute For Evangelism (L.I.F.E., Sydney) for Campus Crusade for Christ" – in its long formal name – came to be the main vehicle for the campus linkage of Teen Challenge. Attitudes of TC volunteers and staff members could be mixed since they were members of several organisations.

In the early days, most of the rehabilitation at this time were in people's homes where they offered a therapeutic family model. The model began by a personable contract between the household and the 'client.' There were a clear set of rules. The rehabilitation rules provide an understanding of the program's conditions and expectations, and so there is the surviving Sydney TC record of the restrictions for living in a facility. By 1989, though, the ethos for TC Sydney operation had changed.



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Each state acts independently with a completely separate board to other state organisations. The Sydney operation had a number of starting points and then Harrold Newbury, of a healing ministry, took over and later the Sydney operation changed their name and may only be *informally* part of the TC network.

The latest newspaper piece on Teen Challenge in the NLA Trove newspaper digital collection is from Wednesday 17 December 2008. The latest for the TC Sydney operation is from Friday 8 June 2001. *The Australian Jewish News* (28) reported:

John Castellani, executive director of Teen Challenge, a substance abuse treatment program, said in testimony before Congress last week that Jews at his centre were “completed” — that is, had accepted Jesus — as part of their treatment.

This is evidence that the TC Sydney operation was not in line with Teen Challenge Inc. Queensland. The evidence is there that the TC operation around was far more fundamentalist among volunteers and paid staff. From the Dutch Australian Weekly (Friday July 1980, p. 1):

De sekten waarop de Tweede Kamer zich gaat richten variëren van Youth for Christ, Jesus People, Children of God, Teen-Challenge tot en met Bagwhan en allerlei oosterse aanverwante overtuigingen.

The story is about a House of Representatives investigation. The sects that was the focus varied, from Youth for Christ, Jesus People, Children of God, Teen Challenge to Bagwhan and all kinds of Eastern related beliefs. It remains a further area of investigative research.

If the Board of Teen Challenge Inc., in any state, is unaware of the history of Christian organisations in Australia, as an overview of congregational Christian theologies in each state, then it is recommended a presentation be delivered to the boards. This is not politics for the sake of politics. It is the reality that parachurch organisations are caught in; the congregational politics based on the misinformation feed from political-orientated parachurch organisations, such as the Australian Christian Lobby.



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Much of the political misinformation comes from not understanding an objective-subjective summative intercourse. For a Christian organisation born in the *Charisma*, finally, it is a question of Spirituality and the Holy Spirit Today. Still, it is **sociology** and it will require deeper thinking shared by many more participants of Teen Challenge Inc. The Appendices are further sociological models which can help.





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Featured Image: 1981-08 Sonny Arguinzoni, from the TC Newsletter



The MIRACLE of SONNY

*

Sonny Arguinzoni was a mainline heroin addict on the streets of New York. Lock-up and hospital programmes hadn't helped to stop him in his tracks. Sonny's world was the needle, the fix, the dirty streets. Yet somewhere deep down inside he knew that things could not go on. That he was heading for his grave.

But Sonny changed direction. Prayer in the name of Jesus Christ transformed this addict overnight.

Nicky Cruz who was right there when it all happened later wrote, "Sonny Arguinzoni is a testimony of God's power available today to transform a heroin addict instantaneously. He has proved God's cure lasts". And last it did!

Sonny with his wife Julie went on to eventually found a most unusual church in Los Angeles - the addicts church. Known as Victory Outreach it touches the lives of heroin addicts and their wives and families.

Taking the rejects and outcasts of society Victory Outreach seeks to transform them into men and women of God.

The church operates 32 chapels in key ghetto areas, is involved in prison work and operates a rehabilitation centre for men and women who are drug addicted.

God's cure lasts!

"HELPING YOUNG PEOPLE BECOME WHOLE PERSONS"



Sonny Arguinzoni author of "Once a Junkie"

Here are the highlights of Sonny's story:

THE WORLD DOWN UNDER

The cramps were hitting my stomach and legs, and I shook with a sudden chill. I'd pulled an old mattress into the shade by the chimney, but the heat shimmered over the black tar paper on the rooftop and the stench of vomit burned in my nose and throat. I crawled over



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Dr [Neville Buch](#) **ABN:** 86703686642| Jul 27, 2023 | [Article](#), [Concepts in Educationalist Thought Series](#), [Concepts in Public History for Marketplace Dialogue](#), [Concepts in Religious Thought Series](#), [Intellectual History](#)

See also Edward Merkus ([academia.edu](#) works).



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On Ivan Illich: [A Call for Learning Among University-College Managers](#) (Permanent Page on Business Site)

On the Historiographical Context to Ivan Illich's Thinking (No 1.): [Explaining Neville's Historiography](#) (Dr Neville Buch ABN 86703686642; December 27, 2022)

On the Historiographical Context to Ivan Illich's Thinking (No 2.): [The Spiral history theory of Stupidity: Getting Stuck in Time-Space, and Personal Breakout of Historical Cognition Patterns](#) (February 11, 2024)

On the Educationalist and Schooling Context to Ivan Illich's Thinking: [What is Education, and Why are Educational Policies Failing?](#) (September 8, 2022)

On the Urban Sociology Context to Ivan Illich's Thinking: [Semantics, Power, and Local Politics in Misunderstanding Urban Sociology](#) (November 5, 2023)

On Today's Humanism: [Sartre on Humanism – Annotated. CRT No. 2](#) (February 15, 2022)

On the Mismanaged Question of "The Economy": [What am I worth in the Americanised Economy? What am I worth in the Australian Economy](#) (March 20, 2024)

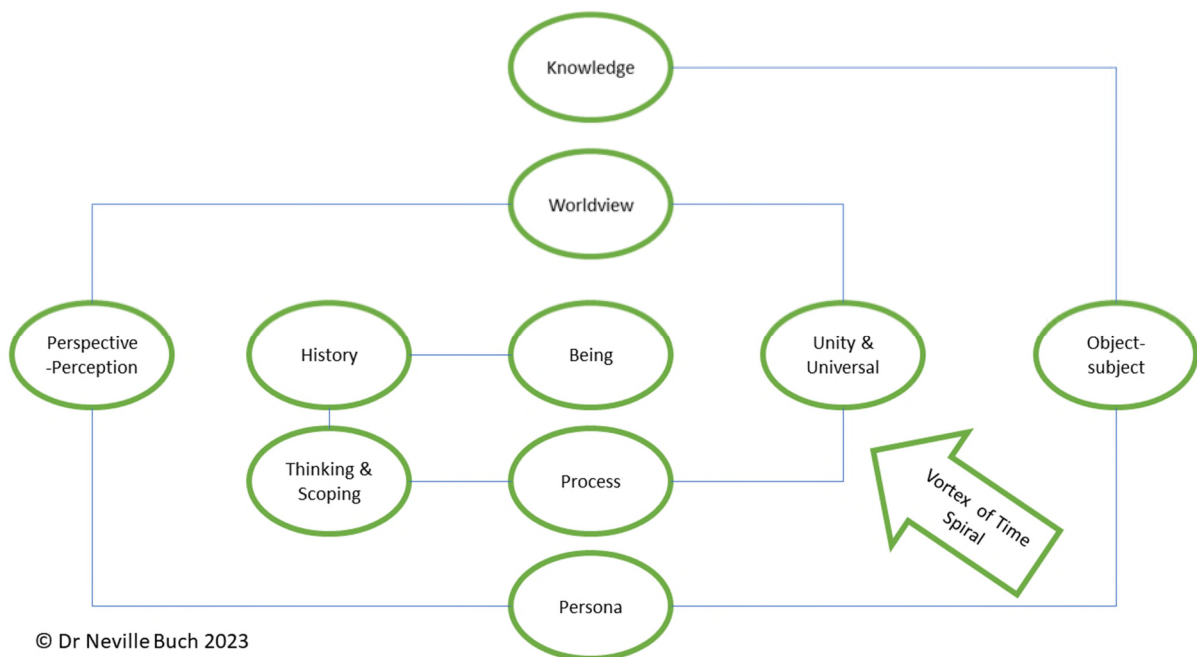
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Appendices: Dr Buch Sociological Models

Dr Neville Buch's Methodological Model (1).



In the early morning, before dawn broke, I dreamed of how to explain my philosophy and history (historiography). ([further information](#))

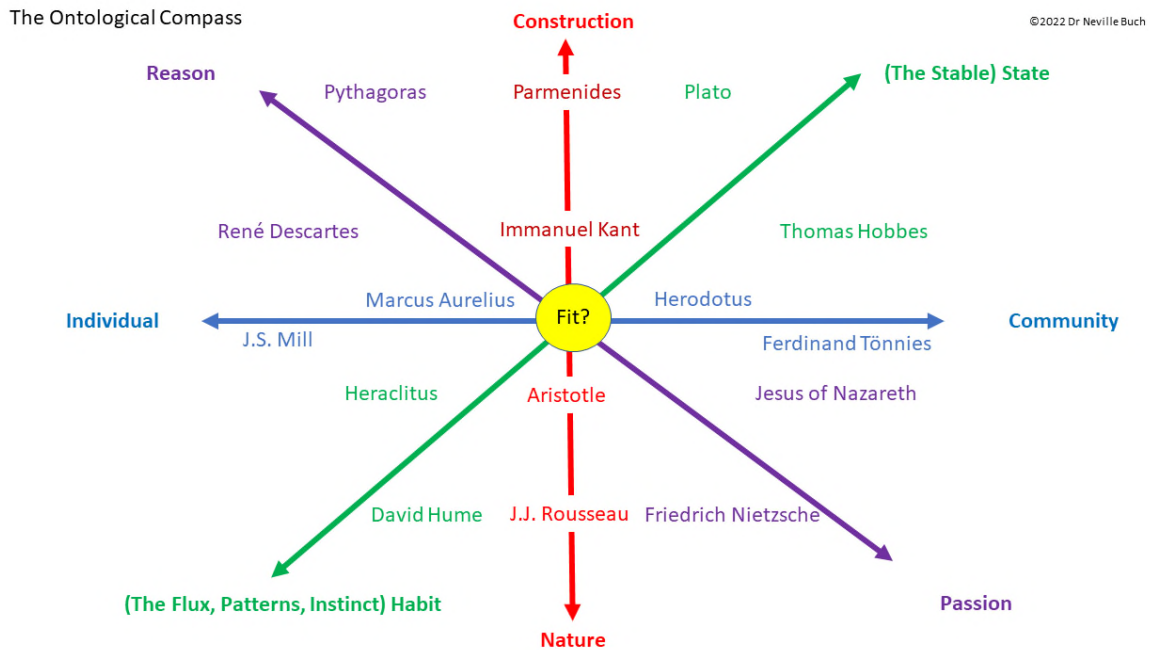


*Understanding history is
philosophy in practice*



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Dr Neville Buch's Methodological Model 2 (The Ontological Compass)



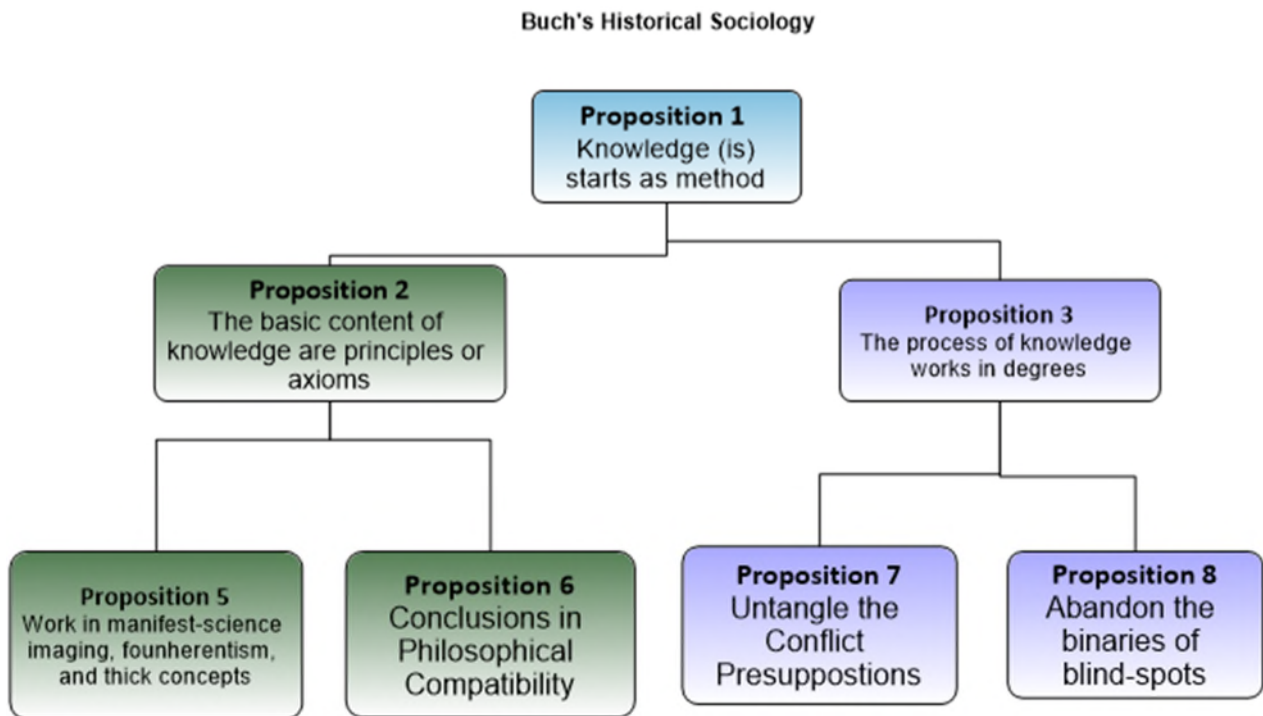
The Ontological Compass assists in mapping out our understanding of too many philosophical arguments which get conflated, and interpretations which overlap without clarity. ([further information](#))



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Buch's Historical Sociology Model (Methodological Model 3)

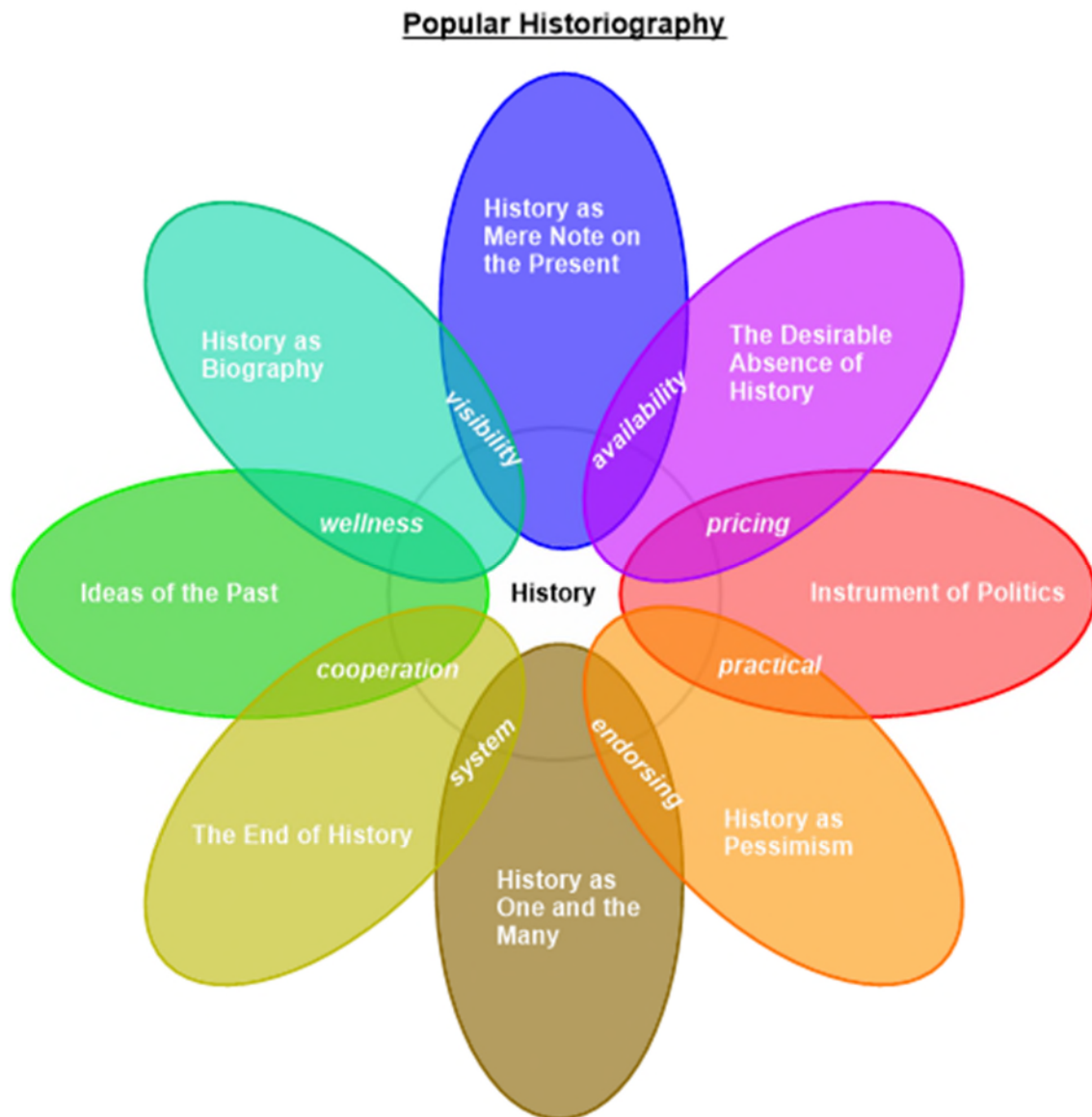


The narrative for all three TASA papers is held together in the process of the professional middle class rebelling against the “business-as-usual” politics and the “set-and-forget” policies. ([further information](#))



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Buch's Spiral Historiography Model 1: Critique of Popular Historiography

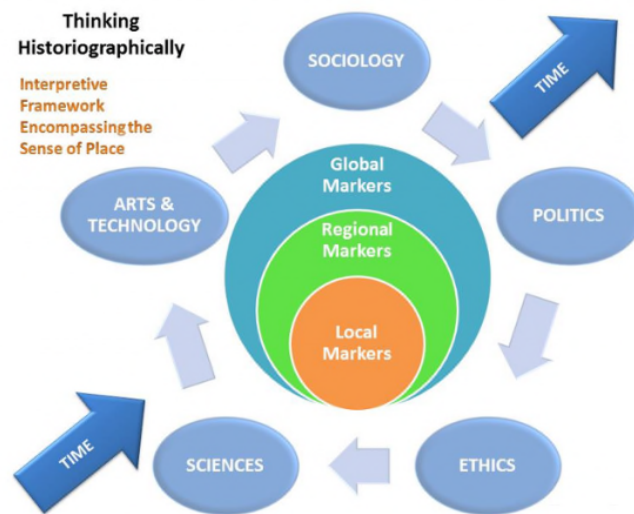


It is very difficult to communicate the art, the discipline, the profession of history to those who never have been immersed in it. ([further information](#))



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Buch's Spiral Historiography Model 2: Interdisciplinary Spiral Historiography (Thinking Historiographically)



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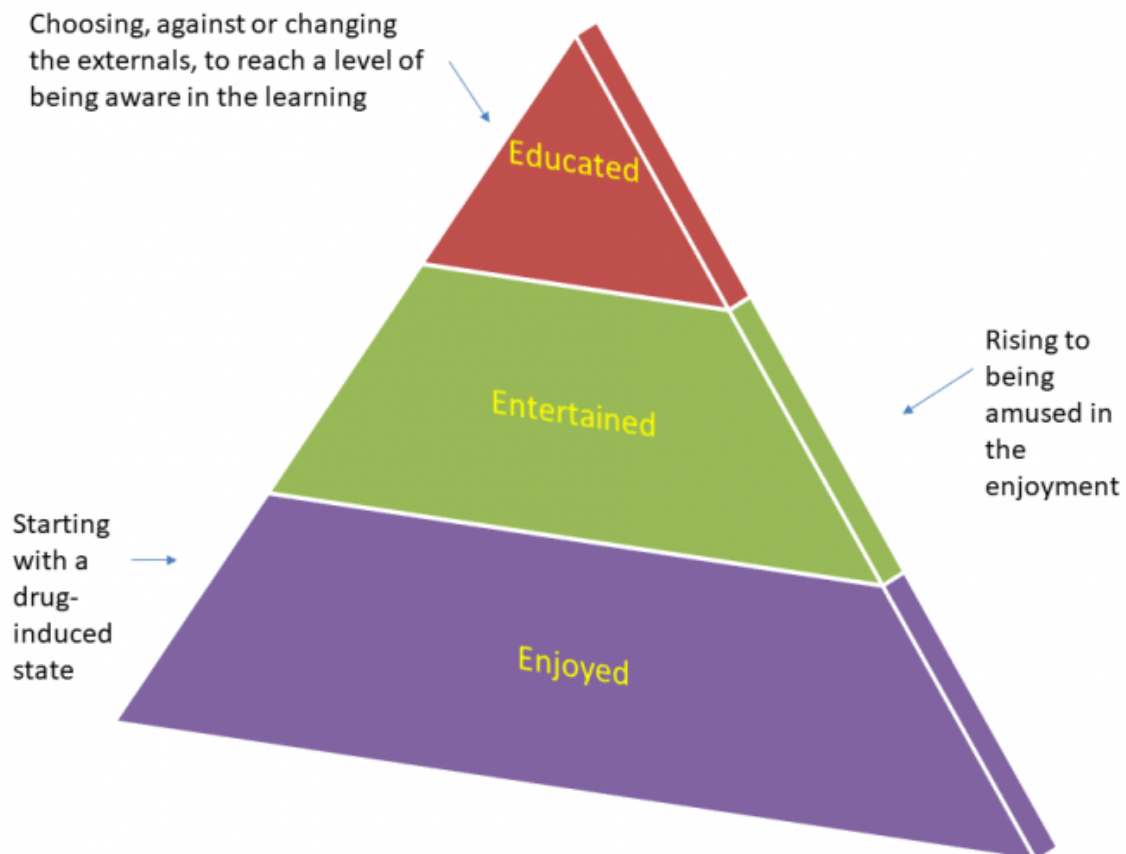
The average person thinks about history in terms of a sense of place. These are categories with markers – events listed in a chronology, names listed in a Who's Who, or environmental features, including human constructs, in a list of locations. ([further information](#))



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Buch's Personalism Model 1: Buch's Pyramid of-Social-Personal Development

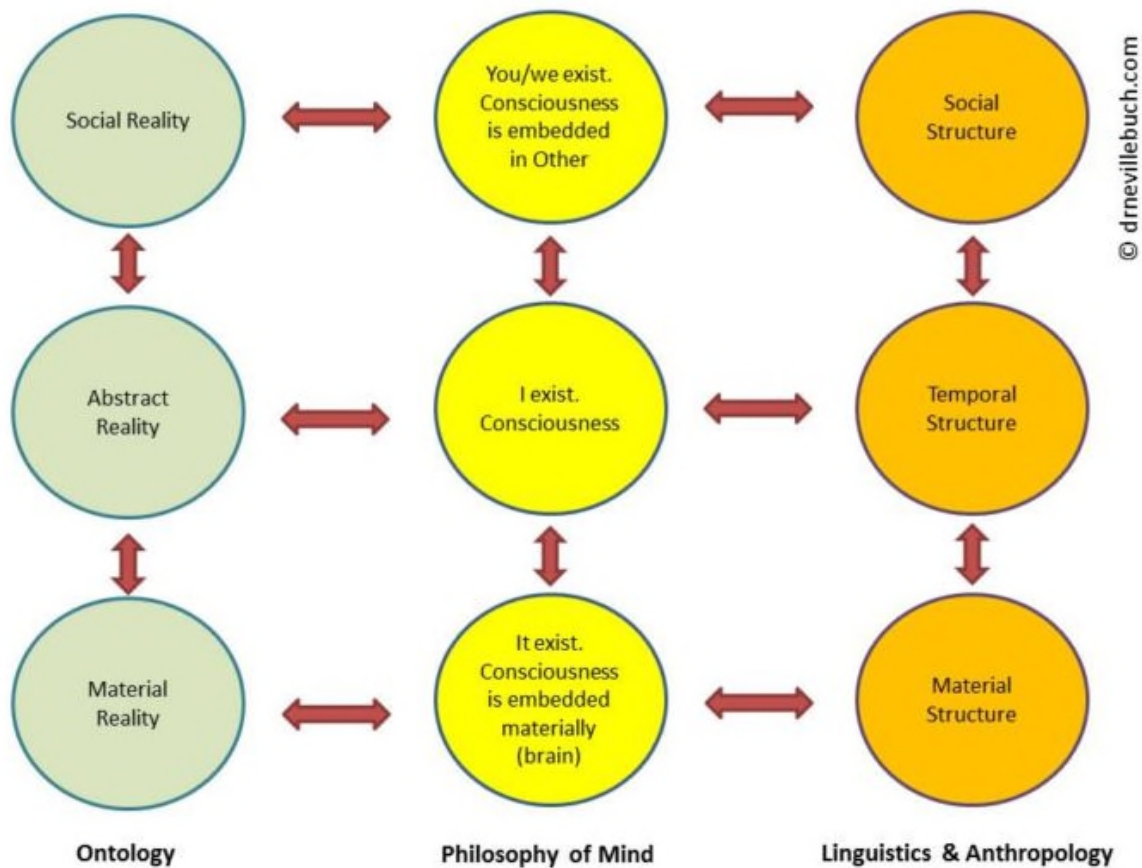


Most of us are bound to a work routine, where evaluation of the time is beyond our agency – we do what we do because...many external reasons beyond our control. ([further information](#))



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Buch's Personalism Model 2: Interrelation of Ideas on Consciousness-and-Reality

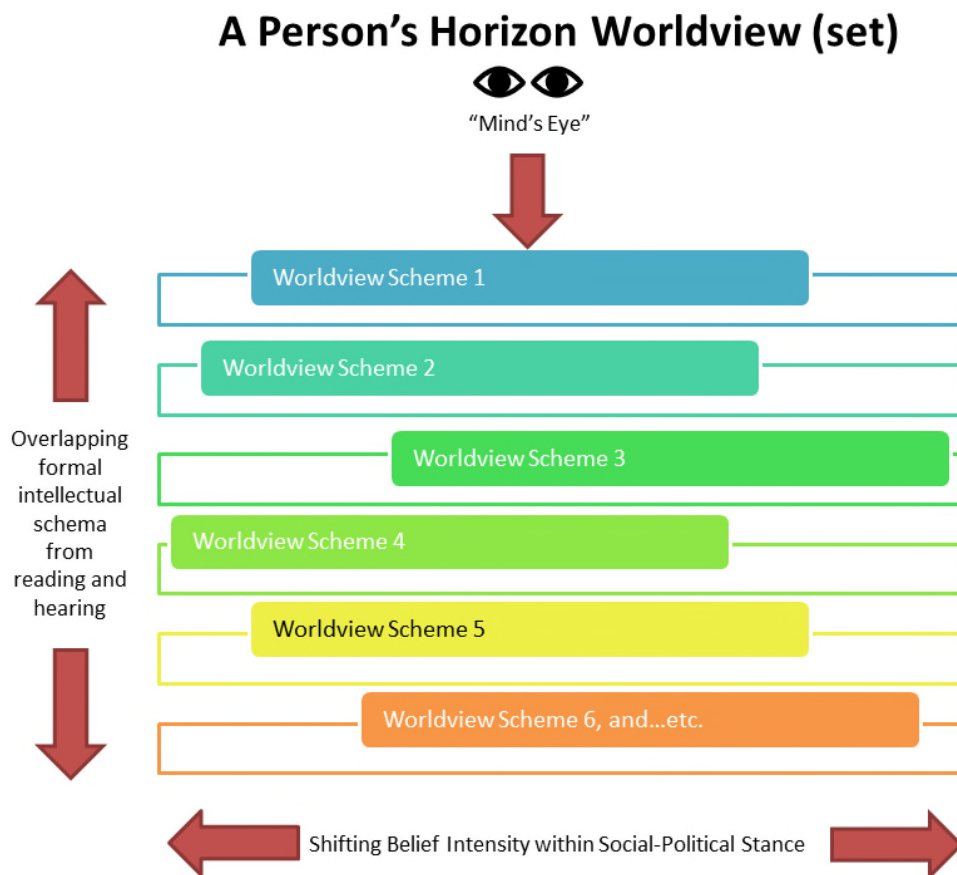


Although it is not apparent from the philosophical subject matter, this essay is a plea for historians to find the compatibility, for the writing of public history, of the personal and the social. More fashionable historiographies of memoir, oral history, biography, are driving the conversation of history into solipsistic direction. ([further information](#))



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Buch's Personalism Model 3: Mind's Eye of a Personal Horizon Worldview



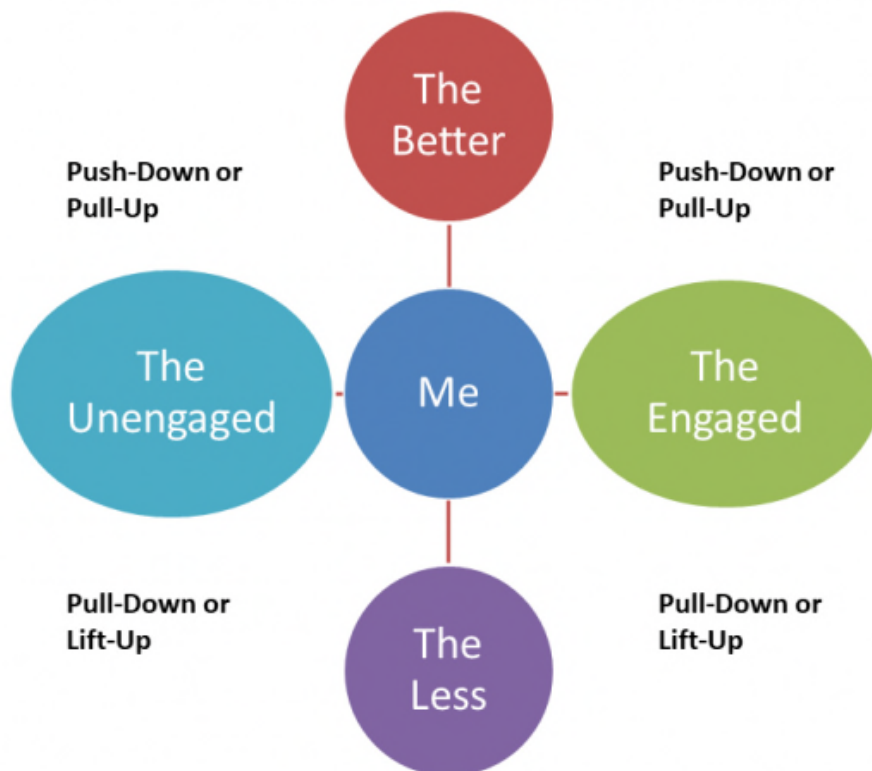
This Project, 'A.03 Book – Horizon Worldviews (Broad Society)', explains the theory of the psyche-historiographical history, employing the empirical data of Queensland history 1911-2001 to develop the model as understood in a regional-local environment. ([further information](#))



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Buch's Personalism Model 4: The Choice in Perception of Social Interaction-

The Choice and Perception of Social Interaction from Centre of Self



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A significant slice on the global history of sociology, philosophy, and historiography has been around discussions of Micro and Macro scopings, and Thin and Thick concepts, with the best scholars examining what Randall Collins calls, “interaction ritual” (IR). ([further information](#))



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