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Understanding of Spirituality: Implications for Psychotherapy

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IMPLICATIONS FOR PSYCHOTHERAPY

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VITA

The author, Mary Lynne Mack was born on September 20, 1967. In August of 1985, Ms. Mack entered the University of Wisconsin-Madison and received the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Special Education in August of 1989. Throughout her education, the author worked exclusively with individuals confronting the challenges of autism, profound mental retardation and behavior disorders. The author was aso exposed to geriatric health care in her employment as a health aide to adults with dementia and terminal illnesses.

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UNDERSTANDINGS OF SPIRITUALITY:

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Understandings of spirituality in modern society have become increasingly diverse as the characteristics of multi-culturalism, ecumenicalism and liberalism have established significance in many arenas. Consequently, the communication of spirituality in most environments may relay a multitude of themes that vary according to the author and the origin. This thesis attempts to demonstrate how these varied understandings of spirituality contain both differences and similarities.

The review attempts to reflect what these differences and similarities imply for both the student and the clinician of psychotherapy. Specifically, the thesis looks at how numerous understandings that derive from the concept of spirituality may be addressed in order to improve the training and practice of professionals in the field of psychology.

Using a literature review across the domains of theology, sociology and psychology, the thesis focuses primarily on representative understandings of spirituality in the social sciences. Historical development of the concept is covered to improve comprehension of the connections in modern understandings.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The growing use of the word spirituality in academic disciplines, popular literature and therapeutic groups has transformed a once theologically laden concept into an ambiguous phenomenon. As a result, what one sect or individual proclaims to be the core of spirituality is what another may view as the antithesis to spirituality. Undoubtedly, this reality transfers to the field of psychotherapy where communication of the concept can mean a multitude of things for both the clinician and the client.

Although it has been expressed that the field of psychology should hold a conceptual framework of spirituality for trainees and practitioners, no clear understanding of the concept has been defined or acknowledged. Apparently this is due to the fact that there are obvious problems in delineating the boundaries and definitions of the concept. First, the concept is dynamic in nature and has been continually transformed throughout history due to the influences of religious institutions, political structures and social movements in society. Second, an introduction of spirituality into discussions of clinical practice has often been considered the imposition of a particular frame of reference onto clients. Finally, most of the data that does exist around the concept has been expressed in a conceptualized rather than quantitative format. The one primary instrument that is capable of measuring factors related to the concept belongs to a discipline outside of psychology.

For the purpose of this thesis, the investigation will focus on how the concept has developed historically, how the concept is understood in other social sciences and how theorists within the discipline of psychology have viewed it. Specifically, an attempt is made to define spirituality in the three domains of theology, sociology and psychology, noting differences both between and within the three areas.   While the focus of this thesis is not a comprehensive review of spiritual development, it is assumed that psychotherapy and current use of this concept does borrow considerably from other disciplines, and hence the need for a cross-disciplinary methodology.

The literature review focuses most heavily on psychology and psychotherapy with more representative selections chosen from the disciplines of sociology and theology. Searches included Loyola University library, interlibrary loan services and the computer systems of PsychLit, SocioFile, Philosopher's Index, Social Science Index, LUIS and INDY.

Although this author acknowledges the existence of additional approaches to understanding spirituality in other disciplines (i.e. anthropology, medicine), the time constraints of this thesis did not allow for a more comprehensive literature review.   However, it is hoped that this review might provide a more specific framework for understanding spirituality in psychology. In addition, implications for the training and practice of professionals, conclusions and recommendations for future research will be made.

CHAPTER TWO

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

As established in the purpose/method section of this paper, research that aims to determine the relevance of spirituality within the field of psychology is needed. In this process, laying out the historical framework of the concept is is the first step to aid in comprehending pathways that have led to current understanding. Moreover, assumptions, gaps, questions and contradictions existing within a review of historical development will enable researchers and professionals within the field to develop a more complete awareness of the complexity of spiritual issues in the therapeutic arena.

When looking at the history of the concept of spirituality, observation of the political, economic and cultural milieus of the authors who write on the subject is critical (Dreyer, 1987). Specifically, although the concept has become generalized to mean the internal life of the human soul, it draws upon many exernal forces which have fluctuated depending on the temperatures within a society. Moreover, the unique life experiences of an author (i.e. social class, familial system and gender identity) all add to the complexity of understanding the spiritual experience. Although objectivity in understanding what this concept is ultimately attempting to convey is difficult, a brief review of the concept within biblical, early Christian, medieval and Reformation periods provides partial logic to the transformations in understandings.

Spirituality entered the realm of human communication through the biblical figure of Saint Paul (Elders, 1976). Saint Paul described spirituality as "that which pertained to the Holy Spirit of God," applying the word "spiritual" to understand objects which were somehow under the influence of God, including law, truth, gifts, blessings and understanding (Schneiders, 1986). Moreover, Saint Paul distinguished the difference between a "spiritual" person versus a "natural" person by explaining spiritual individuals as those influenced by the spirit of God (Schneiders, 1986). Conn (1989) adds that these "spiritual" persons were understood to be the human beings who were consistent in their motivation to bear other's burdens and offer themselves as sacrifices for the benefit of another.

In addition to Saint Paul's understanding, authors of the gospels in the New Testament have offered understandings of the concept of spirituality as relating to enlightenment from God and Jesus Christ. Spirituality within the gospels deals with discernment of where and how God is present in community, in religious or political discussion, in ministry and in suffering (Conn, 1989). Specifically, while the gospel of Matthew understands spirituality as mercy, forgiveness and trust, the gospel of Mark emphasizes the community concerns of faith and love (Conn, 1989). Similarly, while the gospel of Luke is concerned with a spirituality of generosity and service, the gospel of John promotes a spirituality of unity and alienation in life struggles (Conn, 1989). Certainly, all the gospels offered understandings of spirituality that were interpretations of how following the example of Jesus Christ is manifested in daily life.

According to Saint Paul and early fathers of the church, the term "spiritual" was opposed to the carnal (versus corpeal) aspects of the human

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experience (Elders, 1976). Specifically, spirituality aided the whole man in body and in soul through the power of grace. Grace enabled the human being to go beyond the law of sin through the relationship he/she had with the Spirit of God. Consequently, it is important to note that grace, rather than nature, was a core aspect to biblical spirituality. Spirituality was understood as a process of becoming whole through God and Jesus Christ rather than any specific human act or mental exercise that would allow for greater awareness.

Early Christianity

Upon review of how the fathers of the church viewed spirituality, it is important to note that this understanding changed very little up to the period of the eleventh century. Specifically, although early Christian understanding emphasized different elements of biblical spirituality at different times, a consistent focus ran throughout (Conn, 1989). Specifically, God-images, community, prayer, ministry and asceticism were all elements of this focus that were regarded as central to a life with God.

Schneiders (1986), notes that spirituality was sometimes used in this period to speak of those who were empowered with a characteristic of superior holiness to guide others with the life of the Holy Spirit. Moreover, Antiochene, Alexandrian, Byzantine, and Roman ancient institutions were used as models of spirituality through concentration on asceticism (Conn, 1989). Specifically, the ideals of charity, purity of conscience, contempt for flesh, subjection of passion to reason, and virginity were perceived as paths to attaining spiritual maturity. Despite the increased range of understanding of the spiritual experience by some authors in this early Christian period, love of neighbor and union with God were still held as primary conceptions.

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Spirituality in the medieval period, although remaining rooted in the concepts of early Christian period, moved towards new developments that reflect the political environment of this time. Unfortunately, the rise of monasticism, the lack of education in the larger community, and the emphasis on church hierarchy contributed to a situation where those writing about the spiritual life were mainly religious, conveying the message that only a select few had understanding of the spiritual journey (Dreyer, 1986). As a consequence, popular spirituality was differentiated from professional spirituality as its' attention to relics, magical processes and spiritual pilgrimages were considered less authentic by church leaders (Conn, 1989). Professional spirituality was viewed as an experience to those in roles that were dedicated to study, guidance, liturgy and the monastic life (Conn, 1989).

As a result of this schism, many individuals began promotion of a spirituality that was not restricted to isolation and contemplation, but a spirituality directed toward lay preaching and conversion. Lower class mendicants and special women's lay groups initiated independent quests for spirituality through community prayer and work which supported God "within the world" versus God "external to the world" (Conn, 1989). These individuals indicated, in their approach to life, a spirituality which was no longer restricted to the monastery and /or solitary reflection.

Also inherent to the elements of spirituality that took place within this period was a focus on both femininity and Hesychasm (Conn, 1989). Feminine God-images such as gentleness, tenderness and availability were considered characteristics of the spiritual as they represented a different source of strength to the male-dominated perspective. Hesychasm, contemplative monasticism of

eastern philosophy, emphasized spirituality as "prayer of the heart" which enables individuals to be both active and contemplative in maturing spiritually. Specifically, spirituality is first concerned with redirecting rather than suppressing, passions toward a positive external means and, secondly, silencing the heart towards internal growth (Conn, 1989).

As Schneiders (1986) points out, this medieval spirituality, especially form the twelfth through fifteenth centuries, provided an understanding of the word "spiritual" that stressed factors of the intellectual being versus the non-rational being. Going beyond the the material world through disciplined exercises and abstentions was central to spirituality. Designation of clergy, however, was a norm which made the concept of spirituality a difficult application for laypersons. Consequently, this period was a prime preparation for the change that eventually occurred in the Reformation period, as spirituality was no longer limited to an elite group.

Reformation

Although the Reformation led to a conceptualization of spirituality which repudiated good works, monasticism, and devotional practices; writings by leaders in this era still found value in living God's will and a Christian life (Hunter, 1990). However, as Conn (1989) explains, God was free to be present in all of life, which included marriage. Reformation leaders understood a spirituality that was characterized with a knowledge of God as possible only in His terms rather than discriminating human guidelines (Conn, 1989). Thus, in the awareness that a far less regulative stance of spirituality was vital to growth, followers of the movement sought to yield the self-assertive will and allow God to take the initiative in an intimate relationship.

The seventeenth century came to be understood as the "Golden Age of

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Spirituality" as it often denoted everything that pertained to the interior life of a person in the quest for perfection. Devotion, piety and perfection came to be words used to discuss "the quality or condition of being spiritual" (Schneiders, 1986). However, as Alexander (1980) explains, a division in understanding the spiritual life arose as a conflict between growth in moral life and growth through mystical prayer. Specifically, the issue of whether spirituality stressed observation of the commandments, undergoing purgation, practicing asceticism and fulfilling counsels of perfection versus a spirituality of mysticism in prayer, visions and miracle-working.

As a consequence of this intense interest in validating the concept of spirituality, the twentieth century brought about a branch of study in the academy called "spiritual theology," which centered on the science of perfection (Schneiders, 1989). The field had two divisions which included both "ascetical theology," which studies the spiritual life beyond the keeping of the commandments and duties of Christianity, and, "mystical theology," which studied the spiritual life as a reception to mystical experiences.

Twentieth Century

As Schneiders (1986) explains, writers of spirituality within the first half of the twentieth century focused a large amount of energy in establishing consistent theory in the discipline of spirituality. However, later writers within this period initiated a break in past patterns that formerly placed spirituality within traditional boundaries. Considered more generic and experiential, writers such as Louis Bouyer (Alexander, 1980) proclaimed a spirituality that was differentiated from dogma as it centered around human reaction to the belief rather than the objects of belief themselves. Clearly, the elements of dualism and elitism that had once dominated understandings on spirituality had

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gradually been shaped to fit the unique needs of an ecumenical culture. As Schneiders (1986) communicates, " the juxtaposition of the philosophical and religious meanings is helpful for understanding our own situation in which the term "spirituality"...by no means always involves reference to theHoly Spirit or the life according the to the Holy Spirit" (p.260). Thus, spirituality for many theologians is no longer only manifested in religious structures, as dogma, spiritual prescriptions and concern with "perfection" are viewed as limiting. Spirituality has come to take into account all aspects of human life and experience (Schneiders, 1986).

Conclusion

As this experiential orientation of spirituality has taken root, it is necessary to explore ways this outlook is beginning to be conveyed within both theological circles and other intellectual disciplines. Beginning with theological writers, the remaining essay will explore various ways the dimensions of spirituality are communicated in theology, sociology and psychology. Using this base, a more specific aim is to discuss how these varied viewpoints have or have not impacted the therapeutic domain within psychology.

CHAPTER THREE

SPIRITUALITY IN THEOLOGY

As pointed out in the review of the history of spirituality, scholars within the field of theology have been in conflict regarding whether spirituality is a serious division of theology. The many scholars who do view spirituality as a respectable division of the discipline consider theology grounded in reflective religious experience of the highest quality. The question remains, therefore, whether these experiences of the spiritual should be understood in a holistic sense or adhere to selective processes of dogma. The following paragraphs demonstrate how these opposing viewpoints have their roots in church-based spirituality.

Feminist theologian Schneiders (1989) proposes that spirituality is indeed an integral part of theological studies, yet it should be treated today in a manner that is far less restrictive. Specifically, the author views spirituality as interdisciplinary, ecumenical and cross-cultural rather than dogmatic or dictatorial. As Schneiders had previously noted (1986), a holistic viewpoint has the advantages of empowering the lay community as well as increasing cross-denominational dialogue. When the concept is no longer bound to strict theological rules, the factors of openness and flexibility invite honest discussion in human growth.

Other theologians argue that use of the word spirituality in this experiential and/or generic sense is a dangerous endeavor. Specifically, if

spirituality is viewed in this light, these authors remind us that certain experiences or perspectives that have been labeled "spiritual" throughout history are often ones that have been found to be oppressive and inhumane to particular sects within society (Alexander, 1980). Moreover, these authors claim that to define spirituality holistically may diminish its' meaningfulness. A broader application may result in a lack of clarity that would offer no creative means to uniquely communicate the experience of the spiritual. As Dreyer (1987) proposes " we need to ask for whom and by whom a spirituality has been fashioned ...to consider ways of enhancing our spirituality as active, lay, late twentieth-century folks, using the past as a correlative..." (p.201). Consequently, an attitude of passive-acceptance to understanding the dynamics of the concept can no longer be tolerated if society is incorporating the term on a regular basis. This seems especially relevant to professionals who are actively involved in a therapeutic field, as the topic of spirituality will be communicated in a variety of ways in their daily human contact.

Theologians discuss the commonalities and differences regarding what qualities of the spiritual should be embraced. This review first discusses Western religion's conceptualizations of spirituality and then discusses the more generic views. Judaism, Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic and various other Christian denominations have specific definitions of spirituality; however, even within these orientations, theological writers have offered differing interpretations.

Judaism

Although within the early Judaic tradition the interior life of the individual was understood through the term "mysticism," many theologians within the tradition have recently begun to use the term "spirituality" and apply it to both

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Jewish Law and to the more contemplative experience (Schneiders, 1986). Groeschel (1989) explains this as the "desire for reestablishment of the intimate covenant relationship between the chosen people of God which existed when the the Lord was present to and led the children of Israel by visible theophanies" (p.16). Hence, under Jewish tradition, spirituality is ofen considered the journey of expectation which is not necessarily any reached union or experience. For this tradition, unanswered questions and awaited conclusions are a part of the spirituality which centers on hope as a lived experience (Schneiders, 1986). If one compares this understanding to the early Christian spirituality that developed out of the biblical text of the New Testament, it is clear that Jewish spirituality encompassed an attitude of personal relationship with God.

Eastern Orthodox

According to the classical Eastern Orthodox tradition, spirituality can be understood in the three aspects of life in relationship to God, the life of the church, and the life of prayer and spiritual warfare (Hunter, 1990). Life in relationship to God is a spirituality which acknowledges " the knowledge of God through a union of love" (Hunter, 1990, p.1221). Thus, human beings are spiritual in their reception to God's spirit so life can be lived under His divine guidance. Secondly, the life of the church is a part of spirituality where communion with God is guaranteed through Jesus Christ. This union is afforded through the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, the Eucharist, marriage and the anointing of the sick. Thirdly, the life of prayer and spiritual warfare is a spirituality whereby the philosophy behind the sacraments is manifested in everyday communication with God. Specifically, this is a focus on unceasing prayer that seeks to receive union with God so life can be lived with

Christian convictions (i.e. against injustice and falsehoods). In conclusion, the three primary aspects of Eastern Orthodox tradition convey how essential both awareness of God's will and rituals to validate that will are to the spiritual process.

Roman Catholic

For the Roman Catholic tradition, spirituality is conceptualized as "one's distinctive way of following Christ, communing with God and growing in the life of faith." (Hunter, 1990, p.1223). In recent years this emphasis includes both the traditional aspects of the sacraments and liturgy rituals as well as an openness to the wisdoms of other religious traditions in India and East Asia. Clearly, the increase in retreat centers, church-based meditation groups and encouragement of cross-cultural communication demonstrates a change toward a less dogmatic spirituality. However, at the base of Catholic spirituality, a process understood as the "three ways" of the spiritual life has been strongly acknowledged. Specifically, the purgative, illuminative and unitive ways are considered the process of spiritual development which describe conversion to the will of God.

As Groeschel (1989) explains, the first and most discouraging phase of spiritual development is the moral integration that takes place within the purgative way. The purgative way is considered a spiritual process where penance, training in prayer and delaying gratification is the focus. With this change toward a virtuous self, individuals within this spiritual process move toward the development of mature faith and trust (Groeschel, 1989). Clearly, the individual is conceptualized as growing away from the false self toward a renewed self within God. The illuminative way, the second part of this process, is understood as a recognition of grace and love from God in order to do what is

truthfully good (Groeschel, 1989). This recognition is largely based on the shift to contemplative, affective prayer which allows an individual to hear God in mental processes (Hunter, 1990). Moreover, with this ability, the individual is given the power to discern truth from falsehood in the external world. Finally, the unitive way, understood as a personal covenant with God, includes distinct contemplative experiences that are both comforting and disturbing. As Groeschel (1989) explains, the awareness of God that is fostered during this phase allows for total absorption of the self into His divine will. However, the self-surrender that is descriptive of this phase of spiritual development manifests itself in the individual's struggle to let go of the psychological defense mechanisms of the ego. Thus, feelings of alienation and loss of control can be the dominating forces which make this aspect of spiritual development so difficult.

Protestantism

The Protestant tradition claims the ideals of puritanism, pietism and revivalism from the Reformation up the nineteenth century (Hunter, 1990). However, similar to Roman Catholic expansions in understanding spirituality, many contemporary viewpoints within this camp have offered new responses. First, a secular spirituality which rejects otherworldly piety and embraces "going through the world to God" (Hunter, 1990, p. 1223) has given Protestants a break from strict traditional boundaries of spirituality. Second, a charismatic spirituality which emphasizes experiential religion (i.e. speaking in tongues) versus the more formal and rational attitudes has taken root. Third, neo-oriental spirituality which draws from Buddhist and Hindu religions promotes a vital supplement to Christian methods of prayer and meditation. Finally, emphasis on liturgy, retreat centers, spiritual direction, prayer forms and devotional

writings brings a new dimension to Protestant spirituality from ecumenical influences. Thus, the Protestant tradition embraces the evolvement of spirituality that seeks universal insight as well as personal intimacy.

Contemporary Opinion

Each of these major western world religions has developed particular conceptions of spirituality. However, authors such as Schneiders (1986a; 1989b), Alexander (1980) and Bechtle (1985) have expanded and/or redefined the term. These authors describe the characteristics of a modern-day spirituality and attempt to differentiate the degrees of spirituality in relation to church dogma. Moreover, theologians Baur (1983) and Fox (1980) suggest ways to apply spirituality in our immediate environment through particular values and outlooks on social welfare. Consequently, the proceeding paragraphs give evidence to the fact that just as society grapples with the meaning behind spirituality, so does the theological camp that originally extended formal recognition to it.

Theologian Schneiders (1989) points out several important characteristics of the concept of spirituality in relation to theology. For example, Schneiders explains that spirituality is more or less a "participant" discipline as researchers must know the spiritual quest by personal experience. Moreover, spirituality is not involved with principles, general classes or typical cases but with concrete persons, works, and events. Finally, spirituality has a three-fold objective of studying for understanding, fostering one's own spirituality and fostering the spirituality of others. Thus, to Schneiders (1989), spirituality refers to the lived experience of consciously striving to integrate one's life not in terms of isolation and self-absorption, but of self-transcendence toward the ultimate values one perceives. Personal meaning, life philosophy and perspectives

toward humankind are all components to the intensive study of the nature of spirituality.

Schneiders (1986) has also explained how the term spirituality has been understood differently in philosophical, religious and Christian aspects. Philosophically, spirituality is a distinguishing of the material and spiritual as they relate to the human capacity for self-transcendence through knowledge and love. Hence, spirituality is a condition which describes all people as they enter into human relationships. Religiously, spirituality deals with self-transcendence in personal relationship to God. However, faith, hope, and love versus knowledge and love are factors which underlie the phenomenon of religious spirituality. Finally, Christian spirituality deals with self-transcendence which is Trinitarian as it is enabled through relationship to God in Christ under the gift of the Holy Spirit.

A similar discussion of the varied meanings of spirituality was offered by Alexander (1980) who recognized that the changing implications of the concept in church and society is conducive to three working definitions. As these definitions move in degrees of abstraction, Alexander concludes that the development of the concept of spirituality parallels the movement of the church through history. The first understanding, referring to how people live their faith, is closer to the meaning of a personally integrated religion which original writers of spirituality used. A second definition, considered a higher level of abstraction, explains spirituality as the integration of ultimate concerns and unrestricted values in life. Clearly this understanding of spirituality allows authors to converse on the concept without reference to a specific religious tradition and denotes man's universal convictions. Finally, the broadest way to understand spirituality is to view it as an analytical concept to discuss aspects

of human life which are interpreted by observers as "intentionally related to that which holds unrestricted value" (Alexander, 1980, p.253-254). Specifically, spirituality in this sense might incorporate phenomena that appear to be opposing to the religious, such as the spirituality of Marxism or the spirituality of atheism. What Alexander is laying out appears to be an awareness of how the more generic tone that spirituality now entails in American culture could be detrimental to the religious ideals of church institutions within society.

In her article on the convergence between theology and spirituality, Bechtle (1985) explains that underlying all spiritual theology is the understanding that each of us are individuals open to mystery, that conversion is the journey to God and, that the cross is the center of this transformation. Thus, spirituality is first becoming aware of all the subtle traces of the mystery that play a part in our unique experiences as human beings. The mystery, moreover, is best left unanalyzed as it remains the base of our faith in God and unexplainable capacity to transcend our own self in everyday living. Secondly, commitment to conversion is the aspect of spirituality that allows each of us to grow towards improving our own individual situations, as well as other situations around us. This might be equated with applying our own intellectual resources to understand the depths of emotions within our heart. Third, the author contends that using the symbol of the cross of Jesus Christ is fundamental to our spirituality as it provides us with some understanding of the non life-affirming aspects of the human journey. Specifically, realizing that life and death are both integral components to living as each individual faces a never-ending process of both loss and renewal in their development.

In more extensive format, theologian Baur (1983) approaches spirituality with a vision that is considerably more idealistic in nature. Specifically, Baur

professes that this vision of spirituality is based on an understanding of the themes of living life abundantly and perceiving God in the purest sense of love. The first theme, the process of striving for abundance and fullness in everyday existence, is evident in scriptures which describe the human tendency to seek a full life of meaning with God. The second theme is understood as the pursuit of human life in confidence that life is valuable from the God who holds all things in love, rather than power, fate or vengeance. The author adds that this spirituality can only be inhibited by two misconceptions that place mastery of spiritual disciplines and special expertise as primary. Specifically, once spirituality is no longer advocated as a matter of special knowledge, the lay majority is no longer discriminated against in their own unique pursuit of living life under the grace of God.

Modern-day theologian Matthew Fox (1980) has pronounced a fourfold path of spirituality based on the late Meister Eckhart (1260-1329). Fox has used Eckhart's spiritual theology to promote a modern spirituality which he believes "provides significant weaponry for the mystical and prophetic agenda that the human race faces in the nineties" (Fox, 1991, p.V). The paths that make up this spirituality include the experience of God in creation; the experience of God by letting go and letting be; the experience of God in breakthrough and giving birth to God and self, and; the experience of God by way of compassion and social justice. Clearly, what Fox incorporates in his conception of spirituality is based on the belief that creation is central to human perspective in how individuals view their own life and the lives around them. A sense of connectedness among all creatures is a necessary awareness to bring about positive change in all societal structures and the environment we live in.

Conclusion

As many diverse conceptions of spirituality exist even within the discipline of theology, it is easy to understand the reason for even more extensive gaps in understanding outside of this field. Apparently, authors who are exposed to different life circumstances may adhere to an understanding of spirituality that goes beyond any education instilled in them by their religious institution. Ritual, personal creativity, life-affirming philosophy and detachment from external possessions are clearly noted as routes to new understanding. However, as this paper continues to study the concept 's understanding within other fields, it is crucial to look at commonalties that appear as well. Undoubtedly, what may seem to be differences in understanding could be more of a reflection of language than core philosophy.

CHAPTER FOUR

SPIRITUALITY IN SOCIOLOGY

The discipline of sociology, similar to theology, has confronted the issue of spirituality. A range of understandings of the spiritual exists depending upon the author's particular area of study. Specifically, sociologists have researched spirituality as part of the study of religion, the feminist movement and the men's movement, each of which have yielded different perspectives. As Moberg (1979) explains, "Sociologists are not a homogeneous group. The light they cast upon a complex subject like spiritual well-being is one of numerous diffused rays shedding their beams from many sources, not that of a single, powerful beacon shining in one direction..." (p.viii). Consequently, to comprehensively explore all the understandings of spirituality within this domain it is important to note the specific area of interest a particular researcher is coming from.

Sociology of Religion

The concept of "spiritual well-being" (versus spirituality) in sociology seems to have arisen in connection with the 1971 White House Conference on Aging that recognized how health care relevant to physical needs must also include promotion of spiritual wellness for a comprehensive care program. Specifically, with this awareness, a 1977 Annual Meeting of the Association for the Sociology of Religion included two sessions devoted to papers on spiritual well-being which subsequently explored the topic in a multitude of ways.

relationship to an indwelling spiritual being, being tuned in to the power beyond one's self, drawing closer to God, or developing a right relationship with God which provides reconciliation and forgiveness for sin" (Moberg, 1979, p.12). In addition, Moberg (1979) asserted that spiritual well-being pertained to the "wellness or health of the totality of inner resources of people, the ultimate concerns around which all other values are focused, the central philosophy of life that guides conduct, and the meaning-giving center of human life which influences all individual and social behavior" (p.2). Sociological scholars seem to demonstrate the same diversity in understanding as do theological scholars.

In critical review of these varied understandings, Moberg (1979) proposed the need for spiritual well-being indicators in Quality of Life Research that would aid understanding of how this spiritual dimension actually affects human beings. However, as Moberg recognized the large gaps in interpreting the spiritual nature of humanity, it was suggested that work focus on the construction of an index of spiritual well-being which would be useful in all ideological groups and sociocultural settings. Consequently, Ellison and Paloutzian (1982) designed the Spiritual Well-Being Scale (SWBS) to measure quality of one's spiritual health which acknowledged an understanding of spirituality based on subscales of religious well-being and existential well-being (Bufford, Paloutzian and Ellison, 1991). Specifically, spirituality in the SWBS is understood as including both the vertical dimension of well-being in relationship to God and the horizontal dimension of well-being in relation to the world around us, including sense of life purpose and life satisfaction. Clearly, the scale proclaims an understanding of spirituality that assumes a general well-being of the individual in relation to the transcendent and the external world around him/her, rather than a strict adherence to codes, laws or

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disciplines of a religious institution.

The research summary described by Ellison and Smith (1990) communicated that indeed spiritual well-being (as rated by the SWBS) is positively correlated to physical well-being, adjustment to physical illness, psychological well-being and relational well-being. With this knowledge, researchers within all disciplines may begin to understand how spirituality (i.e. spiritual well-being) takes in an array of factors beyond the once dogmatic prescriptions of disciplined prayer exercises and adherence to strict moral codes. Specifically, as sociology communicates spirituality as a measure of comprehensive well-being, the concept may be outlined in a manner that is less threatening to research scientists and more inviting to the needs of value-laden helping professions. Moreover, further research around the implications of spiritual well-being scores may indicate the practicality involved in study of the concept.

In addition to the more broad understandings of spirituality in the sociology of religion, other theorists in the field offer distinct messages as to how the specific experiential nature of spirituality may manifest itself in daily life. In 1990, sociologist of religion Greeley portrayed an understanding of spirituality that centered around the phenomenon of prayer, as its' importance was verified with the fact that the average American engages in prayer six times per week. Prayer, which Greeley describes as an intimate human relationship to the transcendent, is a form of spirituality which represents important sociological phenomenon, as it indicates supposed "payoffs" in living a fuller, balanced life. Specifically, the author concludes that prayer is a "pragmatic" spirituality, as his research indicates that personal happiness, marital happiness and satisfaction with family all increase with frequency of prayer.

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Moreover, these beneficial outcomes are generalizable to all religious sects as research included prayer from more disciplined religious orientations to the agnostic and atheistic end of the belief continuum. The development of exact descriptors of the spirituality of prayer seems to be the next logical step in describing how prayer is used by different individuals in society.

Possible explanations for these positives outcomes prompts speculation that a spirituality of prayer is an intimacy with God that makes life more satisfying, reveals an underlying world view with a more positive orientation to life, or allows for communication of gratitude from satisfaction with life (Greeley, 1990). Although one cannot be sure of whether this observable spirituality is a cause, an indicator, a result, or a combination, it is apparently worth serious consideration because of the dramatic correlations. However, as Greeley (1990) notes, it would seem reasonable to look at spirituality in the realm of prayer more rigorously than, for example, spirituality via church attendance, as prayer represents a private behavior which is less likely to be subject to social pressure. Finally, although it is not yet possible to make absolute claims that all outcomes of such a perspective on spirituality are healthy, it is vital to keep in mind how large a proportion of individuals in American society understand spirituality in their daily life.

Sociology of Women's Spirituality

The increased interest on the women's movement in society has also produced a large amount of literature on the topic of women's spirituality. As sociologist Yates (1983) explains, "rather than the word "religion" associated with historically established institutionalized forms, feminists sometimes choose the word "spirituality" to label their discovery and affirmation" (p.60). However, the perimeters of women's spirituality have been discussed through both

developmental processes and actions that support awareness. Thus, to accurately review the concept of spirituality among feminists it is necessary to note all the varied dimensions that are currently offered by authors of this realm.

Harris (1990) explains women's spirituality as a thematic development which moves sequentially in seven stages. Awakening, the first theme, is the spiritual stage of actively attending to what the self is experiencing, which may not be self-affirming. Upon this realization, the individual is open to growth in discovering and creating (the second and third themes) a unique spirituality that differs from cultural values. Once this is accomplished the individual can be more in tune to being in the here and now (the fourth theme of dwelling) as well as honestly nourishing (the fifth theme) the personal and communal virtues of her spirituality. Finally, with these personal spiritual convictions, the individual is able to move to guidance for the next generation (the sixth theme of traditioning) and care for the entire cosmos (the seventh theme of transforming). Harris offers a comprehensive but simple understanding of how the many facets of women's spirituality work together. Consequently, the behaviors and attitudes of women's spirituality that are discussed in the following section can comfortably fit into certain stages Harris' model.

Many authors of Christian, Jewish, and goddess worship theologies discuss spirituality in terms of isolated attitudes and behaviors versus developmental processes. Consequently, the understandings of spirituality arising from these viewpoints range from connectedness to the earth, belief in a deity/goddess that can be found within the self, and mythologies based on womens' realities (Yates, 1983). Moreover, although these authors may differ in their boundaries of how feminist spirituality is ultimately understood, all advocate a deep respect for each other since the aim is to embark on cognitive

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theory that is neither dogmatic or hierarchical in nature. In terms of active experiences, Jacobs (1990) discusses spirituality as the practice of rituals which are used as transformation and empowerment. Rituals are understood as spiritual pathways to empowerment in their construction of female solidarity groups, identification of sources of victimization, and formulation of creative visions for female strength. Thus, although a religious nature seems to be descriptive of feminist spirituality, the focus remains rooted in unique expression of the feminine as a step toward growth.

Other approaches to understanding feminist spirituality are found within interpretations of women in history and women in literature (Yates, 1983). The first seeks to recapture the experience of women in historically identified religious groups as inspiration for current movements. Thus, spirituality is gaining awareness through historical literature which notes how women endured in religious organizations with non-mainstream opinions that deemphasized masculine aspects, traditional ordained clergy and mandatory motherhood (Yates, 1983). The latter approach deals with feminist scholars exploration of women's literature as a source for understanding spirituality in terms of personally defined meanings. Hence, a review of the literature by numerous female authors describes spirituality as it relates to the women's journey to the self and/or discovery of the "artist within" that comes through significant life experience.

For women, spirituality can manifest itself in a multitude of ways. As Eisler (1987) explains, a new science that uses both reason and intuition is for the first time in history focusing more on relationships than on hierarchies. Consequently, feminist spirituality is not so much an individualistic goal but a mission for cultural attitude change that has its' roots in a partnership model of

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society. Clearly, this partnership can only grow out of the seed of self-affirmation and creativity that feminist spirituality advocates.

Sociology of Men's Spirituality

In more recent years, some male scholars and professionals have recognized the need to look at male spirituality. Clearly, the decades dominated by the women's movement gradually called the male population to realize the need for growth and acceptance within their own gender. Similar to women's spirituality, the men's movement has offered both a developmental process of spirituality as well as attitudes, symbols and rituals to represent itself. However, as the understandings within this movement are still in early formation, the literature covered within this section continues to be supplemented with new interpretations.

Rohr and Martos (1991) have offered a developmental understanding of spirituality in the men's movement. Specifically, these authors explain that men begin to foster spirituality through journeys toward both masculine and feminine aspects of themselves. This begins first in their relationships with women where they are exposed to aspects of themselves that have been left untapped. The spiritual conversion from male attitudes of autonomy and control to feminine attitudes of relationship and trust is the initial growth that allows for this wholeness. Rohr and Martos explain that this journey to the feminine must be followed by a journey toward a deeper masculine. Specifically, identifying with the "wild" nature of God (considered a deeper masculine aspect) allows men to take the risks and ask the questions which promote a new sense of self. These risks, moreover, are the core of a spirituality where the male can confront who he is as a human being rather than who he is as a societal role.

In addition to academic journals, recent books have covered the subject

of male spirituality in relation to mythical figures and male archetypes. Moore and Gillette (1991), for example, decode the structures of the human self through exploration of the four mature male archetypes of King, Lover, Magician and Warrior. Clearly the authors invite males to spiritual growth that is rooted in claiming aspects of the male psyche that have been cut off by modern cultural constraints. With similar intent, Bly (1990) views the male journey as an individuation process that can be observed through mythic fairy tale. Bly uses the routes of poetry, associations and symbols as a means to allow the male reader to get in touch with this internal spiritual journey. It is clear that Bly communicates a spirituality that is centered around the confrontation of inner conflict and inner absences in order to make peace with the external world.

A spirituality for men seems appropriate when one considers how the societal expectations of war, corporate politics and financial responsibilities have centered on this gender throughout history. As Kivel (1991) writes, "...because we, as men, spend such incredible effort at maintaining control in our lives, it is sometimes harder for us to have, and acknowledge having, spiritual experiences" (p.13). This need to control, moreover, is adopted at such a young age for most males that it will inevitably take radical movements to begin a new reality. Ultimately, this new reality must be applauded and respected by the same society that enabled the older one.

Conclusion

The discipline of sociology, more so than theology, appears to venture in directions that provoke a lot of questions about the psychosocial forces that impact spiritual understanding. The person in society, with external factors such as religious institutions, class and gender movements, and cultural philosophies, is inundated with information on the concept of spirituality.

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Consequently, even use of a simplistic sociological definition of spirituality may fall short to the needs of psychological inquiry. Moreover, as environmental moods are continually vacillating, attempting to grasp the core of how the concept manifests itself in a particular culture may be next to impossible.

Although difficulties exist in looking at spirituality as a sociological phenomenon, psychology may benefit by using some of the base knowledge that sociological researchers have volunteered. The Spiritual Well-Being Scale (1982), for example, provides a realistic model for assessment. As it includes items that observe existential perceptions of spirituality, the measure offers a fair amount of insight to universal human dilemmas. Secondly, understanding how the concept of prayer might be at play in the life of a client deserves much consideration in determining the locus of control for an individual. For example, speculations on the relationship between addictions and external referencing might be aided through understanding of the client's prayer life. Finally, realizing how the genders have come to conclusions about what is essential for spiritual growth has bearing on differences in client's self-expression and goals. The professional therapist might take this into account as a means of preventing misperceptions and/or negative countertransference in the establishment of therapeutic rapport.

CHAPTER FIVE

SPIRITUALITY IN PSYCHOLOGY

Although the literature demonstrates a growing interest in the concept of spirituality, the field of psychology has not produced in depth research that would validate the subject's potential theoretical or clinical importance. As Shafranske and Gorsuch (1984) have explained, the relative inattention to the study of the spiritual in psychology may be rooted in the professions historical precedents to dissociate itself from nonempirical philosophical disciplines. However, if professionals within the field are to take Bergin's research (1980) around the impact of counselor values in psychotherapy seriously, a responsible effort must be made to clarify how an understanding of spirituality effects these values. Moreover, as Tjeltveit (1989) explains, a failure to be aware of all models of human beings (which includes spirituality) is to risk ignoring key aspects of human experience and behavior. With this belief, the following section seeks to review how an understanding of spirituality has previously and is currently being understood within psychology. In addition, this author will explore the differences of these understandings with the theological and and sociological perspectives and provide a base to comprehend the implications of these differences within the final sections.

As Benner (1989) explains, historian Jan Ehrenwald (1966) has argued that psychotherapy arose as an effort to fill the spiritual void left by the demise of religion, its' motive being to meet "unmet metaphysical needs...without recourse

to mythical ideologies or magic ritual" (p.16). Moreover, despite the fact that spirituality has not been recognized as a vital element to the existence of psychotherapy, both pioneer and contemporary theorists within the field have made reference to the spiritual dimension within their work. Beginning with the early theorists, it is necessary to observe how some authors have/have not approached the concept as a therapeutic function.

Early Theorists

In comparison to many textbook theorists in psychological literature, the work of Carl Jung provides an extremely complex and radical understanding to the human psyche.   Jung focuses on a "natural" spirituality, considered a base for the development of both Christian and alternative spiritualities, which is understood in relation to specific psychological processes within each human being (Benner, 1988).   Specifically, Jung labels religiosity as an instinctual aspect of human functioning, as each individuals spiritual longings reside in the collective unconscious. Consequently, religion, as well as spirituality, is placed within the realm of creative expressions of the deepest aspects of the self, rather than psychological neuroses (Benner, 1988).

As Benner (1988) notes, the primary concept in Jung's view of spiritual growth is that of individuation: the life time process of becoming whole through the synthesis of conscious and unconscious aspects of personality. Jung labeled this process of individuation as religious in nature as he viewed it as the human's capacity to submit his/her ego-will to the will of God through movement away from the ego as center of the personality toward the self as center (Moore, 1988). The self, therefore, is considered the central mechanism involved in the spirituality of the individual and is understood as the God-image within the psyche of each individual. Hence, according to Jung, both psychological and

spiritual health depend on an open relationship between conscious and and unconscious forces in personality. Moreover, this open relationship, which is fundamental for the Jungian process of personality integration, is the criterion to discern true or false spirituality.

In addition to Jung, several other theorists within the field of psychology have made explicit statements about an understanding of spirituality through a process of self-transcendence. However, many of these theorists view growth in the spiritual realm differently from Jungian, with the self no longer deified and God no longer psychologized. The common thread that runs through these particular schools maintains that the transcendence of ego or false self is an integration process that is achieved through total dependence on God. A few primary schools that have advocated this philosophy are Contemplative, Existential and We Psychology.

Contemplative Psychology, drawing on both Western and Eastern spiritual traditions, recognizes spirituality as "the willingness and courage to open oneself to mystery" (Benner, 1988, p. 69). Gerald May, the leader in this thinking, pronounces this spirituality exists through the human being's capacity to practice willingness versus willfulness (Benner, 1988). Specifically, a healthy attitude of willingness to surrender to a reality greater than oneself rather than the willfulness that asserts the idea that mastery of destiny and/or manipulation of existence is possible. Moreover, May explains that this spiritual aspect of human life is best exemplified when the individual encounters the "unitive experience" where a momentary loss of self-definition is accompanied by some degree of self-transcendence that produces a sense of being-at-one (Benner, 1988.)

It is evident that what May explains as spirituality is not a searching

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process but a surrendering process, fully understood when a person comes to the awareness that our roots are as creatures of a universal plan. In psychological thought, one could parallel this process to an individual's resistance to accept who he/she is in the current moment rather than embracing the acceptance and awareness necessary for any change. Clearly, what May explains as willingness can be very much related to a client's capacity to take an honest look at who he/she is in the present. However painful this process, willingness is a necessary part of building a healthy base for a therapeutic relationship.

Within the Existential tradition, psychologist Adrian van Kaam and psychiatrist Victor Frankl have provided significant implications for incorporation of spirituality in therapeutic growth. Its' beginnings are often identified with the late philosopher Kierkegaard, who asserted that the self must be grounded in something outside the self as true selfhood is only possible by being grounded with God (Benner 1988). With this fact, it is important to note that existential approaches stand in opposition to many systems of psychology that take on a reductionsitic attitude of humans. These theorists look critically at the issues around human existence and meaning, purpose in life, freedom, responsibility, choice and mortality.

As Benner (1988) notes, existentialist van Kaam looks at the relationship between spiritual growth and self-discovery as the individual's attempt to integrate oneself in light of the presence of God. Specifically, psychology assists our spirituality through the understanding that discovery of the true self is attained by seeking the message of God's will for us. As van Kaam communicates (1972), "spirituality in the most profound sense resides in the core of my being, in my deepest self or spirit, where I as willing unite my will to

the will of God for me" (p.54). Moreover, in addition to Jung, van Kaam views true spirituality as beginning with integrated interiority and moving toward meaningfully directed behavior (Benner 1988).

Victor Frankl, although not offering an understanding of spirituality in his work, uses a base philosophy that looks directly at human concerns of the spirit. Specifically, in his concept of "logotherapy", Frankl theorizes that striving to find meaning in life is the primary motivational force in man (Frankl 1984). This "will to meaning" is explained by the fact that every person has a specific mission in life to carry out a concrete assignment which demands fulfillment. Although Frankl does not use reference to God in discovering this meaning, he does offer three ways it may be discovered that clearly involve self-transcendence. First, meaning can be attained by creating a work or doing a deed. This entails involvement in work that rewards an individual with a sense of contribution to his/her external circumstances. Second, using love to experience something or encounter someone is vital for each human's well-being. As Frankl notes, no one can become fully aware of the very essence of another human being unless he/she loves him. Thirdly, discovering meaning through an attitude that each of us takes toward unavoidable suffering is essential. With respect to self-transcendence, meaning is brought about through suffering that challenges us to change ourselves when we can no longer change a situation.

Fritz Kunkel, although building on the theory of Jung, initiated the start of We-psychology, which declares a spirituality that is grounded not only in self processes but other-oriented processes as well (Benner, 1988). Specifically, We-psychology views the spiritual aspect of mental health as human transcendence of egocentricity to God by returning to the "we-feelings" of the pre-egocentric child (Benner 1988). Kunkel claims that this is possible through

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the "we-experiences" that prove connectedness not only to God but to others as well. Hence, for Kunkel, an individual who is ego-centered will have difficulty in experiencing the spirituality of creativity and energy that come from our relationships with others. However, if a human being becomes aware of how he/she is integrated into the "we" of a society or culture, spiritual experiences which are characterized with life meaning and purpose for a greater good enhance well-being.

Contemporary Theories

In more recent years, certain schools of psychological thought have been used by other authors as a basis for understanding spirituality within the therapeutic realm (Fuller 1982; Conn and Conn 1990). Specifically, both Developmental and Humanistic orientations have been the focus of discussion for looking at the way the spiritual aspect of human nature has covertly been incorporated in psychological theory. It should be noted that particular theorists in these schools may or may not agree with the expressed opinions of how spirituality is potentially incorporated in the theory. The purpose of the discussion, therefore, is to investigate structures in which spirituality may be directly interpreted.

Certain sects of society have maintained the belief that the psychology of Carl Rogers and the school of Humanism have impacted the deterioration of American spirituality. As Fuller (1982) explains, the school promotes a goal of self-will rather than a will external to individual circumstances, which is far different than a large majority of opinions on spirituality. On this ground, this "client-centered" system of psychotherapy maintains that individuals will reach their fullest potential by selection of values suited to them rather than absorption of values inherent to a church, culture or family. Clearly, what Rogers claims to

be key to human mental health does not run consistent with traditional beliefs around spirituality as self-transcendence.

Fuller (1982) contends, however, that spirituality does indeed exist within the Rogerian framework, as the belief that what is most personal is simultaneously most universal, is acknowledged. Specifically, the author explains that this self-actualizing tendency that is the core of Rogerian theory reflects spiritual attainment as it calls forth the powers of the universe to be present. This might be understood as the individual awareness that certain universal laws of nature exist which, if consented to, allow for connection with the greater scheme of things. With this philosophy, Rogers also examines the boundaries between psychological and spiritual realities as he calls attention to the benefits of telepathy, psychic healing and out-of-body experiences in mental health (Fuller, 1982).

In comparison to other conceptions of spirituality that promote self-transcendence rather than self-actualization, it might seem that Roger's theory goes against the grain of traditional thought. However, what Fuller brings up about Rogers underlying philosophy of connection with the universe may ultimately be very similar to other conceptions. Specifically, can the claim be made that transcending the self toward the will of a higher power is similar to reaching our human potential through connections with universal laws? It seems that, although the semantics are different, what is attempting to be conveyed is very much the same. Consequently, what professionals and researchers may need to look at more closely is how theoretical claims choose to be worded rather than misunderstanding overt meanings.

Developmental psychology gains recognition as a theory which brings out understanding of spirituality as it focuses on many significant life events and

stages to demonstrate the internal growth of the human being. Specifically, these stages have been used by several authors in and out of the field of psychology to explain how spirituality is essentially a developmental process rather than a stagnant condition. As Conn and Conn explain (1990), the same movement from self-centeredness to self-transcendence understood in spiritual growth (i.e. Christian spiritual growth) is the same criterion of growth in developmental psychology. Specifically, the authors use a combination of two approaches in developmental psychology, Erikson's developmental psychosocial life cycle and Kohlberg's development of moral reasoning, to explain how this human growth process is ultimately spiritual in nature.

As Erikson's theory is made up of eight bipolar crises, ranging from the tension between trust and mistrust in the infant to the attitudes of integrity versus despair in the older adult, opportunity for continual spiritual conversion exists (Conn and Conn 1990). Specifically, moral conversion and affective conversion are continually at play in the individual's life as he/she moves from the egocentrism of childhood self-absorption to an orientation rooted in universal ethical principles. Clearly, what the authors explore indicates that successful resolution of developmental crises profoundly impacts individual spirituality, with the most profound influences in the first stages. Thus, if a child fails to develop the trust that is paramount to the first stage he/she may not have the necessary foundation needed for healthy spiritual growth in adult life.

Groeschel (1989) explains, however, that Erikson's theory implies even those who have had developmental failures can adjust by making healthy decisions around intimacy, productivity and self-acceptance in later life. What seems important here in the realm of spirituality seems to be an individual's ability to discern what is realistic and what is impossible. Specifically, as the

individual ages, unmet fantasies and physical decline may call for a surrendering process which can ultimately lead to a new perspective. This perspective, similar to many understandings of spirituality, can be described as an acceptance of our humanness which fosters integrity rather than despair. Thus, instead of becoming obsessed with the death of certain aspects of life, these individuals view loss of control as a new way of being and giving.

Lawrence Kohlberg (Conn and Conn, 1990) identified six stages to moral reasoning which are paired at preconventional, conventional an postconventional levels. Similar to Erikson's theory, development moves from the egocentric child to the socialized individual to the autonomous person. Specifically, the movement brings about individual capability to make moral judgments in accord with universal ethical principles, from self-centeredness to decentered self-transcendence (Conn and Conn 1990). The transcendence that takes place in the moral transformation, moreover, may provide insight as to the spiritual dynamics of human development. Specifically, as these post-conventional stages are characterized by the struggle to make choices in adult religious commitment on the basis of universal ethical principles, the theory lends itself to spiritual concerns. Developmental theory, like spiritual growth, understands the self as fulfilled by sacrificing the inappropriate security of conforming relationships in order to grow in mutual, yet intimate, independence. However, although the theories offer knowledge on how one might see spirituality in the psychological realm, Groeschel (1989) claims that psychological adjustment and spiritual development are different. Specifically, Groeschel states psychological adjustment is an ongoing process where an individual seeks to to make productive use of his/her abilities while fulfilling personal needs. Spiritual development, on the contrary, relates primarily to a

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person's willingness to respond to God and the truth as one knows it. Evidently, what Groeschel offers is based on a Christian understanding of spirituality and not a universal law on the dynamics of the spiritual.

Current Applications

In addition the use of early and contemporary theorists to understand psychological perspectives of spirituality, many professionals within the field today have offered valuable insight as well. Clearly, the rise of interest in spirituality from the public sector, the accepting nature of spiritual issues in self-help groups and the movement towards holistic approaches to therapy have stimulated efforts to study this theme. Moreover, although some researchers within the field view the study of the spiritual as incongruent with the dominant studies of overt connections to the human psyche (i.e. behavior), it is apparent that the multi-faceted composition of mental health has more recently been favored in consideration of treatment implications. If psychology maintains conviction towards honest inquiry rather than structured tunnel vision, researchers and clinicians in the following explanation will be an asset to continued progress.

According to Bergin (1988), it is necessary to scrutinize the implications that incorporation of a spiritual perspective will have to psychotherapy and behavior change. The nature of the human being, explains Bergin, goes well beyond the mechanistic notions once claimed as foundations in early psychology, which implies several positive things for spirituality. First, the spiritual perspective provides a conception of human nature that is in keeping with research that indicates spiritual experiences also make a difference in our behavior. Specifically, rather than grasping one opinion on human functioning, it is vital to assume that psychobehavioral aspects of all organisms are

multisystemic, the same way biological aspects are. Secondly, Bergin explains that a spiritual perspective is fruitful as it provides a moral frame of reference that anchors values in universal terms. Thus, a spiritual orientation reemphasizes the importance of being open, specific and deliberate about values as it works to look at the broad and long-term aspects that make life meaningful. Thirdly, a spiritual perspective contributes by allowing for techniques that include intrapsychic (i.e. prayer, ritual, inspirational counseling) and social system (group support, communal spiritual experience) methods. As explained, these techniques allow the individual to work beyond his/her own difficulties by coming to a larger awareness of universal struggle and the startling brevity of the human life span.

The perspectives given by Bergin (1988) seem to provide a good base for professionals to begin a conceptualization of spirituality for therapeutic practicality. The broad terms that Bergin uses in explaining how beneficial the concept could be, if formally recognized, may leave some questions about the boundaries of religious values. Hence, it would seem crucial that therapists' first priority would be to have a strong awareness of the delineations between religiosity and spirituality. Only by acquiring this knowledge initially can any clinician begin to discuss how spirituality fits in.

In addition to Bergin's insights, specific authors in modern day psychology have approached psychological models of spirituality. Specifically, Benner (1989) discusses how the interconnected nature of psychological and spiritual aspects of individual functioning implies a serious need to undertake a different perspective of human nature. Advocating a non-reductionistic model of spirituality in the psychological realm, Benner explains how the human tendency which yearns to integrate and find meaning in our lives is the heart of

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the spiritual aspect of all human beings. Consequently, spirituality is grounded in the belief that we have been created in God's image and it is because we are designed this way that we seek union with a greater meaning, our creator. On this ground, Benner (1989) calls spirituality "our response to God's call to a relationship with himself, a call we experience as a yearning for self transcendence and surrender" (p.19). The spirituality of transcendence implies a search for our roots as human beings which is manifested in the archetypal memory which hints to us the shape and place where we belong beyond the self. Secondly, surrender is the perspective that we are in the service of something far grander than ourselves or our immediate environment, allowing us to become aware of a true self with centered inner-direction.

With this belief in mind, Benner (1989) explains three levels of spiritual response to this "inner call of God" in the course of life. First, natural spirituality, which is the ground of all religious spirituality, is the quest for self-transcendence and surrender that is a fundamental part of being creatures made in the image of God. Specifically Benner (1989) views this quest as identified in our human longings that occur commonly throughout our lives that may often not be responded to because of a lack of an intimate relationship with God. Second, religious spirituality is what Benner describes as a relationship with the Power of Being which serves as the focus of self-transcendence and meaning for life. Ideally, this is the spirituality that involves movement toward God or some other god that is worked through prayer, meditation, and worship. Thirdly, Christian spirituality is understood as responding to the longings of natural spirituality within the context of Christian faith and community. This spirituality is the experience of God made possible by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit where transformation begins in the depths of self rather than

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prescribed by external church institutions (Benner, 1989). It is important to note that although Benner only discusses the religious spirituality of Christianity, this author acknowledges the significant spiritualities of a multitude of other non-western religions, ranging from Buddhism to Hinduism. However, it seems that Benner's point in bringing out these understandings of spirituality is to explain how the essential nature of psychotherapy has it's roots in the long-standing religious tradition of the "cure of souls." Specifically, Benner notes the social sciences bent towards the curing of minds versus the curing of souls is a consequence of the seventeenth century's growth of science and the nineteenth century's decline in religion. Thus, if psychotherapy is virtually new solutions to old problems (i.e. search for meaning, identity, wholeness and fulfillment) without the illustration of religion, it would seem obvious that greater attention to the understanding of spirituality is necessary.

More specific applications of spirituality in psychotherapy have come from authors in both family therapy and addiction recovery. Berenson (1990) , recalling how the issue of spirituality has been dealt with in the field of family therapy by pioneers Bateson and Bowen, explains that a unique understanding of God and spirituality can aid any system. Specifically, the author explains how the evolution of humanity's relationship with God starts with oneness with the divine, proceeds to stages of differentiation, and returns to a reintegration where God is understood in terms of relatedness. This notion of God, which goes beyond both the conventionally religious view of God outside the self and the psychological view of God as self, is vital to healthy human understanding of relationships. Specifically, Berensen explains that this "spirituality of relatedness" can be manifested between an individual and a divine presence, between human beings, between the feminine and masculine aspects of the

self, and between human beings and a supreme being.

Evidently, adopting a spirituality of relatedness could be highly beneficial to any system, as a healthy attitude of non-hierarchical communication, respect for virility and power, empathy and gentleness, and allowance for the element of synchronicity to be present in life understanding, are key components. As Berensen notes (1990) the primacy of relationship as the method of change used in family therapy can be of great assistance to both humanity's relationship with God as well as its' relationship to itself. In this light, each individual may seek to connect in a way that allows for healthy balance, toleration of uniqueness, and openness to change. A spirituality that disposes of mediation prescribed by dogma and/or hierarchy, such as the one Berensen proposes, may offer an understanding that family therapists can incorporate with greater confidence.

Within the field of addiction recovery, the Twelve-Step program that originates from Alcoholics Anonymous has consistently maintained a primary focus on spirituality. Moreover, similar to other arenas, the program has been flooded with many interpretations of what spirituality should be to the individual. However, as Buxton, Smith and Seymour maintain (1987) a significant part of spirituality in the program resides in Step Two of the Twelve Steps, "Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity" (p. 280). Similar to theological understandings, this view recognizes the importance of transcending the self in order to break unhealthy dependencies over which the individual ego has assumed control. As this surrender mentality can be a difficult notion for many clinicians, Bridgman (1987) explains how Twelve-Step spirituality ideally values this external locus of control in regard to drinking behavior, whereas an internal locus of contol is promoted in other life issues.

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Conclusion

The analysis of various psychological theorists who speak of spirituality indicates the potential differences in how both therapists and clients may perceive the concept in mental health. Beginning with the early periods in the development of the psychology as a discipline, it is evident that a definite curiosity with the spiritual nature of man existed. However, from this base came additions as well as digressions in establishment of non-empirical viewpoints. It is clear that the work of Carl Jung (Moore 1988) had the most prominent role from the earlier theorists in offering the rationale for why an understanding of spirituality in humanity is so valuable. Moreover, existential viewpoints provided unequivocal claims on the primary concerns in human striving to find meaning and transcend the self.

In more recent work, several other authors have expressed similar beliefs around the make-up of all individuals. What seems to be the consensus of all these somewhat varied understandings is how each individual realizes wholeness. Specifically, wholeness achieved through succumbing to the the will of God; wholeness through discovery of a greater mission in our lives; wholeness through the letting go of an unhealthy life-style or relationship in our lives and; wholeness through full integration of every face in our personhood, bright and dark. Clearly, the way each person perceives attainment of this wholeness is a complex constellation of many factors which may or may not be labeled "spiritual" in the therapeutic environment.

Due to the varied understandings across all disciplines the following section will break down the differences within and between the three camps previously explored. It is possible that the loosely defined image of the concept may not be the result of ambiguous phrasing but the fine lines between very

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specific language. Upon this speculation, the matter at hand takes on a tone that is no longer characterized by abstraction but intricate design. Deciding whether this intricate design is worthy of serious study will be of primary importance in later looking at implications for training and practice.

CHAPTER SIX

DIFFERENCES AMONG THE DISCIPLINES

This chapter explores the question of how similarly and/or differently spirituality is understood among theology, sociology and psychology. The purpose of this comparison is to enlighten and sensitize the clinician on the important place of spirituality in the lives of many clients. In this process, it is also hoped that the reader will be able to look at the implication section with new insights on the problem.

A Comparison Between

Theology, Sociology and Psychology

The differences in understandings among the disciplines do not appear to be about the aims of spirituality but the way these aims are pursued. Specifically, each discipline is essentially based in the perspective of discovering the whole and true self within each of us. However, each discipline differs in the reference point that is generally used to perceive this perspective. Thus, parallel to each of the disciplines' foci of study, spirituality is seen from the perspectives of relationship to God, relationship to society and relationship to self.

In the discipline of theology, the spirituality that embraces the discovery of this true self is rooted in a relationship to God. However, this relationship can take many forms depending on the views of a particular tradition or theologian. Codes of behavior, church law, prayer, Christian principles, observation of

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nature and meditational techniques are among the varying ways this spirituality of relationship to God is understood. It is important to note, moreover, that this wholeness through relationship to God is considered a manifestation of both human intention and the mysterious grace of God.

Sociology looks at this spirituality of wholeness in the way it is manifested in social attitudes and behaviors of varied philosophical stances. These attitudes and behaviors are looked at as either adherence to or digression from prescribed cultural values or societal institutions. Specifically, although sociologists of religion look at how a large proportion of society uses prayer as a means of bettering their worldly relationships, the spirituality of the women's movement utilizes rituals of empowerment that are not considered as common to many sects in society. Ultimately, the spirituality embraced by the gender healing movements, religious ideologies and existential philosophies are all viewpoints of spiritual wholeness that are complimented or opposed by a relationship to society.

The discipline of psychology views this spirituality of wholeness as an attitude of acceptance to the unknowns in our life. These unknown elements are both the inevitable changes in human development and the realizations brought about by unique human experiences. Consequently, spirituality can be seen as the acceptance of unknown parts of our self (both positive and negative); acceptance of biological and emotional development that propels us to grow; acceptance of natural laws that define the boundaries of who we are as human beings; acceptance of how our relatedness as human beings sets us free from the myths of hierarchy and immortality and; acceptance of the paradox that each individual is at his/her best when meanings and missions are discovered beyond the self. Undoubtedly, the acceptance that takes place in

these understandings of spirituality is critical groundwork for the client's capability to work on change.

Differences Within Theology

Within theological understandings, the spirituality of Judaism, which views hope and mystery as central, has remained rooted in it's biblical heritage to view spirituality as a journey rather than a goal. Whereas the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic traditions view the sacraments and the life of intimate prayer with God as mechanisms to experience God, Judaic belief has been more reluctant to advocate human modes of fully entering into the life of the spirit. Unlike the many Christian churches that have adopted less dogmatic attitudes, spirituality is not necessarily recognized through reached unions of communal discussion, interactive prayer and/or the ritual transformations of life and death.

Although the spirituality of Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Protestant traditions all focus on the life of Jesus Christ, each demonstrates a unique way of incorporating this theme. Although Roman Catholic and Orthodox traditions emphasize the sacraments as a means to relationship with God and Jesus Christ, the former views the developmental conversion of the human psyche as fundamental to the spiritual life. Specifically, the Catholic understanding of giving up the rigidity of the human ego through penance and striving toward good works implies a fair amount about day to day living. Moreover, similar to Protestant spirituality, the Catholic tradition has gained increasing openness to a spirituality which takes into account components from other religions.

As Protestant and Roman Catholic spirituality have grown more alike in the past few decades, both are now embracing the importance of Eastern

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meditative practices, retreat functions and charismatic orientations. However, the Protestant bent toward rejection of otherworldly piety and secularism are factors that tend to separate it from other older Christian orientations. Clearly, the Protestant traditions seem to be more in tune with modern attitudes around universal and multi-cultural avenues of philosophy. This is somewhat related to many of the contemporary theological writers have given importance to the ideals of inclusivity and connectedness rather than exclusivity.

As explained in the theological section, theologians such as Schneiders (1986; 1989), Bechtle (1985), Baur (1983) and Fox (1980) have given a new meaning to spirituality for their home discipline. Many of these individuals have opened up to attitudes of living life abundantly through openness to God's mystery in love and in nature. Spirituality for many of these contemporary theologians has come to mean less adherence to dogma or rules and more receptivity to the mysterious nature of God in our lives. Prayer life, ritual and meditation are not geared to meet a structure of so-called "appropriate" guidelines for spiritual connection. Instead, revelation of the spirit is a process that each human being receives under unique guidance and discovery. Spirituality is no longer an autonomous and disciplined experience as much as allowing for God's unique entrance into our lives.

Differences Within Sociology

Differences that appear from a sociological perspective are primarily between the sociology of religion and the gender movements. Specifically, although leaders in male and female spirituality address a belief and relationship to God, these views tend to focus on the discovery of power and strength through the self versus a higher Power. Sociologists of religion, however, give great emphasis to a spirituality where strength and quality of life

are encouraged through continuous communication with God. Consequently, the following paragraphs give clear indication of how authors within each focus of society are more similar than different in their understandings of spirituality.

As sociologists of religion have used both understandings of spiritual well-being and prayer to explain spirituality, it would seem that researchers within these domains have varied opinion on the subject. However, spiritual well-being and prayer have both remained rooted in a spirituality that places central importance on relationship with God.   Specifically, spiritual well-being is considered to be measured through existential and religious relationships that an individual has to others and to God. Prayer, similarly, is explained by sociologists as an intimate human relationship to God. Consequently, what may seem to be very different understandings are really just different approaches to communicating the same theme.

Sociological studies of spirituality within the gender movements indicate many similarities between male and female understandings.   Many of these researchers view growth in spirituality as heavily based in the journey through the self. Specifically, women's spirituality acknowledges the discovery of the goddess within the self, with the goals of empowerment and awareness as central. The men's movement, moreover, in it's motive to join the masculine and feminine sides, seeks to integrate all components within the self. Clearly, the ultimate goal of fully confronting the strength of the true self is apparent in feminist and men's spirituality.

<u>Differences Within Psychology</u>

Although each understanding of spirituality within psychology centers on the shedding of unhealthy perspectives to process the incorporation of healing ones, theorists take different views on the theme. Jung (Benner, 1988) provided

a firm view that this incorporation was a painful process of accepting facets of the self that are darker and opposing to our own images. With this base, many theorists explored this in terms of letting go of our ego's will toward acceptance of the inevitable laws of the universe and human nature. However, acceptance takes many different forms of actions and thoughts depending on the theory

Most of these psychological theorists of spirituality claimed that this letting go/acceptance process was only possible by submitting to God's plan. God, according to these theorists, leads us to the part of ourself which allows for true understanding about our life journey. However, how this letting go process with God is viewed as what makes each of these theorists different in their understanding of spirituality. Specifically, while Kunkel (Benner 1988) views the letting go process as a return to the we-feelings of the pre-egocentric child, Van Kaam (Benner 1988) views it as an awareness of the presence of God. Moreover, while May (Benner 1988) views this process as surrendering to a greater reality through an attitude of willingness, Frankl (1984) acknowledges the wills of deeds, loving interaction and changing attitudes as an understanding. Finally, while Berensen (1990) proposes the spirituality of relatedness to God and others, twelve-step programs acknowledge the Power greater than (not related to) the self in overcoming addictions.

Other theorists who have not explicitly used the term spirituality in their work have offered implications of spiritual progress. Specifically, both Humanistic and Developmental Psychology view the task as moving and becoming in personhood as vital. Humanist Carl Rogers (Corsini and Wedding, 1989) understands this as the basic human drive toward completeness and fulfillment labeled self-actualization. This drive is the gradual establishment of congruence with our personal depths in which we simultaneously assume our

role in the greater scheme of things (Fuller 1982). In more defined form, Developmental psychologists Kohlberg and Erikson (Conn and Conn 1990) have explained the stages of this simultaneous growth toward human fulfillment and universal good in moral and psychosocial stages. These stages look at the internal attitudes and external relationships whereby wholeness is gradually attained in recognition of the greater picture.

Overlap Among the Disciplines

As stated in the introduction, expansive conclusions about specific differences between the three disciplines proves to be difficult in light of the enormous overlaps. However, exploration of how each psychological researcher shares components of his understanding with other disciplines will allow the reader to make sense of the implications for training and practice. In addition, comprehension of the connections between the various disciplines may evoke ideas for further research from professionals in all academic disciplines.

Beginning with Jung's (Benner 1988) understanding of spirituality as a process of individuation, several connections can be made to sociological viewpoints . Specifically, as individuation entails the integration of various complementary and conflicting elements of personality into the self, components of men's spiritual development come to mind. The integration of both feminine and masculine aspects of the self is a component of men's spiritual development that is really rooted in Jungian psychological processes. However, the men's movement expands on this psychological concept by exploring its' implications on the norms of male behavior in society.

The spirituality within the We-Psychology of Kunkel (Benner 1988) is very alive in sociological views of spirituality as understood by women and

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religion. In We-Psychology, a return to the we-feelings of the pre-egocentric child is the spirituality that leads to wholeness through our relationship to others. Similarly, women's spirituality, seeking relationship rather than hierarchy as a means to growth, understands the importance of connectedness with others. Clearly, the "we" versus the "I" is a central component in the women's movement's goal to re-structure unhealthy divisions of knowledge in society. Secondly, sociologists of religion acknowledge how important this "we" relationship to the world is in the Spiritual Well-Being Scale. Specifically, the scale's measure of existential well-being indicates how vital an individual's relationship to others is in spiritual health.

Psychologists from the existential perspective, including van Kaam (Benner, 1988) and Frankl (1984), share many factors of spirituality with other disciplines. Van Kaam, looking at spirituality as an awareness of the presence of God in order to discover the true self, provides a base for one aspect of men's spiritual development. This aspect is what Rohr and Martos (1991) explain as "identifying with the wild nature of God" to access the self that can take risks. Evidently, identifying with the various faces of God in order to get in touch with our core self is how all of these authors understand spirituality. Frankl, viewing good deeds, love, and change in attitude as essential, shares many factors of spirituality with both theological viewpoints. First, theologian Fox (1980) and his path of compassion and social justice is primary to Frankl's claim around actions for the betterment of the whole universe. Second, the Gospel of Mark's centering on love for others (Conn, 1989) mirrors Frankl's avenue of finding meaning through the encountering of another.

Contemplative psychologist May (Benner, 1988), who understands spirituality as an attitude of willingness rather than willfulness, advocates

surrendering to a reality greater than oneself. This surrender runs parallel to the Catholic understanding of spirituality that moves from self-fulfillment to unity with God and the universe. Thus, what appears to be central to these two understandings is the courage to be open to the mystery of life by letting go of the attempt to master destiny. Hence, the realization that many factors entering into our life are out of our control is the spiritual attitude that allows an individual to live more fully.

Theorist Rogers, who focuses on self-actualization and finding meaning in the personal, shares many components of his theory with women's spirituality. Rogers theorizes that an individual's establishment of congruence with personal depths is simultaneous to assuming one's role in the greater scheme of things (Fuller, 1982). This attitude is clearly outlined in women's spiritual development (Harris, 1990) which views self-discovery and nourishment as building blocks for each individual to determine the unique direction of their lives.

Developmental psychology's understanding of spirituality as growth from egocentric values toward universal principles parallels the theological viewpoint of Catholic spirituality. Specifically, the developmental process of moving beyond ones own self-centered perspective in order to live for the benefit of the whole environment is somewhat similar to the "three ways" of Catholic spirituality. Catholic spirituality, however, describes the development as a movement toward the will of God rather than movement toward universal good. Clearly, one could argue that the will of God and universal good are one in the same depending on personal viewpoint.

Bergin's (1988) understanding of spirituality in the use of intrapsychic and social system methods is manifested in the sociological phenomenon of

both prayer and self-help groups. Specifically, the intrapsychic technique of prayer is explained as a common expression of spirituality in society by sociologist Greeley (1990). Moreover, the use of social systems as spiritual channels is most evident in the millions of Alcoholics Anonymous groups that seek aid from a higher power to recover from their addiction. Bergin, in his recognition of these techniques, shares opinion with sociological researchers who isolate the behavioral manifestations of spirituality in our society.

Benner's (1989) break-down of spirituality into natural, religious and Christian sections parallels theologian Schneider's (1986) philosophical, religious and Christian spiritual meanings. For instance, natural and philosophical meanings both denote the human being's natural longing for self-transcendence that may not necessarily be recognized as the call of God. Moreover, both authors view religious and Christian spiritualities as involving a relationship with God and eventually Jesus Christ. Thus, both the psychologist and the theologian recognize the need to view spirituality as rooted in self-transcendence that may or may not be based in God.

Berensen's (1990) discussion of spirituality as a process of relatedness has also been supported by theological and sociological researchers. First, the relatedness between an individual and a divine presence is an experiential spirituality that has been advocated by all Christian religious traditions. Second, the relatedness between human beings is stressed by women's spirituality in its' priority of relationship over hierarchy. Third, the relatedness between feminine and masculine aspects of the self is a strong component of the integration process stressed in men's spirituality. Finally, the relatedness between human beings and a divine presence is the spirituality of connectedness that theologian Fox (1980) describes in his path of God in

creation.

In the twelve-step spirituality advocated by Alcoholics Anonymous, it is clear that an integration of many factors of spirituality comes to play. Specifically, gradual turning over of the will to a higher Power, forgiveness, prayer and meditation are all aspects of the program's spirituality that draw from many religious belief systems. However, as the program makes it clear that spirituality, not religiosity, is the center, personal conceptions of a higher Power could range from Catholicism to the "goddess within" of women's spirituality. As Bridgman (1987) notes, individuals in the program come to understand God in a general revelatory sense much like naturalistic laws. Consequently, the twelve-step program, although rooted in particular themes around a higher Power, views spirituality as an experience filled with unique perspectives for each individual.

Conclusion

The differences in understandings of spirituality between theology, sociology and psychology appear to be how wholeness or the "true" self is discovered in relation to God, to society and to self. In addition, within each of these disciplines there is variance in the ways this discovery of wholeness may evolve or be expressed. As a result, a large overlap among the three disciplines can be observed, giving psychological theories of spirituality many commonalties with other understandings. The question arises, therefore, of whether spirituality needs more consideration in psychology in order improve therapeutic communications. The following chapter on implications will look at this question as well as other issues in a more expansive format.

CHAPTER SEVEN

IMPLICATIONS FOR TRAINING AND PRACTICE

As outlined in the preceding section, a particular theologian, sociologist or psychologist may or may not agree with a fellow professional on an understanding of spirituality, regardless of a similar academic origin. Given this diversity of definitional understandings, there is question of whether discussion of spirituality in therapeutic interaction is effective.   Moreover, is it even necessary for the field of psychology to acknowledge a formal understanding of spirituality in training and practice? Exploring these questions, this chapter will address implications for students in training and professionals in clinical practice.

Opposing Viewpoints

In 1989, Tjelvtveit stressed the immanent need for psychotherapists to reflect on how their models of human nature impact understanding of human experience. Specifically, the author suggests that if practitioners are not aware of their own unique model, they run the risk of imposing a plethora of biased worldviews on the client. In addition, incomplete resolution of countertransference issues that occur out of this lack of awareness may result in ineffective therapy. Fortunately, Tjeltveit (1989) goes on to say that the ability to reflect on these models will provide several positive implications for the field; implications which also have a direct bearing on the concept of spirituality in the field.

Tjeltveit (1989) first explains how models of human beings that are more integrated will aid in increased understanding of psychotherapy, as research would take a more inclusive look at the dimensions of human functioning. Specifically, using a model that includes all aspects of the person, with the knowledge that each theorist holds relevance, may aid research in overcoming neglect of the human totality. This has direct bearing on how the consideration of spirituality in psychology could provide a fuller conception of humanity. Secondly, Tjeltveit explains how reflection of these models will increase consistency between therapists' conceptions and their actions in research and therapy. In relation to spirituality, one could also speculate that the therapist's understanding of spirituality has a profound impact on how he/she will deal with it when brought up in therapy. Specifically, if the concept is never acknowledged in a practitioner's model, numerous omissions concerning the belief system of a client may result. A third consideration, an improved model of human beings that takes into account the insights of both humanistic and scientific cultures in psychology, offers multiple implications. For example, a more comprehensive model of human beings that would result from this reflection might have bearing on both the subjects of scientific research and the recipients of the clinical profession. Errors of inconsistency, especially with respect to how one understands the spiritual realm, would be reduced. Finally, Tjeltveit explains how the reflection of models has enormous potential to improve client well-being as it would lead to the task of confronting countertransference issues. Honesty pertaining to the spiritual viewpoints of the therapist has definite potential to aid practitioners in projections which may impede therapeutic growth.

Evidently, what the author offers is a good base for determining whether

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serious consideration might even be given to the spiritual realm. It appears that assumptions about human beings within psychological theory are in definite need of scrutiny if the field is to progress. Specifically, if a theorist or clinician looks only at particular aspects of the human condition, is it conceivable that they are comprehensively understanding the nature of a client's concern? If the spiritual realm of the individual is seen as "untouchable" due to its' religious connotations, might the clinician be overlooking the primary needs particular to certain clients? Moreover, if spiritual concerns were seen as value-laden, would it not also be true to claim mental and emotional components of the psyche as such? For example, one might conclude that the interpretation of dreams, cognitive restructuring, and mirroring of feelings infer a large amount of what a therapist views as beneficial for human wholeness. Clearly, inclusion of only the aspects that are professionally "comfortable" seems illogical when one considers the aim of the psychological field: individual well-being.

Contrary to Tjeltveit's (1989) considerations, Robb (1986) contends that, although a multitude of issues center around human existence, it is not necessary to frame them in a spiritual or supernatural framework. Specifically, the author claims that using a logical-empirical framework provides the most practical and effective means of dealing with "spiritual" issues, as solutions are no longer derived from an unsubstantiated source. A model based on the principles of Rational-Emotive Therapy, for example, can easily be applied to the broadest types of spiritual issues, as meaning and evaluative beliefs behind these issues is what essentially needs to be reconciled. According to Robb, any absolutist or supernatural thinking in therapeutic communication needs to be restructured in logical, functional terms.

Although Robb (1986) offers practical suggestions to deal with the

modern-day curiosity of the spiritual aspect of man, the author fails to acknowledge several extremely important factors. Most importantly, Robb's claim that supernatural thinking automatically results in emotional disturbance is inconsistent with both the research and experience of participants in self-help groups that indicate the very opposite. Despite the fact that some individuals carry dysfunctional images of the supernatural based on early experiences, many individuals who recognize a power greater than themselves lead healthy and productive lives. Secondly, if in fact the discipline of psychology did advocate the use of only a logical-empirical framework in addressing "spiritual" issues, miscommunication between therapist and client would inevitably result when the subject arises. For example, if the client conceptualizes an issue under a particular "spiritual" framework, complications might arise if the therapist fails to incorporate these agents in the client's thinking process. In sum, the field of psychology might take enormous risks if decided that only one objective framework need be used to work effectively. Consistent with the mysterious nature of the human condition, any field that centers around the study of humans would do well to be open to new ideas around functioning.

<u>Implications for Training and Practice</u>

In regard to the preceding opposing views of how the issue of spirituality should be dealt with in psychological training and practice, several implications are in order. First, spirituality can no longer be a subject that is left for study only by the discipline of theology. Specifically, although some psychological theorists have given different evaluations of the concept, the time has come for psychological research to begin inquiry into spirituality in training and practice. This seems crucial when one considers Shafranske and Gorsuch's (1984) finding that psychologists who perceive spirituality relevant in their own lives

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are more likely to perceive spirituality as relevant within clinical work. Undoubtedly, the fact that some therapists are more inclined to look at the spiritual dimension out of their own experience is reason to be concerned that other therapists who do not acknowledge it may overlook central dynamics.

Due to this situation, several factors might be of value when approaching the question of how spirituality could be dealt with in training and practice. In regard to the education and training of clinicians, it would seem vital for all students to become highly aware of their own personal understanding of spirituality. Specifically, as noted in the preceding sections, each understanding of spirituality has an intricate design and is often made of factors from theological, sociological or psychological realms of education and experience. Thus, the student's awareness of his/her "spiritual design" (often developed out of early religious training and familial influences) is an effective way to deal with countertransference and unconscious processes. Secondly, the student's awareness of other understandings of spirituality (such as the ones covered in the preceding sections) could only bring about increased knowledge around the psychological components of different clients. Awareness might be aided through particular courses or texts which address both religious and spiritual issues in psychotherapy. One of the best examples of how spiritual and religious beliefs affect individual orientation is demonstrated in Freud's (1961) essay entitled "The Future of An Illusion." Freud, parallel to his own atheistic viewpoint, labeled spiritual tendencies as rooted in neurosis, which undoubtedly impacted his own therapeutic interventions.

In regard to clinical practice, this author also promotes particular standards for dealing with spirituality. First, in accordance with Benner (1989),

this author believes that the therapist can leave the door open for spiritual considerations in therapy by routinely bringing them up in assessment with other issues. Clearly, the fact that many clients view their spiritual life as only appropriate for the religious setting implies a fair amount about psychology's agenda and not about the needs of the client. Second, as spirituality is a unique experience for each individual, psychotherapy can only aid growth in this arena through an exploration, versus explanation, of meanings and blocks in a client's spiritual life. As Benner (1989) discusses, specific suggestions as to how specific spiritual attitudes or exercises (i.e. prayer, God images, healing rituals) should be, are best left for a relationship of spiritual guidance. Thus, increased understanding rather than the educatory "shoulds" of the spiritual experience seem to be the healthiest way to approach this avenue in the therapeutic arena. Thirdly, the psychotherapist would do well to understand his/her limits in dealing with spirituality in the profession. Understanding differences between religious and spiritual concerns, realizing the relationship's vulnerability to the spiritual values of the therapist, and the ability to make referrals when issues may be handled more appropriately in other environments are all central to these limits. Fortunately, when the therapist demonstrates his/her own boundaries around the capacity to handle spiritual issues, the client will begin to acquire greater awareness about the highly personal consistency of their perceptions.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION

Summary

The thesis examined understandings of spirituality across the domains of theology, sociology and psychology to ascertain both differences and similarities among the three fields. In conclusion, understandings of spirituality across the three disciplines indicated that differences were based on the way discovery of wholeness was perceived. Specifically, theological views perceive this discovery of wholeness through a relationship to God. Sociological views perceive this discovery of wholeness as it is manifested in actions or beliefs within societal structures. Psychological views perceive this discovery of wholeness in the acceptance of developmental changes and integration processes within the self.

In addition to the differences between the fields, understandings within each discipline displayed variances in the way this wholeness was approached in feelings, thoughts and actions. As a result, a collective exploration in all three arenas demonstrated more overlap than difference. Thus, the claim could be made that an understanding of spirituality, regardless of its' professional discipline, often takes in factors from other arenas. This fact, coupled with the increased use of the concept in the therapeutic environment, has important implications for practitioners within the field of psychology. Specifically, varied conceptions need to be looked at more seriously if therapeutic communication

is going to be meaningfully conducted and the therapeutic relationship is going to be honestly confronted.

The way these varied conceptions of spirituality can be looked at with an increased seriousness convey several implications for the training and practice of professional psychologists. The training of students in the field of psychology may be aided through exploration of both personal understandings of spirituality and various other understandings of spirituality. Moreover, clinicians may increase awareness of countertransference issues around spirituality by using the concept routinely in assessment procedures, exploring its' meaning in therapy and seeking further clarification in supervision.

Recommendations for Future Research

As the review of this concept suggests, further research focused on the practical use of the concept is needed. An initial question is what approaches students and clinicians in the field of psychology take toward issues of spirituality. The California State Psychological Association (CSPA) Task Force on Spirituality and Psychotherapy sought to look at the current status of psychologists' attitudes and training respective to spirituality (Shafranske and Gorsuch, 1984). However, the understanding of spirituality that was adopted, the "courage to look within and to trust," (Shafranske and Gorsuch, 1984, p.233) seems to relay an incomplete measure of the varied ways spirituality is perceived. Numerous factors in other understandings of spirituality indisputably go beyond the acts of introspection and trust.

Another question to be considered is the type of assessment procedure that is useful for practitioners in looking at the factors of a client's spirituality? Although questions around a client's understanding of spirituality might be brought up in the working of a case history, might it be necessary to utilize a

more in-depth tool? Specifically, if a client comes to the counseling environment with issues he/she labels as "spiritual" in nature, might a formal assessment of spiritual understanding be helpful? Evidently, sociologists have concluded that this is a definite need through their construction of the Spiritual Well-Being Scale.

A third consideration is how practitioners within the field learn to distinguish spiritual understandings from religious understandings. It is clear that just as one individual may have religious beliefs which dominate their understanding of spirituality, another individual with no religious commitment may hold an extremely defined understanding of personal spirituality. As a result, it is the responsibility of the therapist to become aware of how factors of religiosity and spirituality do or do not intertwine. This seems especially important when one considers the increased incidence of religious addictions in our society.

Another question is how a client's understanding of spirituality affects modes of thinking about difficulties within their life. With all the understandings previously reviewed, it is quite clear that client's may look at therapeutic issues differently depending on an understanding of spirituality. Specifically, how might an individual with a strong understanding of Catholic spirituality look at an issue of familial abuse in comparison to an advocate of feminist spirituality? Moreover, how might individuals from different religious backgrounds use spiritual understandings to confront or deny life crises? It seems necessary to look at how many personal issues of the client might be dealt with in accordance to a spiritual understanding.

How might the therapist's understanding of spirituality strengthen or weaken the client's personal understanding of spirituality? As Shafranske and

Gorsuch (1984) posit, psychologists' conscious orientation to spirituality and religion may influence the course of therapy for clients who use a spiritual viewpoint to express their experience. Therefore, the awareness the clinician has in understanding how his/her conception of spirituality is working in countertransference reactions is crucial for both the spiritual director and the secular therapist. It is apparent that continued research should focus on this area for the field to firmly establish the profound influences of a clinician's framework.

Upon reflection of these questions, it is apparent that far more work is needed in coming to a greater awareness about what spirituality is for each human being. Although the field of psychology has been reluctant to approach the concept because of its' connections with religious beliefs, mysticism and unexplainable phenomenon, the vast usage of spirituality in numerous environments makes it an inevitable topic of study. If psychology were to deny that the concept is an integral aspect of our therapeutic society, the needs of many individuals may be unrecognized. This study has sought to move the psychological field in general, and the therapeutic community in particular, one step forward in the understanding and application of spirituality in both clinical practice and professional training.

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The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of <u>Master of Arts.</u>

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Date

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Director's Signature