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Fostering Spirituality in a Pluralistic Secular Society

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A Thesis

In

The Department

Of

Theological Studies

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of Master of Arts at

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Abstract

Fostering Spirituality in a Pluralistic Secular Society

**Irene Phillips Miller
Concordia University, 2002**

With the advent of the postmodern era, a heralding of a renewed and energetic interest in spirituality is being announced globally throughout many facets of society. This revival in spirituality has adopted diverse forms of expression, which generate an interest and intellectual quest to discover the nature and reasons for this phenomenon. This study will examine the history and development of Christian spirituality, as well as the concepts and values which emerge as enduring and intrinsic to the nature of spirituality. The goal of this thesis is to study the influence of pluralism and secularism on spirituality, and the resulting modern and postmodern concepts of spirituality, which have emerged because of this cultural trend in postmodern society. In discovering the essential elements of authentic spirituality, this thesis will justify and propose reasons and methods for fostering spirituality in a pluralistic secular society.

Fostering Spirituality in a Pluralistic Secular Society

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1. Introduction

The term *spirituality* is a relatively new term in Christian Tradition and a recently developed concept that has expanded beyond the boundaries of theological studies, where one might expect it to be confined. Over the centuries, the discipline of Mystical or Ascetical Theology would have been inclusive of the modern concept of *spirituality* and *spiritual life* in the Christian Tradition. In the era of *postmodernism*¹, spirituality in its various forms and definitions has become a prevailing quest, a frequently mentioned euphemism, utilized by secular and more recently by some religious communities. Spirituality as a discipline has gradually become relevant, topical and respected in the scholastic milieu and in theological studies. What has occurred in history and society that gives spirituality a popular and scholastic appeal in today's postmodern society?

A factor that has stimulated my interest in spirituality is the secularization of the Quebec public school system shifting from a monolithic-confessional system to a pluralistic-secular system of education. To meet the needs of a pluralistically religious and secular society, the Québec Government has established a new service to replace Pastoral Animation with *Spiritual Care and*

¹ "The movement of Postmodernism involves the abandonment of the Enlightenment project and its animating vision of reason. It involves awareness of everything as in process, relativity of all perspectives of the universe and experience, ecological interdependence. Postmodernity means a world without fixed identity or confident future." James Fowler, *Faithful Change. The Personal and Public Challenges of Postmodern Life*. (Nashville, Abingdon Press, 1996). p. 179 –180.

Guidance and Community Involvement Service. The definition of *spirituality* in both Bill 118² and the document for spiritual community animators, *Developing the Inner Life and Changing the World*, seems to reflect the postmodern trend of reductionism and relativism³ which would remove religion and faith expression from the public educational system, while at the same time claiming to foster spirituality and spiritual life among students in the educational setting. The reductionism has been observed through the use of terms like *non-confessional*, *non-denominational* and *non-expression of faith transmission*.

The relativists are stating that one perspective on a particular religion, or belief system, is as good as, if not the same as, one another. With relativism, the uniqueness of a religious tradition may not be stressed, and the differences may be avoided, which seems to result in the use of amorphous generic themes (peace, light etc.) and which try to encompass all religious traditions together. This trend can cause a loss of meaning within the religious beliefs because only the generic concepts are used in this process. The legalization⁴ of *spirituality* in the public forum of education is somehow more acceptable than the faith expression and faith transmission which was explicit in the former confessional system. The shift in emphasis alerts one to a differentiation between *spirituality* and *religion* or *religious expression*. This posits the question, is there a

² Bill 118 is an act to amend various legislative provisions respecting education as regards to confessional matters. *Government Orientations: Responding to the Diversity of Moral and Religious Expectations* was passed by the Ministry of Education for the Province of Québec, on May 10, 2000. This bill changed the confessional system of education based on religion (Catholic and Protestant) to a linguistic (French, English) religiously pluralistic system of education. All public schools in Quebec became non-confessional on July 1, 2000. (*MEQ working document* for application of Bill 118, 2000).

³ *Reductionism and Relativism* will be discussed in Chapter IV, *The Influence of Pluralism on Spirituality*.

difference in these terms that has been heightened by postmodern secular pluralism? If there is a difference between *religion* and *spirituality*, what is the nature of this difference? One wonders why an educational system is embracing *spirituality* while negating *faith expression*.

While not an in-depth exploration of the thought of Bernard Lonergan, the thesis will draw on some specific tools of analysis from his *Method in Theology*. It will explore whether one can have an authentic definition of spirituality based on Lonergan's concepts of conversion and authenticity. The definition of conversion, according to Lonergan, is very specific and crucial to the understanding of authenticity. Lonergan defines conversion as follows:

Conversion is a radical experience where a subject undergoes a reversal or an about face from one manner of being to another...a movement from unauthenticity toward authenticity...an experience of self-transcendence. The three levels of conversion are 1) intellectual: movement from seeing the world as immediate to mediated... awareness of one's own conscious processes, experiencing, understanding and judging. 2) moral: a shift from satisfaction to truly good and valuable. 3) religious/affective: expansion of one's love toward ultimate meaning...openness to repressed, unconscious feelings.⁵

A person who has undergone these three levels of conversion is able to view reality beyond just looking at the obvious sensory data. Such a person is able to move from one realm of meaning to another, from common sense to theory to interiority to transcendence, and to see deeper symbolic meaning in observable

⁴ Bill 118

⁵ Lonergan website < [http://www. Lonergan.on.ca/](http://www.Lonergan.on.ca/) Glossary.> (date accessed, Sept.29, 2001)

data.⁶ It is in the transcendent level that God is known and loved. Conversion at the three levels is an indicator of authenticity, which according to Lonergan is defined as follows:

Authenticity is an openness and obedience to one's inner norms for raising questions. These inner norms, or criteria – be attentive, intelligent, responsible, reasonable, loving - puts us in touch with reality. For Lonergan, genuine objectivity is attained only by the authentic subject. Thus, authenticity is the human being's "deepest need and most prized achievement." (Method,254). It is the inner exigency for truth and value...Authenticity is expressed in concrete actions. It could easily be said that authenticity is merely "being oneself".⁷

Given Lonergan's understanding of *conversion* and *authenticity* as a basic framework, can an authentic spirituality emerge in our present social reality? This exploration into authentic spirituality will gradually unfold throughout the thesis. Along with the definition of authentic spirituality, there will be an exploration into how our secular culture has altered, relativized or reduced our traditional definition of Christian spirituality or spirituality in general. Finally, if a definition or understanding of spirituality has been altered, what impact has secularism and pluralism had on the concept of *spirituality*?

These ponderings are the direct result of the catalyst generated by the Québec Government's stance on *spirituality*. This leads me to ask the more general question; what is the definition of *spirituality*? Has this definition remained constant over long periods of history or is it constantly changing and

⁶ Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971) Chapter 3, *Meaning*, p.57-99.

⁷ Lonergan website < <http://www.Lonergan.on.ca/> Glossary.> (date accessed, Sept.29, 2001)

developing from its original conception? Can *spirituality* be defined today, or is it too fluid and dynamic to be definitive? How has our social context and history altered our understanding of *spirituality*? Is *spirituality* bound by history and culture, or is *spirituality* universal, transcultural and transcendent of time and history?

It would appear that our society has had an effect on the *expression of spirituality*, the *kinds of spirituality*, and the relationship between *religion* and spirituality. However, there needs to be an exploration into that *essence of spirituality* which endures throughout history and is transcultural. In light of these recent developments in society, culture and education, my thesis proposes to explore the question: Given that the essence of spirituality endures and is of ultimate value, how does spirituality emerge in a pluralistic secular society? This question will be explored through a consideration of the following relevant questions: Is there an intrinsic value in traditional spirituality, and if so, how can this intrinsic value be identified or defined? Does this identified intrinsic value of traditional spirituality respond to the modern quest for ultimate meaning and if so, how can this spirituality be fostered in a pluralistic secular society?

I intend to begin my thesis with historical research which will focus on the origins and development of spirituality, as well as the various schools of thought and practice in church history. My main focus will be Christian; therefore I will

concentrate on the origins from Christian Scripture to the Desert Fathers and Mothers, to monastic, lay and recent eclectic spiritualities.

Having explored the origins and developments of spirituality, I will then explore the traditional understanding of *spirituality* from the Christian Tradition, seeking a true foundational understanding of some of the major components of *spirituality, conversion, authenticity, self-transcendence, religious experience, faith, the indwelling spirit of God's love and prayer*. I intend to refer to Bernard Lonergan's Chapter four, *Religion*, for my exploration of a definition of *spirituality* and its essence. I will explore the gift of God's love, which is transcendent, beyond human understanding and transcultural, not bound to history or the culture of a particular society. I will draw upon Lonergan's transcendent and transcultural aspects of God's gift of love and the religiously differentiated consciousness approached by the ascetic and mystic. From these explorations I intend to draw forth the authentic elements of spirituality, which have ultimate meaning and are constant and portable in any culture or society.

Because of the pluralistic nature of our present society, the dialectic of a religiously undifferentiated consciousness with a religiously differentiated consciousness would be an important factor to explore, especially in the discipline of spirituality. An undifferentiated consciousness uses indiscriminately the procedures of common sense (first level of knowing), so its explanations, its self-knowledge and its religion are rudimentary. An undifferentiated

consciousness insists on homogeneity in religious beliefs. On the other hand, a differentiated consciousness is the self-knowledge that understands different realms of meaning (common sense, theory, interiority, transcendence) and knows how to shift from one to another, without losing one's own identity or religious beliefs.⁸ The other dialectic, which I expect will emerge, is the polemic stance of religious fundamentalism with secular humanism. A third dialectic will be the traditional, modern and postmodern concepts of spirituality. Of particular interest is the concept of spirituality, which has recently been espoused by the Ministère de L'Éducation du Québec. I will posit that the ministerial position is indeed a *counter position*, which according to Lonergan, is "a statement incompatible with religious, moral and intellectual conversion, lacking authenticity"⁹, whose aim might well be the separation of religion from spirituality in the context of separation of church and state. The separation of *spirituality* from *religion* as a stance of many in today's pluralistic secular society will be examined to see if there is an inherent relationship, difference or separation of these two concepts. I will explore the term, *religion*, and its relationship or complementarities to *spirituality*, and try to understand where *spiritual conversion* fits into Lonergan's understanding of *religious conversion*.¹⁰

The understanding of pluralism, relativism and reductionism concerning spirituality and religious expression, and the impact of secularism on religion and spirituality, will be explored. The purpose of this exploration is to seek to

⁸ Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, p.84.

⁹ Lonergan, 249.

discover an authentic spirituality in the midst of a pluralistic secular society, and to examine whether an authentic spirituality will respond to the need for ultimate meaning in today's society.

Finally, drawing on concepts from Lonergan's chapter on *Communication*, and utilizing his principles of communication and community as a paradigm for articulation and dialogue of an authentic spirituality in a society of diversity and indifference, I intend to explore ways of communicating and fostering spirituality in an educational setting or a community environment. I will suggest those elements of a community which might foster spirituality by being beacons of conversion, self-transcendence, authenticity, renewal and revitalization for others.¹¹ In conclusion, I intend to demonstrate that the experience of God's love is transcendent and transcultural, and therefore of ultimate value in any society.

¹⁰ Lonergan, Ch. 4, Religion. pp. 101-124

¹¹ Lonergan, 357, 359-368.

2. The History of Spirituality

A. Introduction

My thesis begins with a history of spirituality, which will focus on the origins and development of Christian spirituality as well as the various schools of thought and practice in church history. The exploration into the history of spirituality is primarily from the Christian tradition, because my intention is to probe vertically into the horizon of my own Roman Catholic tradition, rather than broadening my search with other traditions and failing to explore deeply into any tradition. The historical study probes into the essence of Christian spirituality and comes to know what there is in Christian Catholic Spirituality that is non-negotiable in an interfaith dialogue, and why that principle or value is of such importance to the Christian Catholic tradition of spirituality. In order to find the essence and intrinsic value of spirituality, I am choosing to pursue an in-depth exploration of one faith tradition. The general attentiveness to other religious traditions will be primarily from the perspective of religious pluralism.

The history of Christian spirituality begins before the birth of its founder, Jesus of Nazareth, and has endured for two thousand years after his death. What has endured in this spirituality and what has remained relevant in today's postmodern society?

With these prevailing questions, the historical journey has a focused intention of discovering the essential, universal and constant, which has endured over the years of its existence.

B. Origins – The Jewish Legacy of Christian Spirituality

One cannot explore the history of Christian spirituality without first acknowledging the legacy of Judaism in the origins and development of Christianity. Besides the Christian biblical dimension of Judaism, the Jewish religion was:

...above all the religion of the covenant. The covenant of the exodus and of Sinai, that is a covenant based on the gratuitous divine choice, but in return requiring that man gives himself wholly over to God with his entire life. In this covenant, the holiness of God blazes out, as an exigency that only he can render his own capable of bearing; and yet it is the source of an unshakable trust, not only in the divine power, in his strong hand and outstretched arm always ready to save his people, but also in the intimacy. The gracious nearness of the God whom the heavens and the heaven of heavens cannot contain, who none the less condescends to make himself the companion of his people here below."¹²

It is evident from this covenant that both the *transcendence* and *immanence* of God takes form in the minds and hearts of the Jewish people. These attributes of God will develop even more so in the immanence of a human God dwelling among his people in the Christian tradition. The *transcendence* and *immanence* of God has been a constant point of reference in Christian Spirituality and in various shapes and forms in other spiritualities as well,

¹² Louis Bouyer, *The Spirit of the New Testament and the Fathers* (N.J.: Desclee Co., 1960). p.5.

especially in modern times. *Transcendence* and *immanence* of God seems to be an essential element in spirituality throughout the ages.

Jewish piety was derived from a God of majesty, fidelity, tenderness and love. "This aroused a piety unlike any other. Here adoration and love, the highest and purest religion, the most intimate and most exalting trust, are perfectly blended..."¹³ Along with his personal loving relationship, there is a purification of those whom God loves through trials and melting down the heart of stone into a "heart of flesh".¹⁴ Bouyer describes the *piety* of Judaism as having "elements of morality and mysticism".¹⁵ The purity of heart was sought as a means of encounter with God. Humility and a moral life were the means for holiness and a mystical encounter with the Divine.

It is interesting that *piety* rather than *spirituality* is used at this time in history. *Piety*, according to Augustine, is derived from the word *pietas*, (Greek, *eusebeia*). In its strict sense, it ordinarily means the worship of God. However, it is also used to express a dutiful respect for parents. Moreover, in everyday speech, the word *pietas* means pity or mercy. This has come about, I think, because God commands us especially to practice mercy, declaring that it pleases Him as much as or even more than sacrifices.¹⁶

¹³ Louis Bouyer, p. 5

¹⁴ Ezekiel 36:26

¹⁵ Louis Bouyer, p.8

¹⁶ St. Augustine, Gerald G. Walsh sj (Translator) *City of God*.(N.Y.: Doubleday, 1958). p.188

From Augustine, we realize that *piety* had an internal locus which emphasized a moral other-centeredness and which seems to have priority over external worship and sacrifice, not because worship is unimportant, but rather that worship is of little or no value without the internal force of a moral generous life.

What is of great interest is the movement from the blessedness of the rich in Judaism, to the writings of Jeremiah or Ezechiel, who prophesied the Blessed One as *servant of God*, humiliated, scorned, rejected and friend of God. It is clear that Job, Jeremiah, Isaiah and Hosea were men of God, with a close loving relationship with Yahweh. Suffering, however, was implicit in the journey towards purity of heart, and deep mystical union with a God who wished to teach and prophesy through the actions and written word of his messengers.

Jordan Aumann, a Dominican historian of Spirituality, views the Jewish tradition in the following way:

The message that comes to us from this rapid survey of the patriarchs and the prophets, is that God loves us and asks our response to his love through faith and obedience... Whatever value of the Old Testament in itself as a source of the spiritual life, and however inspiring it is as a witness to the religious experience of the patriarchs and the prophets, for us (Christians) it is seen primarily as a preparation for Christ and his Kingdom. Such is the teaching of Vatican II.¹⁷

¹⁷ Jordan Aumann, o.p., *Christian Spirituality in the Catholic Tradition*. (London: Sheed and Ward, 1985). p.8

The Vatican II document, *Dogmatic Constitution of Divine Revelation*, emphasizes the Hebrew scripture as preparation for a greater event in history, the coming of the Messiah. "The economy of the Old Testament was deliberately so orientated that it should prepare for and declare in prophecy the coming of Christ, Redeemer of all men, and of the messianic Kingdom."¹⁸

This declaration of Hebrew texts as preparation for Christian fulfillment by Catholic theologians has been a source of contention for Jewish scholars who feel that the Hebrew scriptures cannot be simply a preparation for the advent of Christ and Christianity. For Jews, this is a degradation of the value of Hebrew texts that remain today a source of ultimate reverence in the Torah and Talmud as an intrinsic dimension of Jewish tradition and worship. To view these sacred Jewish scriptures as pre-Christian prophetic literature is, for Jews, a diminishment of Hebrew scripture and tradition. In Christian-Jewish dialogue, this factor must be respected in a pluralistic society.

Christians cannot disregard the words of Jesus as recorded in Mark: "I did not come to abolish the law and the prophets but to complete them."¹⁹ Christians are faced with the dichotomy of either respecting the Jewish tradition intact or of attempting to dialogue with Jews about these prophetic words of Jesus, which might be the cause of divisiveness and misunderstanding between Jews and Christians. The Jewish-Christian dialogue begins with the children of

¹⁸ Walter Abbot, ed. Documents of Vatican II, *Dogmatic Constitution of Divine Revelation*, No.15 passim

¹⁹ The Jerusalem Bible, *Mark 5:7*, (N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1966).

the God of Abraham meeting together on common ground, rejoicing in our mutual praise of Yahweh. Are Christians and Jews prepared to speak of Jesus as the fulfillment of Hebrew Scripture? Time, sensitivity and celebration of the *common ground* are essential prior to sharing *controversy*. The Jewish Christian “friendship” may require many years of climatization before venturing forth into dialogue over crucial controversial issues.

C. The Teaching and Influence of Jesus

With the legacy of Judaism, and its prophetic theme of the *suffering servant*, it is not surprising to Christians that their Savior was a person borne of humble origins, and who lived and taught the Christian message from the perspective of one who was despised, rejected and crucified in a demeaning and humiliating manner. His glorification was the paradoxical mystery of one who triumphs over the debasement of humanity and shameful death in a sinful society, which was unaware of the mystery of God at work among God's people.

For those who chose to believe in the resurrection of Jesus, a new and glorious spirituality was borne in the depths of their being. The suffering and humiliations of life could now take on a new significance, a new awakening, a new compassion and a new resurrection in the personal life of each Christian. Mysteriously, the Christian, through the presence and gifts of the Holy Spirit, was able to endure with courage, joy and strength, the spiritual journey of purification, trial, humiliation and finally death and eternal life with God. This spiritual journey

is clearly foretold by the Judaic prophets who lived and wrote about the suffering servant as one blessed by God. Jesus, as suffering servant and Messiah, was not accepted in the Jewish tradition, although many Jews were to be converted to Christianity despite the Jewish rejection of Jesus as Messiah.

Although the resurrection is the centrality of the Christian message, the actual life and teachings of Jesus enflesh the spirituality of Christian faith. The influence of John the Baptist, the precursor of Jesus who practiced extreme asceticism and anchoritism in the desert, preached *metanoia* before the coming of the Kingdom. The King, like John the Baptist, would choose *kenosis*, humiliation, poverty and obscurity rather than wealth and fame. Jesus would live a life of obedience to his Divine Father. The synoptic Gospels refer to the loving relationship between Father and Son. God calls Jesus, "My well beloved Son".²⁰ "Everything has been given to me by my Father."²¹ The gospel also gives witness to the holiness and humanity of Jesus. He is seen as sinless. "Which of you will convict me of sin?"²² Although Jesus was not an ascetic in the sense of the tradition of John the Baptism, he lived among men and women and sinners; he ate and drank with the community.²³ Before his death of utter betrayal and humiliation on the cross, he left the legacy of the broken bread of his flesh and sacred chalice of his blood sanctified in the truth.²⁴ He sent the advocate, the

²⁰ Mark 1:11

²¹ Mark 16:21-22

²² John 8:16

²³ Matthew 11:17, Luke 7:34

²⁴ John 17:19

Spirit who would teach his followers all things.²⁵ This Spirit of truth will be available to all who ask for it. "Will not the Father give the Spirit to those who ask for it."²⁶

It is this Spirit that is the basis of Christian spirituality and the development of the early Church as recorded in the Book of Acts. Peter and Paul predominate as in Acts 2:32-63, where the discourse of Peter is focused on these words, "God has raised up this Jesus; we are all witnesses of it, and now exalted by God's right hand, he has received from the Father, the Holy Spirit, object of the promise, and has poured it out. This is what you see and hear."²⁷

D. The Primitive Church and St. Paul

Paul, the missionary apostle, brought the Gospel message and teachings on the Spirit to the Gentiles as well as the Jews. Having experienced a radical conversion on the road to Damascus, Paul never wavered in his conviction, and his writings are testimony to this spiritual journey. St. Paul combined the gift of the Spirit with the mystery of the resurrection, by declaring the Spirit as: "The Spirit of him who has raised Jesus from among the dead."²⁸ "The union of the Spirit dwelling in us makes but one with the indwelling of Jesus himself". As the spiritual historian, Louis Bouyer notes:

The gift of the Spirit thus appears as the substance of that life which St. Paul describes as a life of "Christ in us" or as our life "in

²⁵ Luke 11:13, John 6:7-15

²⁶ Luke 11:13

²⁷ Acts 2:32-33

²⁸ Romans 8:1-4

Christ Jesus". Our relationship with Christ, actualized by the gift of the Spirit, and having its principle in baptism, is thus seen as a real entering of us into Christ, of his Spirit into us." ²⁹

"I live, but it is no longer I who lives, it is Christ who lives in me" ³⁰ is the essence of this spiritual union with Christ as expressed so eloquently by St. Paul. The one who has attained this loss of self, accompanied by the indwelling of the Spirit of Christ, which consists of a Spirit of love, humility, piety, hope, faith and all that is Christ-like, is one who has attained deep union with the risen Christ. This state is the ultimate goal of one who lives the spiritual life in the Christian tradition.

E. The Fathers of Christianity - Patristic Period

End of 1st Century – 8th Century - Gregory the Great (d.604) / St John Domascene (d. 749)

With the early Christian writers, we are faced with those early witnesses who are filled with the gifts of the Holy Spirit as recorded in the Book of Acts. Fulbert Cayré, an Augustinian and patristic scholar, in his book, *Spiritual Writers of the Early Church* notes that:

"We think of them (the Fathers) primarily as witnesses of faith, ardent apologists and controversialists or founders of schools ... thus we run the risk of distorting their true character by laying insufficient emphasis on something which is essential to it, namely supernatural life." ³¹

²⁹ Louis Bouyer, p.71

³⁰ Galatians 2:20

³¹ Fulbert Cayré, *Spiritual Writers of the Early Church* (N.Y.: Hawthorn Books, 1959). p.12

Cayré calls the early Fathers the first mystics of Christendom and he notes that the gifts of the Holy Spirit as described so vividly by the Fathers are the essence of spirituality and the spiritual or supernatural life. Cayré divides the Fathers of the Church into three categories: “the *Initiators*, in the first three centuries; the *Great Ministers* of the fourth and fifth centuries from Athanasius to Leo the Great 461; the *Continuators*, from 461– 843. ³²

Although the Patristic writers are noted for their concern with orthodoxy, the living out of the Christian faith by the practice of the virtues of faith, hope and love under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit was a priority in the early spiritual formation of the individual and the Church community. Two great fathers of the Alexandrian School, Clement and Origen developed Christian wisdom for the early patristic writers. Urban T. Holmes, in his analytical introduction to a history of spirituality, views Clement and Origen as speculative, kataphatic, influenced by the secular philosophies of Neo-Platonism and Stoicism. According to Holmes, Clement gives us a legacy of two images:

The first is *gnosis*, the gift of the logos, the Christ... a gift of God which is the illumination of our minds and ourselves – since for Clement, the true self is the rational self. *Gnosis* leads us not only to the apprehension of intelligible realities, but beyond those to the hidden meaning of the spiritual realities. The created order is a symbol of such realities, particularly the Scriptures. ³³

³² Fulbert Cayré, p.16

³³ Urban T. Holmes, *A History of Christian Spirituality*, (N.Y.: Seabury Press, 1981). P.25

It is about this *gnosis* that preference for celibacy and the “rational masculine” dimension of human mind becomes prioritized over the affective and receptive dimension. Holmes attributes the growth of Clement’s *apathia* to the

...Greek notion that God is without passion or emotion (i.e. impassable), and so to be related to God one must expect the calming of our disordered passions. God gives us his love, so *apatheia* is not the absence of love but the absorption into the truth that is love. But it is thoroughly reasonable love.³⁴

Earlier Christian fathers introduced the concept of Christian Gnosis. Ignatius of Antioch, while awaiting martyrdom, expressed in pure and becoming terms this mysticism of primitive *Christian Gnosis*. Why, then, are we not all made wise in receiving the *gnosis* of God, which is Jesus Christ? What follows shows that, for him, this *gnosis* of God, which is Jesus Christ, is concentrated in the glorious Cross.”³⁵

Christian Gnosticism, if taken to extremes, could create a dualism of spirit, reason and body. *Enkratism*, an adherence to continence, *enkrateia* in all forms of life, became a primitive form of martyrdom, which strongly influenced the various forms of prayer, worship and sacramental theology. The theme of martyrdom was present in eschatological thinking in Baptism, Eucharist and holiness. Martyrdom, in fact, became such a prevalent reality in early Christian spirituality, that those who were not called to real martyrdom, were somehow

³⁴ Holmes, p.26

³⁵ Bouyer, p.183. quoting *Ignatius to Ephesians* XVII,2

contriving to martyrdom of another kind or providing equivalents to martyrdom in the manner of living or dying.

Before one ventures forth into the “*white martyrdom*” of monasticism and religious life in general, it is vital that the roots of mystical theology and in fact, Christian Gnosticism, be examined. The development of early Christian spiritual tradition was a combination of several factors: the Hellenistic Philosophical Tradition, the mystical experience of union with God, the rational attempts to define the effects of the Holy Spirit and the clarification of beliefs, or dogmatic theology. Andrew Louth, in his series of lectures compiled in *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition*, differentiates between mystical and dogmatic theology:

Mystical theology provides the context for direct apprehensions of God who has revealed himself in Christ and dwells within us through the Holy Spirit; while dogmatic theology attempts to incarnate these apprehensions in objectively precise terms which then, in their turn, inspire a mystical understanding of the God who has thus revealed himself which is specifically Christian.³⁶

Louth obviously, sees no differentiation or conflict between direct experience of the transcendent and the role of understanding and rationality in objective presentation through writing or speaking. Our great theologians are also great mystics. One only has to read the writings of St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. John of the Cross or Karl Rahner to know that a theologian is one who is deeply immersed in prayer and the experience of union with God, before he or she ventures into an objective rational attempt at communication

through formulation, dogma or theological reflection. *Christian Gnosis* and *gnosticism* in general, have their roots in Hellenistic culture that influenced the Patristic Fathers and early spirituality. Plato gave the fathers the methods of thought by which Christian theology found its first intellectual expression. "Christian Platonism has meant many things, but in our period Christianity and Platonism met primarily on the level of mysticism, predominantly religious and theocentric world view..." ³⁷

Middle Platonism was mystical; "It was concerned with the soul's search for immediacy with God". ³⁸ This desire to think and ponder and write about the immediacy with God was the aim of the early fathers. Père A.J. Festugière summarized the patristic Hellenistic influence by stating, "When the Fathers "think" their mysticism, they platonize".³⁹

Plato, Philo (middle Platonism) and Plotinus influenced the Patristic writers and in some ways created responses that were extreme from both ends of the spectrum. What is clear, according to Louth, is that Platonism has, as its conviction man's essentially spiritual nature.

Man's soul enables him/her to participate in the realm of eternal truth, the realm of the Divine. Because of the creatureliness of man, there is an ontological gulf between God and God's creation in man's ascent to God, the soul moves in the direction of properly belonging to God and through the incarnation and descent of God,

³⁶ Andrew Louth, *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition* (Oxford Clarendon Press, 1981). p. XI

³⁷ Louth, p. XIII, taken from R.E., Witt, Albimis and *The History of Middle Platonism* (reprint, Amsterdam, 1971). p. 123

³⁸ Louth, p. XIII

³⁹ Louth, XIII, taken from, *Contemplation et vie contemplative selon Platon*. (Paris, 3rd ed., 1967). p.5

humankind can have communion with God. The mystic is one who is not content to *know about* God, he longs for *union with* God. ⁴⁰

The Greek term *nous* has a much deeper meaning than simply 'mind' or 'intellect'. For the Greeks, *nous* has an instinctive grasp of reality combined with the intellect and intellectual. Festugière captures the fullness of the term *nous* and indicates how spiritual teachers through the ages might define it. "It is one thing to approach truths by reason, it is quite another to attain to them by that intuitive faculty called *nous* by the ancients, the *fine point of the soul*, by St. Frances de Sales, and the *heart* by Pascal". ⁴¹

The understanding and misunderstanding of *gnosis* and *nous* has continued to permeate the history of spirituality causing various polarities between *intellect* and *affectivity* or spiritual experience. Mystics who derived their knowledge from supernatural experiences of divine encounters have met with either reverence or ostracization from communities in various periods of history. At certain points in history, mystics were held suspect or were revered as saints, often long after their deaths. *Neo Gnosticism* reaffirms itself even today with intellectual movements or groups who claim an exclusive knowledge or wisdom about the divine, which causes them to group together apart from the norm or mainstream Christians or other religions. The Sufis are again gifted with a mystical dimension that separates them from mainstream Islamics. Groups

⁴⁰ Louth, XV

⁴¹ Louth, XVI, taken from. *La Revelation d'Hermes Trismegiste* (Paris, 1944), I, 63

which claim either an intellectual or mystical knowledge of God, creating a sense of exclusivity in community, are directly or indirectly influenced by either a *mystical or intellectual gnosticism* which runs contrary to the Gospel teaching of unconditional love, humility, and sharing with one another. This trend toward modern *Gnosticism* or “special knowledge” of God can be cultish and in some cases dangerous as was evidenced in Jonestown or Waco⁴². The roots of *Gnosticism* stem from the Hellenistic influence and the distortion of the Greek terms *gnosis* and *nous*. Understanding the roots of historic spiritual movements is most helpful in recognizing their derivatives, which will continue to emerge in variant forms in the history of spirituality and indeed humankind.

F. The Origins and Development of Monasticism

The origins of monasticism began as an alternative to martyrdom, which became the precarious life in the desert, *anachoritism*... meaning to *withdraw*.

People literally went into the desert to avoid martyrdom, but the severe life there was considered a worthy substitute for the final witness. The spirituality was often *kataphatic* and affective, unlike the more-learned spirituality and authors such as Origen ...Suffering was part of the anchorite, but not the purpose. Liberation or disengagement, in order to awaken the spirit to the Word of God, was the purpose... there were two forms of anchorite life: eremitical, which is life totally in solitude; and cenobitical, where the participants gathered in community from time to time each day.”⁴³

⁴² Jonestown in the Congo and Waco, Texas were two isolated and remote areas where cult leaders set up “communities” of “enlightened” individuals who were brainwashed into believing they had a special calling by God with special knowledge of God, transmitted by charismatic prophets and/or messiahs. Both communities self destructed in violence after a short period of time in the latter part of the twentieth century.

⁴³ Holmes, p. 30

The legacy of monasticism has had a profound effect on the spiritual life of religious, clerics and laity. Monasticism, which, in many cases, laid the foundations of spirituality because the early writings of monks were based on lived experience and provided an authority emanating from an actualized life in the Spirit. Years of prayer and asceticism provided the credibility to the monastic writings and *Rules of Life* that emanated from the early foundational monastic period. Monasticism can be traced to the early Syrian and Egyptian period, “in which both traditions appeared simultaneously and independently”.⁴⁴ It was in the *Life of St. Anthony* (b. 251 – 356 d.) by St. Athanasius, where Anthony's challenge in the desert became the first written record of principles for discernment of spirits. This biography would become known to many spiritual scholars as an example of the *desert experience*, the *acedia*, or conversion of dryness or lustful passions into contemplative living union with God, consisting of a pure heart unburdened by passion, desire or ego. The desert experience was a detached, focused love for God alone, apart from worldly distraction or temptations. The only temptation in the desert emanated from the intellect, will and emotions, for all exterior influences were minimized in the desert experience.

In the east, St. Basil, Gregory of Nyssa, in the fourth century, and Gregory of Nazianzen, the Cappadocians, provided us with typical erudite monasticism and established the basic principles of monasticism: *work*, a primary form of asceticism and basis for all others; *prayer*, nourished by scripture and constant *detachment*, solitude, patience and charity to others.

⁴⁴ Holmes, p.30.

Anthony's desert experience led to his first essay on solitude:

This experience was the occasion of a trial and an interpretation of which is also very enlightening, opening a vein with immense prolongations in Christian spiritual tradition. For he went through a trial by darkness, with the impression of being abandoned by God to the evil powers. He persevered, but in the most naked faith. At the end of his trials a most luminous vision of Christ consoled him."⁴⁵

The *Vita of Anthony* clearly resembles the paradigm of the spiritual journey as described in Origen's, *Commentary on the Canticle*, St. John of the Cross', *Dark Night of the Soul*, the third and fourth week of St. Ignatius of Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises* and many other accounts of the journey of naked faith, desolation and consolation which are so characteristic of life in the Spirit of God.

Monasticism not only contributed much to the inner journey of the soul in solitude, but also the cenobitic life in community. Following Anthony, it was Pachomius and St. Benedict of Nursia, who wrote the Benedictine Rule for cenobitic life in monasticism. His was the rule of moderation and balance, the subjugation of the ordinary everyday desires and egocentric habits, in conflict with one's brothers in religious life or life in the world. Humility, stability and charity or hospitality became the virtues of the Benedictine Rule of Life. The Benedictine Rule became the cornerstone of future monastic orders whether they are cloistered, monastic or apostolic in the world.

⁴⁵ Bouyer, vol.1, p.313

Pachomius, who attempted at first a fraternal non-authoritarian rule that led to disarray and disrespect, initiated the first attempt at cenobitic monasticism. His second attempt included a radical obedience to authority, which led to an institutionalized, hierarchical and legalistic monasticism, which required the taking of the habit and formal promise of obedience. "Obedience now dominated the whole life; materially, because it ruled all its details, spiritually, because it became the basis of all asceticism." ⁴⁶

The features of spirituality, which have endured over the ages through the gift of monasticism, especially through the Rule of St. Benedict, are:

...a fixed hierarchy, stability of life and moderation of the practices imposed in prayer and work. In this effort, monasticism is sustained by a moderate spirituality, accessible to all and proportionate to the character and learning of the various monks of the community." ⁴⁷

The Rule of St. Benedict was to become, for many, the cornerstone of monastic life and for oblates or committed laity who wished to live a life of holiness.

Monasticism has had a profound effect on the spirituality of both monks and laity because the life of a monk and the rule of monastic life have endured to this day and is still an influence on many forms of religious and secular life, lived in the service of God through a life of prayer.

⁴⁶ Bouyer, Vol. I, p. 325

⁴⁷ F. Cayre, p. 89

G. Various Schools of Thought and Practice in Spirituality

Although life in the Spirit of God has universal meaning for Christians, the differences in approach and rule of life have variations in schools of spirituality. Rather than encroaching upon the numerous schools of spirituality, it is interesting to note the two classical approaches to prayer: *kataphatic* and *apophatic*.

The kataphatic approach to prayer and spirituality involves all the use of the senses and emotions and the affectivity of the individual. The imagination incites the love, the heart of the individual, which nourishes an interior generosity and zeal for prayer and service for God. The apophatic method of prayer is a negation of thoughts and emotions in prayer. Often a mantra is used to combat the recurrence of imaginative thoughts. The total emptying of the self from the ego is the overall aim of this form of prayer. The absence of external influence leads to an examination of one's inner life as it emerges in various layers of consciousness, to be purified and brought into conformity with the will of God, and eventually, union with God.

Among the kataphatic traditions of spirituality are the Ignatian, Franciscan, Dominican and Teresa of Avila's castles. John of the Cross, the author of the *Cloud of Unknowing* and the some of the hesychasts of the Byzantine tradition (Gregory Palamas 1296 – 1359) supported a more apophatic tradition of spirituality.

The apophatic tradition brought one to a condition of *nada* (St. John of the Cross) or to a purified state through simplification of emotions, desires and thoughts by focusing on a mantra or the classical Jesus Prayer of the Byzantine tradition. The aim of both kataphatic and apophatic approaches leads to a self-emptying void in one's life, which can only be filled by union with God. Both forms of prayer will eventually lead to a contemplative unitive state, having first passed through the purgative and illuminative states on the spiritual journey. Both Maximus the Confessor (580-662) and Bonaventure (1221-1274) developed the triple way to God (purgative, illuminative and unitive), which has endured to this day. It is interesting to observe that the three stages may not necessarily emerge as chronological intervals, because God often allows one to have glimpses of illumination and union in order to strengthen one, before again plunging one into another cycle of purgation. The ultimate goal of the spiritual life is unitive, however, and the means to that union with God is self-mortification of one's own will and one's love of self, leading toward a selfless love of God alone. All forms of spirituality tend toward this way of life, since the means must always be focused toward the end, which is union with God.

H. Modern Eclectic Spirituality

Because of the easy access to books, Internet and travel, many of the traditions and practices of the spiritual life have become accessible to the general public. The first chapter of the *Cloud of Unknowing* cautions those who are mature in the spiritual life to be prudent about what and when to reveal certain

information to novices and those unfamiliar with the ways of the Spirit. This wisdom is not meant for the unschooled or inexperienced in the spiritual life. What has emerged in spiritual circles is a new generation of individuals who know about the spiritual life through acquired knowledge, rather than a lived experience or spiritual life. Because the spiritual life involves self-sacrifice and a purification which involves suffering, humiliation and selfless love of God and neighbor, this pseudo journey is often in the *study of* rather than the *life of* spirituality.

The modern effect has very often led to a mixture of all that is “consoling” in a “spirituality” which is not complete or valid to a particular tradition. To read about monasticism or visit a monastery is not the same as living a monastic life on a daily basis. To read books on prayer and its various levels is not equivalent to the daily practice of life borne out of prayer. Listening to relaxing new age music tapes and focusing on one's own inner energies is not the same as placing one's self before God in prayer with a complete self-abandonment to whatever God allows or causes to happen in one's life.

Another danger to authentic spirituality is the generic or watered down forms of prayer which appeal to the lowest common denominator of the spiritual life, offering no challenge or self-mortification to the individuals involved. In an authentic spiritual life, the “nice peaceful feelings” or consolations are accompanied by periods of desolation and aridity, which are probably more

numerous than the peak consoling moments of the spiritual journey. To stress the joy without the suffering is to misrepresent the spiritual journey. The young and non-initiated in a life of prayer can be led into a pseudo spirituality and shallow spiritual life, if the real spirituality is not presented openly to them.

For modern spirituality to maintain its authenticity, it is vital that the lessons of history are learned and the deviations and excesses of various forms of spirituality not be repeated. Aumann sees the roots of excess as emerging from the fundamental problem of the relationship between grace and human nature. In France, the traditional doctrine, which states that grace perfects nature and elevates it to a higher level through participation in the divine life while leaving it intact as human nature, was obscured by a doctrine that either destroyed nature and replaced it with grace, or exalted nature to the point that grace was unnecessary. Jansenism and Quietism, the two excesses of the French School, were related to each other in the sense that: "they both exaggerated the role of grace at the expense of human nature and human effort."⁴⁸

In our present era, some of the fundamentalist cults which have emerged often reflect a Jansenist disregard for prudence and health, while other modern "new age" forms of "feeling good about the inner self" might be somewhat reminiscent of the Quietists who trusted all to God with little human effort.

Reactionary spirituality is also visible in the past with the shift from the quietists and mystics to the scholarly and rational study of the word: the Jansenist movement to combat the errors of Luther and Calvin. Liberalism was often counteracted by fundamentalism or conservative authoritarian shifts in emphasis. Prudence and moderation, as exemplified by the monastic rules, were well tested by great spiritual masters and serve as a norm for the spiritual life when extremes tend to filter into a culture or society.

I. What has endured as the Essence, the Constant, the Unique and the Universal in Spirituality

In exploring the history of Christian Spirituality and in seeking the enduring elements over the ages, a pattern emerges.

First, the founder of Christianity, Jesus, and his life as exemplary as his teachings, is a constant source of focus for those who embrace Christian Spirituality. The elements of self-emptying, obedience to God's will, love of God and neighbour, humility, meekness, inner peace and strength are modeled in the life and teachings of Jesus for all Christians.

Second, the apostolic zeal of the early apostles and fathers and mothers who evangelized the message of Christian Spirituality and nourished and developed the society of believers, is again a constant factor for the preservation of an authentic spirituality.

⁴⁴ Aumann, p. 229

Third, the willingness to die for one's faith through martyrdom, either through death or a life of self-mortification, stemmed from an imitation of Jesus' life of self-sacrifice. Victimhood for God and neighbor manifested itself throughout the history of Christianity.

The intrinsic value of the spirit within humankind, the *nous* of Plato, has been documented and generally accepted for humanity. Humankind has a spirit and spiritual dimension which needs to be nourished and united with the divine Spirit of God for fulfillment.

The living-out of a spiritual life has taken various forms from a monastic environment to a lay apostolate. The living out of spirituality requires daily discernment and reference to the experiential teachings and rules of life of the masters who based their teachings on authentic lived experience.

The various schools of spirituality are expressions of either an *apophatic* or *kataphatic* approach to prayer and the spiritual life. The spiritual journey requires prayer, love and service emanating from prayer and love. The three-fold journey of *purification*, *illumination* and *union* may be expressed in various modern and postmodern terms, but the spiritual journey will follow this path in various forms because the pattern is universal and emergent to those following a life of prayer and service to and with God through these passages of life in the spirit. It is evident that the spiritual life is a dynamic force which is transformative

in the spiritual person and the service, which he or she gives to others because of the inner transformation and which radiates into the outer transformative life. These two dimensions are reflective of the universal gift or grace and humankind's cooperation with God's grace.

3. The Traditional Definition of Spirituality

A. Background for Defining the Term *Spirituality*

Defining the term *spirituality* has been a challenge over the ages. This is perhaps because *spirituality* is meant to be lived and experienced before one can verbalize the appropriate terminology or reflective expression for an experience or lifestyle, which transcends the norm or enters into the mystery beyond the rational or empirical realm of understanding.

Several theologians have expressed this challenge when speaking of spiritual or mystical lifetime experience. Karl Rahner is a theologian who has been known for his insistence on a theology based on prayerful reflection. Declan Marmion notes Rahner's fusion of theology with spirituality in the following statement:

Theology cannot be divorced from experiential knowledge of God...He (Rahner) does not restrict this encounter with God to a privileged few, but presents it as a possibility for anyone in the midst of their everyday experiences of life,⁴⁹

Indeed Rahner is a theologian who has purposely tried to develop a theology of spirituality based on Augustine's understanding of humankind's "restlessness of heart".

My heart is restless, O God, until it rests in thee...He is within the very heart, yet hath the heart strayed from Him. Go back into your heart, ye transgressors, and cleave fast to Him that made you. Stand with Him, and ye shall stand fast. Rest in Him and ye shall be

⁴⁹ Declan Marmion, "The Notion of Spirituality in Karl Rahner." *Louvain Studies* 21 (1996) p. 63.

at rest. Whither go ye in rough ways? Whither go ye? The good that you love is from Him.⁵⁰

Rahner utilizes this normal everyday “restlessness of heart” as a catapult leading to the premise that it is intrinsic in the nature of humankind to question and seek meaning and fulfillment in life:

Questioning provides an important context for Rahner’s explanation of the “transcendent” nature of the human person...In the depths of one’s heart the individual is a capacity, a question to which only the Absolute can answer - one is a “hearer” waiting for a word from the Absolute... God is the depth dimension in experiences such as solitude, friendship, love, hope and death... Such encounters reveal our essential contingency, our dependency on a power greater than ourselves.⁵¹

The term *spirit*, for Rahner, when applied to the individual, means both self-presence and questioning. Rahner defines *spirit* as follows:

Spirit is a self-presence that goes out of itself and is ordered to the world... All human beings are essentially oriented to the Infinite...the notion of transcendence connotes that the human person is dynamic, a process, on the way toward a goal that is nothing less than the infinite itself.⁵²

Spirituality and the *spiritual life*, for Rahner, are “ the events of God’s self-communication on the person as a subject of grace.”⁵³ Because Rahner sees the initiative of God in spirituality, his implications for spirituality also emerge:

Human life rests on an incomprehensible mystery and flows in that direction; God is not only the mystery in our prayer, but also the mystery in the details of our daily lives; God is found in experiences of consolation as well as struggle and suffering.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ St. Augustine, *Confessions*. Pusey E.B., trans., (N.Y.: J.M.Dent and Sons Ltd., 1962). Book XII. 18. p.63

⁵¹ Marmion, 69

⁵² Marmion, 70

⁵³ Marmion, 72

⁵⁴ Marmion, 72

Rahner gives one a new understanding of the term *mysticism* and removes the notion from an esoteric group of saintly beings bordering on perfection. For Rahner, a mystic is one who “has a personal interior experience of and union with God’s Spirit.”⁵⁵ Rahner implores our future generations to be mystics of everyday life and to embrace a *spirituality of everyday life*. Rahner’s evolution toward a definition of *spirituality* originates from the terms *frommigkeit* (piety) and *spiritualitat*. He does not wish to leave the impression that spirituality is exclusively a personal experience of God, but that spirituality includes a concrete ecclesial expression that accompanies the *a priori* personal experience of God. His definition of *spirituality*, while giving priority to the personal experience and transcendental nature of the human person, does not advocate “spiritual individualism”. Rahner’s theology and definition of *spirituality* is a balanced combination of an individual experience of God and God’s grace, lived out and supported in an ecclesial and/or everyday life existence.

Of interest in the scholarly pursuit of a definition of the term *spirituality* is the research of Walter Principe, which explores the historical approach to the definition of the term *spirituality*. Principe notes that as late as 1950, the term *spirituality* was equated with *piety, devout life or interior life*. The various studies on individual or thematic spiritualities also clouded any attempts toward a clarification of the term. Spirituality was often associated or named after a saint or school of practice such as Ignatian, Franciscan, Hindu or Buddhist. Focused topics emerged, such as: *spirituality of the family, spirituality of liturgy*: historical

⁵⁵ Marmion, 73

identification, such as: *spirituality of the seventies*, or *seventeenth century French spirituality*. All of these forms or schools of spirituality emerged, which helped contribute to the eclectic notions of the term, thus hindering the process of accurately defining the term, *spirituality*. In this context the term *spirituality* becomes a generic additive, which is somehow attached to the end of a current theme or issue, to soften or divinize the first word. The term, *family spirituality*, for example, could just as easily be termed *family time* or *family life*, but somehow *family spirituality* sounds more profound, without necessarily being more profound, or more spiritual for that matter.

B. Historical and Etymological Roots of Spirituality

One manner of probing into the definition of the term, *spirituality* is to explore the historical and etymological roots of the word itself. The Latin term *spiritualitas* depicts an abstract concept, derived from *spiritus* and *spiritualis* which are translations from St. Paul's *pneuma* and *pneumatikos*, which are contrasted with *sarkikos* or *carnalis* which are opposed to the Spirit of God. The early terminology often created a polemic difference between spiritual and carnal.

The first known individuation of the term *spiritualitas* was found in the fifth century, in a letter ascribed to Jerome, "Age ut in spiritualitate proficias", meaning, "so act as to advance in spirituality", which is clearly urging one to live a life according to the Spirit of God.⁵⁶

The term *spiritualitas* by the twelfth century stood in opposition to *corporalitas* or *materialitas*, which perpetuated the disdain for the body and matter in general. Thomas Aquinas used *spiritualitas* “as related to the Pauline notion of life according to the Holy Spirit, or life according to what is highest in the human person.”⁵⁷

By the seventeenth century, the French *spiritualité* was used in the religious sense of the devout life. The pejorative sense of the word was stressed to identify *la nouvelle spiritualité* of Madame Guyon and Fenelon, from the *Quietist School of spirituality*, which underestimated individual choice and action in the spiritual life.⁵⁸ This *Quietist movement* was discouraged by ecclesial authorities and led to an infrequent use of the term *spirituality* in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. A resurgence of the term *spirituality* was reintroduced in 1927 in Pierre Pourrat’s book, *Christian Spirituality* and also in E.J. Strickland’s, *The Life of Union with God and the Means of Striving It According to the Great Masters of Spirituality*. Principe’s study distinguishes three different and related levels when defining *spirituality*:

The first level is the real or existential level, or the lived quality of the individual. This includes the way a person understands and lives a chosen religion within the historical context. For a Christian, a suitable definition of spirituality might be: “Spirituality is life lived in the Spirit as brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ, and daughters and sons of the Father.” For a non Christian: “Spirituality is the way in which a person understands and lives within his her historical

⁵⁶ Walter Principe, “Toward Defining Spirituality.” *Studies in Religion*. Vol. 12. 2. 1983. p. 130.

⁵⁷ Principe, 131.

⁵⁸ “*Quietism* (*quies*, repose), is the error of those who guide themselves by the following maxim: All our efforts after perfection, consist in suppressing as many of our acts as possible, save in the case of a manifest intervention on God’s part. The minimum of personal action thus becomes the ideal of sanctity.” Auguste Poulain S.J., *The Graces of Interior Prayer*. London, Kegan, Paul, Trench, Truckner & Co., 1910). P. 487.

context, that aspect of his/her religion, philosophy or ethic that is viewed as the loftiest, noblest, the most calculated to lead to the fullness of the ideal or perfection being sought.⁵⁹

A second level of spirituality, according to Principe, is the formulation of a teaching about the lived reality: the life, writings or teachings of an individual might give rise to a particular tradition or school of spirituality. The third level of spirituality is the study by scholars of the first and second level, which forms spirituality into a discipline using methods and resources of other branches of knowledge or study. In his conclusion, Principe cautions about broadening the definition of spirituality to include history, persons or structures that might be diffusive to the actual definition of spirituality.

Spirituality points to those aspects of a person's living a faith or commitment that concerns his or her striving to attain the highest ideal or goal. For a Christian, this is his or her striving for an ever more intense union with the Father through Jesus Christ by living in the Spirit.⁶⁰

Laurence Cunningham and Keith Egan in their book, *Christian Spirituality. Themes from the Tradition*, provide the following definition of spirituality. "Spirituality refers to that dimension or dimensions of human experience which provide the spiritual aspect of our lives by enriching and giving *thickness* to our ordinary existence."⁶¹ This definition is vague because it contains the term *spiritual aspect*, which is like defining a term with the same term. When defining Christian spirituality, Cunningham and Egan are more precise. "Christian

⁵⁹ Principe, 135-136.

⁶⁰ Principe, 139

spirituality is the lived encounter with Jesus Christ in the Spirit.”⁶² In the same context, a reference is made to Walter Conn’s remark that while the definition of spirituality may be generic, there are no generic spiritualities.⁶³ This remark might well explain the difficulty in formulating a clear concise definition of spirituality without including a particular religious tradition or rootedness in the definition. A definition, by its very nature, is intended to clarify, set limits or boundaries and to be concise. If the term, *spirituality* tries to be too generic, it may lose its effectiveness in the very act of defining.

One final definition, although not traditional but reflective of the topical, generic and relativistic definitions of our time, was located in a university chaplaincy article by Peter Côté after the September 11, 2002 tragedy. His article, “Towards a Post September 11 Spirituality”, defines spirituality in this manner:

Spirituality is a way of being in the world, a way which orients you and gives your life meaning and direction. A spirituality can be authentic or inauthentic in this sense...A Spirituality can have as its starting point and fundamental principle, a faith in God or not. All human beings are inherently spiritual...An authentic spirituality is one which orients you in a positive, life-giving and life-affirming way to the world around you, which respects yourself and is caring to others. It recognizes that there is a reality that is greater than and beyond yourself. You can call this reality God, or truth, or love, or justice or the reality of the unity and goodness of all creation. It (authentic spirituality) is ultimately about seeing and celebrating your interconnectedness with all humanity.⁶⁴

⁶¹ Laurence Cunningham, Keith Egan, *Christian spirituality. Themes from the Tradition*. (N.Y.: Paulist Press, 1996). p. 6.

⁶² Cunningham, Egan, p. 6

⁶³ Cunningham, Egan, p. 6

⁶⁴ Peter Côté, “Toward a Post September 11 Spirituality”. *The Bridge*. (Montreal, Concordia, Winter 2001 – 2002). p. 5.

In attempting to appeal to a pluralistic audience, this definition, while having an introduction about *authenticity or inauthenticity*, then proceeds to relativise the issue of whether one requires a faith in God or not. This definition views authentic spirituality as an orientation toward *the world*, respecting *self and others*, and recognizing a *reality beyond self*. Although there is much in the definition that is attempting to be authentic, the definition itself lacks consistency, and seems timid about mentioning the term, *God*. The definition proceeds to generalize and multiply the concept of *God*, by equating the term *God* with: *truth, love, justice, reality of the unity, and goodness of all creation*, which is characteristic of many postmodern thinkers and writers, when defining or discussing *spirituality*. This last definition of spirituality is an illustration of how pluralism and postmodernism can affect the authenticity of defining a term like *authentic spirituality* which concludes with the final phrase, *the interconnectedness with all humanity*, thus minimizing or removing the term or even the concept of *God* in order to come to an acceptable postmodern expression in its conclusion. Authentic definitions must also follow an authenticity in the entire process and in the finality of the product.

C. Authentic Spirituality

Before concluding with the various aspects of the definition of spirituality, it would seem prudent to establish at the same time some elements that would constitute an authentic spirituality. A recent article by Gordon Rixon sj., entitled, "*Bernard Lonergan and Mysticism*" offers some indicators of authenticity in light

of Lonergan's theories on mysticism. It is not certain that Lonergan would necessarily equate the term *mysticism* with the term *spirituality*, but the *qualities of authenticity* of either term would seem to be comparable or at the very least, noteworthy. Rixon bases much of his article on notes from a 1941 retreat given by Bernard Lonergan. Lonergan began his retreat by stating: "Good meditation consisted in the ordinary conscious effort of having tried to speak or think with God."⁶⁵ Rixon suggests that Lonergan was creating an alternative to classicist spirituality (asceticism, penance, mortification) by addressing three dialectics in humankind: the *divine discontent*, expressing the pervasive and absolute task of self-transcendence; the *interplay between the abstract end* of a religious life and the particular context of an individual that yields a *concrete ideal*; the *conflict between the concrete ideal and sin*, overcome through the movements of penance and mortification, the means to the concrete ideal.

For Lonergan and others, self-transcendence would appear to be a significant factor in authentic spirituality and a factor emanating from the first dialectic. Lonergan states in *Method in Theology*, "Religious experience is the experience of being in love with God ... without limits or qualifications or conditions or reservations, the proper fulfillment of the human person's unrestricted capacity for self-transcendence."⁶⁶ In this same vein, Evelyn Underhill noted that, "all mystics agree that the stripping off of the *I, me and mine*, and utter renouncement to the direction of a larger will, is an imperative condition of the attainment of the unitive life... The self is made part of the

⁶⁵ Gordon Rixon, "Bernard Lonergan and Mysticism". *Theological Studies*. 62. 2001. p. 483.

⁶⁶ Rixon. p. 490. taken from Lonergan, Bernard, *Method in Theology*. P 105-106.

mystical Body of God.”⁶⁷ The dialectic of the abstract with the concrete finds Lonergan placing the religious experience as a fulfillment of the fourth level of intentional consciousness (deliberation, decision, action).⁶⁸ The effect of God’s unconditional love will then provide a motivation to enter and endure the third dialectic and move through the purgative cloud of forgetting to the unitive cloud of unknowing as described by William Johnston and reiterated by Lonergan.⁶⁹

To summarize the three elements of authentic spirituality as resulting from the three dialectics, one observes: a self transcendent experience of God’s unconditional love; an experience which locates itself in the fourth level of intentionality; an expression of motivated loving response orienting one through purgation toward the unitive state, which I conclude Lonergan might describe as a constant intense state of being in love with God and God’s creation. The unitive state almost implies a *state of authenticity* in the spiritual life itself, because how could one be anything but authentic at this unitive level, the ultimate orientation of spirituality and the spiritual life. A good definition of spirituality will have the elements of authenticity within it and will reflect a relational orientation toward a full union with God, the first principle of all life, love and creation.

⁶⁷ Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism. A Study in the Nature and Development of Man’s Spiritual Consciousness*. (N.Y.: The World Publishing Company, 1955). p. 425.

⁶⁸ Bernard Lonergan, *Method*. Chapter I. The four levels of conscious operations are: 1) Experiencing, 2) Understanding, 3) Judging, 4) Deliberating, Deciding, Doing.

⁶⁹ Rixon, 491.

4. The Influence of Pluralism on Spirituality

A. Pluralism as Reality

The concept of *religious pluralism* is not necessarily new to our consciousness, but in the last part of the twentieth century and in the new millennium, pluralism has gained a heightened significance. Harold Coward in his study, *Pluralism and World Religions*, notes this prevalence in our postmodern society:

One of the things that characterizes today's world is religious pluralism. The world has already had religious plurality. But in the past two decades the breaking of cultural, racial, linguistic and geographical boundaries had been on a scale that the world has not previously seen. For the first time in recorded history, we seem to be rapidly becoming a true global community...Today everyone is the next-door neighbour and spiritual neighbour of everyone else.⁷⁰

Globalization and evangelization of Christianity and other prominent religions have awakened a sense of otherness and difference not only in religious tradition, but also in culture, concepts of God, prayer, worship and the nature of spirituality. Religions that had assumed an exclusivity of one superior faith and one way of salvation, have been forced to reevaluate their methods of evangelization and sense of mission. Inculturation, as a way of evangelization, required a mingling, living with and understanding of difference in culture through tolerance, acceptance and eventually respect of otherness. Interreligious dialogue has forced a reevaluation of the very essence of beliefs and dictums,

⁷⁰ Harold Coward, *Pluralism in the World Religions*. (Oxford: Oneworld, 2000). preface.

which formerly were accepted and preached without question. For some, the very core of their faith and spirituality was questioned and challenged in a new awareness, which continues to be threatening for some and challenging for others.

Coward's study in religious pluralism notes that:

The quest for ultimate reality often leads to claims of uniqueness and universality. The problematic claim of many religions is the tendency to be the one true religion, to offer the true revelation as the true way to salvation or release.⁷¹

When a religion becomes exclusivist and universal with its claims, it seems self-contradictory for such a religion to accept any other reality. Globalization in information, economy, environmental concerns and cultural awareness has brought much attention to religions in the world. Insular religious views are being exposed in a global perspective where Eastern and Western cultures, religions and spiritualities are becoming more in contact, and in some cases more enmeshed. The global religious mosaic is in formation and religions and spiritualities are being compelled to explore difference and similarity in dogma, scripture, rituals, symbols and sacred spaces. The reaction and interaction of religious members are the basis of the development and challenge of pluralism and its influence on spirituality in general or a particular spirituality associated with a religion. Coward believes that a study of various religious

⁷¹ Coward, vii.

traditions "helps one learn the true dimensions of spiritual life in a pluralistic world."⁷²

B. Definition of Pluralism

The term *pluralism*, when studied from its etymological roots, stems from the Latin word *pluras*, meaning several or many. Paul Knitter, a theologian of pluralism, views religious pluralism as an awareness and recognition of the reality of the existence of several religious traditions. This awareness and recognition initiates a desire to relate with those of other religions in order to dialogue with and understand other religious traditions without having to lose one's own identity in the process. Pluralism involves an exploration into otherness and difference in religion while maintaining one's own convictions in religious belief, expression and identity. Pluralism is relational, dialogical, open, exploratory, educational and inclusive of difference. True pluralism is not intended to be insular, relativistic or reductionist in its philosophy or approach to religious traditions. A pluralist sees reality as plural and different in a form of global mosaic, which is relational to and yet separate from the other.⁷³

C. Pluralism, Reactions and Attitudes to its Reality

Several theologians have studied and researched the reality of religious pluralism and have attempted to identify the various approaches and attitudes

⁷² Coward, viii

toward the pluralistic presence of religions in our society. Paul F. Knitter has published a scholarly critical survey of Christian attitudes toward world religions entitled, *No Other Name?* In his study he discusses 1) the reality of religious pluralism which has come about because of the knowledge and presence of other religions and persons in a new global world 2) the new vision of religious unity, *unitive pluralism*, that this reality of religious pluralism is suggesting to many thinkers, 3) the problems (relativism, reductionism), that pluralism poses for the concerned intelligent Christian. Knitter and other pluralistic theologians in this chapter will examine each of these aspects of religious pluralism. Knitter also notes the heightened consciousness and exploration of other religions among the younger generation. He suggests that the shift from abstract study to the interaction of other religious persons in a shrinking world has fostered this interest.

This new perception of religious pluralism is pushing our cultural consciousness toward the simple but profound insight that 'there is no one and only way.'...The new awareness of multiplicity and pluralism is being felt not just as a provisional situation...Pluralism does not result simply from the limitation of the human mind 'to get it together'. Rather pluralism seems to be the very stuff of reality, the way things are, the way they function...Reality is essentially pluriform: complex, rich, intricate, mysterious... Pluralism becomes not just a fact to be recognized, but also a challenge to be achieved.⁷⁴

Knitter concludes that if pluralism is a permanent or long-term phenomenon in human existence, then a way of human co-existence or a *unitive*

⁷³Paul Knitter, *No Other Name? A Critical Survey of Christian Attitudes toward the World Religions*. (N.Y.: Orbis, 1985). p. 1-20.

⁷⁴ Knitter, p. 6.

pluralism in religions has its starting point in philosophy, sociology, psychology and political economics.

Unitive pluralism is a unity in which each religion, although losing some of its individualism (its separate ego), will intensify its personality (its self awareness through relationship). Each religion will retain its own uniqueness, but this uniqueness will develop and take on new depths by relating to other religions in mutual dependence.⁷⁵

D. Creative Ways of Spirituality Embracing Pluralism

There are several responses to pluralism, which are now in existence or in formation. The spirituality of religions is becoming pluralistic or is grappling with creative responses to the reality of pluralism in society. *Unitive pluralism* as a spirituality would require a way of thinking and living, which embraces coexistence, agreement without conformity, respect for difference and collaboration with similarity. Knitter sees this ideal or futuristic dream taking on more substance and perhaps a greater nourishment and depth in one's own religious identity. W.C. Smith, another thinker on the issue of religious pluralism, refers to a "world fellowship" which requires a religious basis for this challenge to be realized.⁷⁶ Unitive pluralism is relational with the other and calls one forth out of insular, isolationist approaches to religions and subsequently, spirituality.

When speaking of creative responses to religious pluralism, we are perhaps embarking on various expressions of a spirituality of pluralism to

⁷⁵ Knitter, p. 9.

correspond to a theology of pluralism. If the spirit of God is present in the response to religious pluralism and if this response is a spirit filled life commitment or philosophy toward a pluralistic world, then these responses are spiritualities in the sense that they are orientations to a self transcendent life of seeking and understanding the other and of attaining a life of union with God. Pluralistic theocentric responses might well be the expression of a pluralistic spirituality when viewed in this light, because these responses fulfill the requirements for an authentic spirituality.

Theology and spirituality are also challenged to be *global* and *theocentric* in their viewpoint leading to a theology or spirituality of world religions. Jacques Dupuis is a Roman Catholic theologian who has attempted to study the question of unicity and universality of Christianity in the face of pluralism and to promulgate a theocentric theology of religious pluralism. The notification⁷⁷ of his book, *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*, by the Vatican Doctrinal Congregation, coming immediately after the publication of *Dominus Iesus*⁷⁸ appears contradictory or at least problematic with the Vatican Council document, *Nostra Aetate* which encouraged relationship and dialogue with

⁷⁶ Knitter, p. 14, taken from John Hick, Brian Hebblethwaite, eds., "The Christian in a Religiously Plural World." (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980). pp. 87-107.

⁷⁷ *Notification* is an announcement in writing by the *Roman Catholic Vatican Doctrinal Congregation*, that there is a possibility of doctrinal error or fallacy in the text, which requires clarification or revision by the author.

⁷⁸ Joseph Ratzinger, "Notification: Father Dupuis: Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism" Vatican Doctrinal Congregation. *Origins* 30,#38, March 8, 2001.

Joseph Ratzinger, "Congress of Document of Dominus Iesus on the Unicity and Universality of Jesus Christ and the Church." <<http://www.vatican/roman.curia/cong...faith...doc.2000.08/06>> (date accessed, November 10, 2000)

various faiths, especially in its *theocentric* approach to *God* and the *God of Abraham*.

She (Church) considers above all in this declaration what men have in common and what draws them in fellowship...One is the community of all peoples, and their origin, for God made the whole human race; their final goal, God, His providence, His manifestations of goodness, His saving designs extend to all men.⁷⁹

The origins of a theocentric theology and spirituality are well founded in *Nostra Aetate*. Pope Paul VI, in chapters three and four of this document, uses the term *God of Abraham* to serve as a foundation in Christian, Jewish and Islamic traditions. The whole of *Nostra Aetate* presents a theocentric spirituality for the purpose of dialogical diplomacy, unity, renewal, relationship and sensitivity to pluralism and love of the other.

The Christocentric position has proved problematic in interfaith dialogue because of the attitude of Christian/Catholic superiority and imperialism, which was exhibited in the evangelization techniques, or perceived to be so by other faiths in the past. Terrence Merrigan affirms the trend by theologians to right this past position.

The pluralistic school of theology (Hick, Knitter, Smith) is characterized by a move away from the insistence on the

⁷⁹ Walter Abbott ed., "Nostra Aetate" chapter 1, *The Documents of Vatican II* (N.Y.: America Press. 1966). p.660.

superiority or finality of Christ and Christianity toward a recognition of the independent validity of other ways.⁸⁰

Twenty years after *Nostra Aetate*, Pope John Paul II encourages Christians and Jews to “have an even greater interest in the legitimate concerns for each other, and for collaboration in the fields where our faith in God and our common respect for his image in all men and women unite our witness and commitment.”⁸¹

There seems to be a bipolar approach to pluralism, which has resulted in the dialectic between the emphasis of Christocentric theology and spirituality and theocentric theology and spirituality. There are times when Christians take upon themselves an insular, almost protectionist monolithic stance resulting from a fear of relativism, and then there are swings toward pluralism with theocentric overtones. Recent examples of this dialectic would be on the one side, the outpouring of pluralistic theocentric multifaith memorial services which occurred in the wake of the September 11, 2001 attack on the twin towers in New York by Islamic theocentric fundamentalists; on the other side, the recent almost monolithic grouping of eight hundred thousand Roman Catholic Youth celebrating an exclusive Roman Catholic Eucharist for World Youth Day with their pope and Christ as their center. (Christocentric) There seems to be a need to exercise both Christocentric and theocentric attitudes among Christians at this

⁸⁰ Terrence Merrigan, “Religious Knowledge in the Pluralist Theology of Religions.” *Theological Studies*. Vol. 58, 1997. p. 686.

time in history, almost as a need to strengthen their own centrality in community before going out to encounter the other. One questions whether the other main-line religions have similar reactions to pluralism, and if they also need to group together in a monolithic fashion in contrast to pluralistic theocentric models of behaviour and relationship. Are there *Allahcentric*, *Yahwehcentric* or *Buddhacentric* gatherings and expressions of spirituality to fortify this monolithic sense of belonging?

E. Relativism and Reductionism

In an attempt to be creative or accommodating to the pluralistic reality of our society, two approaches to religious pluralism have emerged: relativism and reductionism. A philosopher–theologian, Ernst Troeltsch (1865 – 1923) from the University of Bonn, makes the following statement:

“All religions share something in common; the divine presence or revelation. Yet they also account for their genuine differences, for each is a different, particular historical manifestation of that presence.”⁸²

Troeltsch, the father of historical relativism sees the Christian religion as a purely historical phenomenon, subject to the limitations of history. He sees Christianity as the convergence for other religions. “The *Reformed Christianity* is a Christianity liberated from the superstition and uncritical thinking of the past... The relativity of history means that you cannot say one religion is better than

⁸¹ Pope John Paul II, “Twentieth Anniversary of Nostra Aetate.” *Origins*. Vol. 15 #25, Dec. 5, 1985. p.411

⁸² Knitter, p.26

another.”⁸³ This position poses a great challenge to Christians grappling with the idea that other religions may possess a unique salvific soteriological theology apart from Jesus the Christ.

Another attitude which has emerged in the face of pluralism is the *reductionist trend* which either believes that all religions are the same or that religion will no longer be a reality in our society, therefore it should not be included in the public domain, such as education, or prayer in schools or acknowledging religion at civic functions. *Privatization*, which is not a denial of religion but which contributes indirectly to the reductionism of religion in society, insists that because religion is a private individual function, it should have no avenue for a public forum.

Relativism and reductionism have led to distortions, shift in emphasis and reactive behaviour and thinking regarding religious pluralism. Pluralism includes difference, even at the essence or core of the religions. The absolute of one religion may not be similar and certainly not the same as the absolute of another religion. The theology and spirituality of pluralism adheres to the acceptance of difference in declaration of absolute truths in religious traditions, no matter how difficult for the religions coexisting in a pluralistic society.

⁸³ Knitter, p. 29

F. The Influence of Pluralism on Spirituality

In examining the influence of pluralism on spirituality, it is important that one encounters research on pluralism primarily in relation to theology or religion with some indirect mention of spirituality, primarily because there is more study in the field of theology and religious studies, and much of what is stated can be applied to the study of spirituality. What will be examined in this chapter is the question of whether there is a distinction that is to be made between religion and spirituality when discussing pluralism, or whether one should assume that what is determined about pluralism and religion is basically the same for pluralism and spirituality.

Mary A. Fukuyama and Todd Servig have researched the relevance of spirituality to multicultural counseling and they come to the conclusion that spirituality and religion and culture are related but distinct. Their conclusions were as follows:

Religion and spirituality are interconnected and we do not propose to separate the two arbitrarily, as that creates unnecessary polarization (Pargament, 1997). The stereotypes of restricting spirituality to the personal, and religion to organized groups, break down upon closer analysis... Although spirituality is thought to be a private, personal matter, spiritual seekers often need to share their experiences with others in some sort of community or group support system. In addition, more and more religious communities are engaged in nurturing *spirituality* among their constituencies. *Spirituality* as a word is becoming popular, possibly because it fits into a secular and psychologically oriented milieu... Religion and spirituality do have different flavors and emphasis, and we do tend

to use the term *spirituality* to represent a universal concept, while religion tends to define a more concrete expression.⁸⁴

Fukuyama and Servig see religion as "an organized system of faith, worship, traditions, rituals, doctrine, emotion, ethics and community."⁸⁵ It is preferable when dealing with pluralism to make a distinction of spirituality as a *universal concept* and religion as a *concrete expression*, although these distinctions are not exclusive to each other, they assist in differentiating the terms. The usual distinction of spirituality as *private* and religion as a *public expression* in community or society is not as differentiated as the former. Spirituality is not often as explicit or pronounced as religion in society, but that in no way implies that spirituality is exclusively private. Spirituality expresses itself in religion, and religion often embraces or defines a type or school of spirituality (Christian, Hindu, Anglican). Spirituality can be *cross religious* or *trans religious* in that the generic spirituality of "life in the Spirit of God" may be located in more than one religion. In this sense, spirituality is also considered to be *interreligious*.

Often spiritual leaders can project a great impact on interreligious dialogue because they are deeply mystical, or they have a universal philosophy which transcends the "one and only" religion. Gandhi, and more recently Bede Griffiths, has contributed to a unitive spirituality, which is inclusive and synthetic to more than one religion.

⁸⁴ Mary A. Fukuyama, Todd Servig, *Integrating Spirituality into Multicultural Counseling*. (Thousand Oaks, Cal.: Sage Publishers, 1999). p. 7.

Bede's Christocentrism makes room for genuine pluralism. He rejected both the old exclusivism (one religion is true; the others are false) and the more modified inclusivist view (There is truth in others, but they are preparations for the Gospel), instead, embracing a Christianity dynamically open and related to the deepest truth in the various other religions, an attitude conciliar document, *Nostra Aetate* encourages. Bede accepted the reality and validity with some nuances of non-Christian forms of mysticism, Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish, Sufi and nature mysticism. It is from this mystical level that his thought, his great synthesis emerges.⁸⁶

Bede Griffiths and other contemporary spiritual leaders (John Main, Dali Lama, Thomas Keating) have been able to allow the deeper levels of spirituality to be a path to unitive pluralism. Bede Griffith stated, "Each religion is imperfect in itself, but there is a convergence on a final Truth."⁸⁷ In silence and prayer men and women of this level of mysticism realize that all religions share a unity.

If you are arguing doctrines and so on, you get nowhere, but when you meet in meditation, you begin to share your own inner experiences as you begin to realize an underlying unity behind the religions.⁸⁸

Griffiths' unitive conclusions come with an experiential authority.

For Griffiths' knowledge of the fundamental unity of religions in their convergence upon the unconditional Spirit is thus not just a conclusion from cross-cultural studies; it is a mystical intuition born of his multireligious experience.⁸⁹

The use of silence and contemplative prayer as a process for *unitive pluralism* has had a profound influence on spirituality. The deep silence shared

⁸⁶ Fukuyama, Servig, p.6

⁸⁸ Wayne Teasdale, "Introduction: Bede Griffiths as Visionary Guide." Bruteau, Beatrice, ed., *The Other Half of My Soul*. (Wheaton, Ill.: Quest, 1996). p. 12

⁸⁹ Bruteau ed., p.131

by multireligious groups has deepened the spiritual life of many and has led many to seek a deeper more consistent spirituality built on silent prayer and often leading to mystical union. In this sense, pluralism has had a profound and lasting effect on spirituality, and likewise spirituality (contemplative, mystical) has had a most promising and unifying effect on pluralism.

Bishop Michael Fitzgerald, Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Affairs, responds to the reality of pluralism and its subsequent interreligious dialogue as formulating *spirituality of interreligious dialogue*. His spirituality, according to Fitzgerald, is one that “has the mind of Christ and will lead to a servant spirituality... If one is full of oneself and only seeking one’s own interests, there can be no chance of a true encounter.”⁹⁰ Fitzgerald sees this approach as a spirituality of kenosis and self-emptying to be open to the other. Fitzgerald’s spirituality relates closely to Knitter’s “suffering other” and the “suffering earth” approach to religious pluralism.⁹¹ Knitter, in his book, *Jesus and the Other Names*, claims that the universal global concerns and challenges resulting from hunger, violence, overpopulation, over consumption, cloning and ecology can provide a common ground for pluralistic dialogue not only among

⁸⁸ Bede Griffiths as quoted from Bruteau ed., p. 131

⁸⁹ Bede Griffiths, “Return to the Centre” p. 71, 73 taken from Bruteau, ed., p. 210

⁹⁰ Michael Fitzgerald, “The Spirituality of Interreligious Dialogue.” *Origins*. February 25, 1999, vol. 28 # 36. p. 631.

⁹¹ Paul Knitter, “Jesus and Other Names.” p. 100. taken from Coward, p 155-156.

religious and spiritual groups but political, economic and ecological groups all seeking a better life on this planet.⁹²

The authentic spirituality that meets and nourishes a creative response to pluralism must have a *differentiated consciousness* at its core, for as Lonergan indicates: " An undifferentiated consciousness has no awareness of the 'other' in religion. Religious pluralism is cultivated in a religiously differentiated consciousness approached by an ascetic and reached by a mystic in response to God's love."⁹³

The influence of pluralism on spirituality seems to have had a bipolar effect of either becoming more universal, unifying, deeper and global in relation to God or others (differentiated consciousness),⁹⁴ or the perceived threat of pluralism has produced a protectionist, insular and superior spirituality of isolationism and avoidance of the other (undifferentiated consciousness). The spirituality of a differentiated consciousness is attempting to deal with the reality of pluralism in a functional manner that is realistic for the present and dynamic, relational and transformative for the future.

⁹² Paul Knitter, *Jesus and the Other Names*. (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1996). p.10.

⁹³ Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971). p. 273

⁹⁴ Lonergan, *Method*. Chapter 3, *Meaning*. pp 57-99. *Undifferentiated consciousness uses indiscriminately the procedures of common sense 1) realm of meaning followed by 2) theory and 3) interiority so its explanations, its self-knowledge, its religion are rudimentary. Undifferentiated consciousness insists on homogeneity. Differentiated consciousness is the self- knowledge that understands the different realms (of meaning) and knows how to shift from any one to another.* p. 84

Peter C. Phan, in his article, "Cultural Diversity: A Blessing or a Curse for Theology and Spirituality?" insists there must be a genuinely ethnic and yet transcultural spirituality and he discusses the main characteristics of this emerging spirituality. What is interesting with Phan is his insistence on a conversion according to Lonergan in all its dimensions: intellectual, affective, moral and religious. Phan states the following:

The heart of conversion is the total conditionless and permanent self-surrender to God or to use Lonergan's words, 'falling in love with God unrestrictedly'...With respect to inculturation, one of the results of intellectual conversion is the overcoming of cultural biases and prejudices...Prejudice and discrimination in any form constitute the most basic obstacles to a genuine enculturation.⁹⁵

It is interesting to note Phan's criteria for a spirituality, which would effectively foster enculturation. Lonergan's stages of conversion were cited earlier in this thesis as criteria for an authentic spirituality. Conversion and authentic spirituality are required to deal with difference and the other whether it is in a cultural or religious plurality.

⁹⁵ Peter C. Phan, "Cultural Diversity: A Blessing or a Curse for Theology and Spirituality?" *Louvain Studies*. 19 (1994) 195-211. p. 208.

5. The Influence of Secularism on Spirituality

A. Definition of Terms

The terms *secular*, *secularization* and *secularism* all stem from the Latin word *saeculum*, meaning 'age or generation'. Gerald O'Collins shows the progression of the meaning of the term as follows:

Secular movements happened throughout various ages and generations. They belonged to periods of world history. Initially we may describe the secular as *this – worldly*, or the *non-religious*...A secular explanation is one which declines to include spiritual interpretations. It would not account for events by appealing to revelations and interventions from God. The secular man interprets without recourse to other worldly agents or religious principles.

We need to discriminate carefully between 1) secular secularity: concerned with the worldly, the non-religious 2) secularization: historical movements which entail a change from religious to this-worldly purposes 3) secularism: an atheistic ideology held by secularists, who explain everything exclusively in this-worldly terms.⁹⁶

The gradual development of these terms, from *secular* to *secularization* to *secularism*, has manifested itself at different times and ways throughout history, and these various degrees of emphasis have had influence on spirituality in varying degrees as well. The choice to use the influence of *secularism* on spirituality, rather than *secularization* or *secular*, is because the extreme ideology of secularism is inclusive of the other two terms and expresses the extreme ideology resulting from the progression of secularization. The process toward

⁹⁶ Gerald O'Collins *Theology of Secularity*. (Notre Dame, Indiana: Fides Publishers Inc., 1974). p.12-13

secularization was evolutionary and revolutionary over a period of time. We are presently experiencing *secularism* as an ideology and movement in our society, therefore the full impact of this ideology is confronting spirituality in a more direct and forceful dynamic than previously. In this sense, secularism creates a dialectic with religion and *spirituality*. *Secularism* as a movement or ideology was first used about 1846 by George Holyoake to denote:

...a form of opinion, which concerns itself only with questions, the issues of which can be tested by the experience of this life. More explicitly, *secularism* is that which seeks the development of the physical, moral and intellectual nature of man to the highest possible point, as the immediate duty of life – which inculcates the practical sufficiency of natural morality apart from Atheism, Theism or the Bible – which selects as its methods of procedure the promotion of human improvement by material means, and proposes these positive agreements as the common bond of union, to all who would regulate life by reason and ennoble it by service. Secularism is a code of life founded on considerations purely human, and intended mainly for those who find theology indefinite or inadequate, unreliable or unbelievable. Its essential principals are: 1) the improvement of this life by material means. 2) Science is the available Providence of man. 3) It is good to do good.⁹⁷

Secularism as a term is of recent origin but the principles of this movement and its teachings have been embraced by free and open thinkers of all ages. With regard to the question of God, Holyoake was an agnostic and Bradlaugh was an atheist, which indicates that one may not necessarily be an atheist to be a *secularist* or a *secular humanist*.

⁹⁷ Catholic Encyclopedia: Secularism. Vol.11 < [http://www. New advent. Org](http://www.Newadvent.org)> (Date accessed, November15, 2000). p.1.

B. The Evolution of Secularism

The process of secularization and the gradual evolution and integration of secularism into the various levels of society caused religion and spirituality to drift apart from secularism, but in some instances secularism became intertwined with religion. O'Collins uses the example of Jewish people fighting a war as a secular activity, while believing that religious obligations had inspired this activity and the outcome would reveal God's intention. O'Collins indicates in his book, *Theology of Secularity*, how secularism infiltrated several aspects of society especially at institutional levels. He notes that areas of life like medicine and welfare have come under state control, while many nations have secularized their educational system. On the cultural level, religious content in the arts, philosophy and literature has diminished along with ecclesial dominance in artistic patronage. Science has been given an autonomy from religious perspectives on the universe. On the subjective level, O'Collins notes that the human consciousness has liberated itself from religious domination. The *city of God* has been transformed into the *secular city*.⁹⁸

The process of secularization and the advent of secularism were thought by many to be a liberation from a sacralization, which had permeated society since Emperor Constantine's declaration of Christianity as the state religion in the fourth century. Secularization became a reaction to sacralization. Just as the world secularized the Church by making Christianity the state religion, so the

⁹⁸ O'Collins, p. 14-17.

Church sacralized the state by giving secular authority sacred and divine attributes. The church was secularized in that it utilized propaganda, fought crusades, enjoyed tax exemptions and annuities. The state was sacralized in that the king was divinely inspired, and laws took on theological overtones in their implementation. Society experienced an enmeshment with Church and state, which lasted until the eighteenth century.

Louis Dupre, a professor of philosophy of religion from Yale University, discusses in an interview his reflections on the challenges of modern secularism to religion and the spiritual life. He notes that in the eighteenth century there was an initial breakthrough in secularism with Voltaire and Diderot, but it was the nineteenth century that was marked by antitheistic philosophy and culture. By the twentieth century three prominent secularists emerged: Marx, Freud and Nietzsche. Dupre notes that for these three secularists the idea of forcibly eradicating religion had become unnecessary. Dupre comments on their theory as follows:

Religion for them was a passing symptom that was rapidly vanishing by itself.... God no longer matters absolutely in our closed world, if God matters at all...Christianity has become one element of civilization among many others, and by no means the most important.⁹⁹

⁹⁹ Louis Dupre, "Seeking Christian Interiority ." *The Christian Century*. (Chicago: July 16-23, 1997). < <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb>> (date accessed, July 30, 2001) p.1-2

In a recent article from the Catholic Register, Martin E. Marty, an author and past director of the *Public Religion Project* at the University of Chicago, gave a North American resumé of secularism as follows:

Secularism has become the state religion. For some, it was clear that constitutional guarantees of freedom of religion are being interpreted by the courts and the civil servants to mean *freedom from religion*. Increasingly the symbols and language of faith are being banished from the public sphere.¹⁰⁰

For those who still adhere to a religious component in society, this form of secularism, which now seeks to free individuals from religion, is in a sense an antithesis to liberalism and free thinking which once marked the beginning of the secular movement. Peter Marin in his reflections on four decades of American moral experience, *Freedom and its Discontents*, notes that the great struggle of Americans to live ethically without God has left disorder and confusion.

The great dream at the heart of modern American secularism has always been that religion would slowly wither away, giving way, as it did so, to reason, to a morality rooted not in a fear of God or the hope of heaven, but in reflection, a sense of kinship, and a belief in the common good. Values once maintained through oppression or fear would rise naturally from human reason, instinct and sympathy. The religious divisions of hatred separating us from one another would disappear, and the senses of gratitude and awe felt for God would be transferred to the human world and provide a foundation for a universalized community. As we know, none of this came to be, or is it likely to come to be. The struggle to live ethically without God has left us not with the just and moral order we imagined but with disorder and confusion. Something has gone radically wrong with secularism. The problem has more than its share of irony, for secularism, in the end, has converted itself into a kind of religion. Our hallowed tradition of skepticism and tolerance has grown into its near opposite, and it now partakes of precisely the same arrogance, the same irrationality and passion for certainty, the

¹⁰⁰ Joseph Sinasac, "Secular Takeover." *The Catholic Register*. (Toronto: November 15, 1999). p.1

same pretense to unquestioned virtue against which its powers were once arrayed. In the desperate way we cling to belief, in our contempt for those who do not believe what we believe, secularism has indeed taken on the trappings of a faith - and a very narrow one at that.¹⁰¹

Philosophers and sociologists have observed the process of revolution in society with the subsequent negation of the forms and institutions of oppression. To their dismay, what has been observed is often a repetition of the same oppressive structures and ideologies by the very movement which revolted against these systems of oppression. The communist movement became oppressive and self-seeking over a period of time so that it was virtually unrecognizable from the oppressive structures of the capitalist movement from which it revolted. The revolution of the secularists freeing individuals from the oppression of religion is quickly becoming as forceful about their theory and their rights, to the deprivation of the rights of those who may wish to practice religious beliefs and rituals. Peter Starr has compiled a series of reflections and theories from a group of philosophers, cultural and religious thinkers, who studied the *Logics of Failed Revolt*. In his text he examines the *logic of specular doubling* based on the French theorist, Jacques Lacan. Starr defines this theory as follows: "Revolutionary action is doomed to repetition because revolutionaries invariably construct themselves as mirror images of their rivals."¹⁰² Julia Kristeva,

¹⁰¹ Peter Marin, "Secularism's Blind Faith." *Harper's* (New York: Sept., 1995 vol.291. pp.20-23) <http://proquest.umi.com/pgdweb> (date accessed, July 31,2001).

¹⁰² Peter Starr, *Logics of Failed Revolt*. (California: Stanford University Press, 1995). p. 2

another French theorist of the *Tel Quel Group*¹⁰³, formed this observation for today, based on the logic of *specular doubling*:

Every time the revolutionary process settles in, realizes itself, and so takes form as a state structure or an ideology, this process is betrayed, reduced to local interests..., to preexisting ideological systems, to subjective identifications representing private property.¹⁰⁴

If one applies the theories of the French *Tel Quel Group*, then it follows that secularism has become a political and perhaps even a religious ideology which is doomed to failure because of the logic of specular doubling. Secularism certainly shows telltale signs of becoming a political force that is lobbying for the repression and oppression of religious freedoms in the state.

Marin believes that the evils attributed to religion are coming from a much deeper source in human nature, such that fanaticism can have its roots in non-religious endeavours as was seen in the communist movement. Secularists have attributed human power, superiority, arrogance and domination as resulting from religion and spirituality and by doing this, they have, in a sense, reduced religion to humanism and human imperfection in leadership without acknowledging the self-transcendent factor, which is at the core of spirituality and

¹⁰³ *Tel Quel Group*, "Group of French intellectuals associated with the avant-garde literary journal, *Tel Quel*, founded in 1960, was instrumental in dissemination of post-structuralist thought. Members include Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida, Julia Kristeva and Philippe Sollers. They participated in the concept, *écriture*, a writing practice which gave birth to *polysemy*, or the multiplications of meanings which put into question the notion of absolute truths." Joseph Childers, Gary Hentzi, ed., the *Columbia Dictionary of Modern Literary and Cultural Criticism*. (N.Y.: Columbia University Press, 1995). p. 352-353.

¹⁰⁴ Julia Kristeva, *Revolution*, 377. Taken from Starr, p.159.

religion. Spirituality and religion move the human being beyond the realm of what is self-centered and human to what is self-transcendent and beyond what is natural and human. What cannot be understood at the rational level, what is mysterious and transcendent, has not been acknowledged by secularists, which is perhaps why secularists are experiencing confusion about why their theories have not always materialized in society as they projected so rationally. One example of this is the supposed theory of the *privatization* and eventual *death of religion* by natural causes, which has not materialized: in fact, the opposite has occurred. José Casanova in his study, *Public Religions in the Modern World*, presents a counter theory called the *deprivatization* of religion in the modern world. Casanova proves empirically that religious traditions are refusing to accept the marginal and privatized role, which the theories of modernity and secularization have reserved for the future of religion.¹⁰⁵ Unexpectedly the main religions of the world refused to succumb to the defeatist demise of their fate predicted by the secularists, and in fact Casanova observes a resurgence of the repoliticization of the private and moral spheres of religion to contest these secularist theories in a public forum.

C. The Influence of Secularism on Spirituality

The spiritual and religious responses to secularism vary from the extreme polarized reactions of right wing religious fundamentalists, to pluralists, to moderate secularists, to those who would attempt to define a theology or

¹⁰⁵ José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994). p. 5

spirituality of secularism or secularity. The reality of religion, spirituality and secularism exists and forms of coexistence and cohabitation have to be invented for the future of society. Margaret Sommerville, a medical ethicist who has studied the issues of euthanasia, abortion and the sanctity of life, refers to the *secular sacred*, which integrates science and mystery in life and society.

Many of us have lost access to a sense of the sacred, including the notion that we, as human beings, are sacred in any meaning of this term. There are multiple causes of this loss over the last half-century, including our extraordinary scientific advances. By a sense of the sacred, I mean the recognition and protection of the human spirit – a sense of what I call the *secular sacred*.¹⁰⁶

The term *secular sacred* could be an opening for the peaceful coexistence of science and secularism with spirituality, which would be an alternative to the dualistic approach of the past, and which would provide a respectful acknowledgement of one another in society.

Certainly the presence and influence of secularism have been experienced by society, and its reality, like the reality of pluralism, has to be grappled with and some form of coexistence has to be attempted. The difference between coexistence with pluralism and coexistence with secularists, is the very real danger that secularists often seek the very extinction of religion and spirituality. Religious and spiritual leaders are therefore approaching secularists

¹⁰⁶ Margaret Sommerville, *The Ethical Canary*. (Toronto: Penguin Books, 2000). p.13.

with a cautious skepticism. Christian Duquoc expresses this healthy caution in relating with secularists as follows:

Secularization is, no doubt, for a large part a legitimate tendency to shake off the undue constraints imposed upon man by churches or religious ideologies. This phenomenon will therefore benefit Christianity insofar as it helps us to set God free from the idolatrous trappings in which we have harnessed him. It would be naïve to believe that this secularization is a neutral phenomenon. Its ambiguity...arises from the almost exclusive prevalence of the idea that only reason, in its scientific and technological aspects, can put us in touch with reality. This keynote of Western secularization has devalued the other ways in which man expresses himself.¹⁰⁷

The caution, which Duquoc mentions above, stems from the obvious fact that secularists who support the idea that only science and reason can put us in touch with reality are not recognizing the other levels of *intentional consciousness*¹⁰⁸ and as such, are exhibiting an *undifferentiated consciousness*¹⁰⁹ in their relationship with other expressions of ideologies.

To understand the influence of secularism on spirituality, one can observe some of the spiritual reactions and attitudes which have resulted since secularism became prominent in society, and see if these reactions have resulted in the formation of authentic spiritualities, or if these shifts and movements are reactive or proactive, or if they hold some validity and are authentic spiritualities for our age.

¹⁰⁷ Christian Duquoc, "Spirituality and Secularization." *Concilium*. (Vol. 49, N.Y.: Paulist Press, 1969). p.2.

¹⁰⁸ Lonergan, Chapter 1. c.f. p. 40 of this thesis

¹⁰⁹ Lonergan, Chapter 3. c.f. p. 54 of this thesis

René Rémond views the influence of secularization as a crisis for spirituality, and describes the crisis as follows:

The crisis tells us that man is not pure rationality alone. In examining the spiritual roots of the present crisis, it matters not whether these roots are consciously adverted to by those criticizing our society...For all the criticism leveled against our society, people can still appreciate its wonders. It is criticized mainly for its inability to satisfy certain basic aspirations of man: his desire for freedom, self-expression and personal development. ¹¹⁰

One of the ways in which secularism has affected spirituality is a reversal from openness and liberal inquiry into a sheltered fundamentalism both in religion and spirituality. Gilles Kepel, a renowned French scholar of contemporary Islam, reminds western society that by 1980 several American leaders were proclaiming Evangelical Christianity, which is a reversal in thinking from the Enlightenment and secularism. He notes that Islam and Judaism were also demonstrating a resurgence of fundamentalism in the midst of confusion and widespread discontent with the Enlightenment. Kepel notes:

New leaders along with new religious movements aimed no longer at adapting to secular values but at recovering a sacred foundation for the organization of society – by changing society if necessary...The theme was no longer aggiornamento but a second evangelization of Europe. The aim was no longer to modernize Islam, but to Islamize modernity. The break with the enlightenment occurred in very distinct and usually unrelated ways in the three Abrahamic traditions. There are two affinities in the three religions: 1) These new movements are attracting the allegiance of very well educated and technologically proficient young people (Islamic Revival, Communion and Liberation, Orthodox Judaism). 2) These

¹¹⁰ René Rémond "The Spiritual Crisis Confronting Our Society ." *Concilium*.49, p.14-15.

religious movements have retreated from public engagement and regrouped after a series of failures to secure electoral majorities for their programs.¹¹¹

For adherents to spiritual or religious lifestyle, these fundamentalists seem to be harmful for religion and spirituality because secularists will use the extreme behaviour to generalize for all believers. Hector Avalos, a secular humanist, refers to the death of a young girl who refused medical treatment on the basis of religious belief, and declares that, "faith leads to unrealistic expectations about health and life."¹¹² These extreme statements are misleading to the public and to the future of religion and spirituality.

Moderate secularism is a form of influence, which seeks to come to some relationship with religion and spirituality especially in the realm of education. Barbara Curry and Neil Houser have proposed a new option for reintroducing religion into education:

A moderate secularism would reject the advocacy of specific religious perspectives while promoting critical investigation into the nature of spirituality itself and authentic inquiry into the philosophical aspects of various forms of religion...The inclusion of religious inquiry in the school curriculum, cannot exist without four additional themes: plurality, equality, inquiry and authenticity...A moderate secularism recognizes that pluralistic societies reflect a variety of needs and concerns as well as multiple intelligences and ways of thinking...It is necessary to address the needs of all groups and individuals. This is best achieved by valuing and nurturing

¹¹¹ Michael J. Hunt, "Secularism Under Siege-The Revenge of God: The Resurgence of Islam, Christianity, and Judaism in the Modern World by George Kepel.." *Commonweal*.(N.Y.: May 20, 1994).
< <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb>> (date accessed, July 31, 2001).

¹¹² Hector Avalos, "Is Faith Good for You?" *Free Inquiry*. Buffalo: Fall, 1997.
<<http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb>> (date accessed, July 30, 2001). p.1.

rather than seeking to standardize (e.g. through cultural assimilation) (Banks, 1987, Ogbu, 1987).¹¹³

It is interesting that what has been termed *moderate secularism* is very close to the theories advocated by pluralistic scholars. Certainly this kind of moderate secularism in education cannot be atheistic in approach, but rather a reversion to perhaps the original intent of secularism, which was to eliminate the distortion and abuse of religion through domination and abuse of power.

Louis Dupre has interesting reflections on the nature of spirituality in relation to secularism. He is speaking from a Christian perspective, but much of what he says could be relevant to spiritualities of other religions. He insists that it is of vital importance for one to have a spiritual life which allows faith to incorporate all aspects of one's existence, requires one to have a personal response to the call of the divine and an attentiveness to the inner voice. Dupre sees the future in an authentic religion and spirituality that are borne *from within* and *from below*. He expresses concern for the place of religion in society, and for the fact that religion should not be just another element in civilization, but rather a matter of ultimate concern for all society. He feels that if religion is not of utmost importance in society that it will die altogether. He sees religion as the unifying element of culture, and because it is diminishing, this unifying

¹¹³ Barbara Curry, Neil O. Houser, "Moderate Secularism: Constructing a Language of Possibility for Religion in Public Educational Policy." *Sage Publications*. (Los Altos: March 1997). p. 10

element is also diminishing and we are experiencing fragmentation. He observes that we lack the overall vision that holds the various departments of our life together. He also observes unauthentic reactionary religious movements that attempt to suppress cultural changes rather than achieving the reintegration of culture and the revival of religion. He projects into the future with this statement:

What does this mean for religion of the future? Christianity has always started with a personal conversion of the heart...In speaking of religion's need for inwardness, I am not advocating any form of interiority that isolates the individual or Christian Community from contemporary culture, but an integral Christian humanism that derives its inspiration from within. Christians have no right to seclude themselves from society. The contemplative is responsible for the civilization in which he or she lives. By its very nature, spiritual life is transformative of all aspects of life...The community includes the hidden yet intimate communion of like-minded persons, spiritual men and women of other faiths...Believers living in a pluralist society have an obligation to acquaint themselves with the presence of the Spirit in other faiths. That obligation reaches beyond tolerance and dialogue to an integration of otherness within their own theology...Today's faith requires an inner life. The spiritual emptiness of our time is a symptom of its religious poverty, but it also presents an opportunity for deepening one's religious life. Emptiness tends to make itself felt in painful personal experiences. These experiences may be converted into a spiritual sense of emptiness, a *spirituality from below*. The *spirituality from below* occupies itself with what we ought to do when everything goes wrong, how we can deal with the fragments of our life and from them fashion something new... The cultivation of an interior life is no luxury, but a necessity for today's Christians.¹¹⁴

What is most interesting from Dupre's reflections on the present status of religion and spirituality is that he does not simply rest in the malaise of

< <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb> > (date accessed, July 30,2001). p.10.

¹¹⁴ Louis Dupre, "Spiritual Life and the Survival of Christianity." *Cross Currents*.(New Rochelle: Fall, 1998).

postmodernism, but he is able to draw forth from the past what is enduring in religion and spirituality and transform these principles of the spiritual life into ways of growing and moving forward in society. He provides society with a Christian and yet universal perspective that is not confining to Christianity alone, and which aids one in living the reality of a pluralistic secular culture with an authentic spirituality. Emptiness and confusion need not be viewed as symptomatic of a depressive society, but rather as stepping-stones to a deeper and richer personal, communal and even universal spirituality. *A spirituality from below* offers hope to postmodern culture and society.

6. Modern Concepts of Spirituality

A. Introduction

In the age of postmodernism, secularism and pluralism spirituality has responded in various ways to meet these new historical, cultural and social developments. New expressions of spirituality are responding to the concern for psychological well-being, self fulfillment and self esteem. Health, fitness, diet, exercise, bodybuilding and general preoccupation with self have often led to “spiritualities” of like kind. *New Age spirituality* seeks to tap into the inner self and strengthen the God within the self. Educators have likewise responded with various pluralistic, moral and secular spiritualities, which are inclusive and sometimes relativized in order to be inclusive of all students. The new concern with the survival of the earth and universe has prompted *eco spirituality* and *creation spirituality*, where humankind is one with the universe. The globalization of humankind has led to an increasing awareness in Eastern religions that have adopted some Western characteristics. Some theologians have tried to present interesting movements in spirituality which attempt to develop the whole person with a *holistic spirituality*, or a *spirituality for survival* in postmodernism. The variety of spiritualities is very much reflective of postmodern society, which in itself is open-ended and often without borders or structure. A specific spiritual or human need is instantly presented with a packaged and well-marketed “spirituality” for instant gratification in a particular place and time with tapes, cd’s, attractive books and videos. Such postmodern “spiritualities” respond to the

instant urge to consume, build up self without much effort, commitment or sense of permanence or endurance.

At the other end of the spectrum, there are moderate and classical thinkers and spiritual leaders who are able to assess the present era and offer a substantial spirituality that is not only relevant to our culture, but also offering depth, growth, transcendence and transformation in human–divine relationship which fosters a deeply fulfilling life.

B. Theological and Spiritual Strategies for Postmodernism

The postmodern experience is characterized by the following:

...a loss of confidence in the foundational features of thought established by the Enlightenment 1) commitment to an ideal of the rational, disinterested, objective, universal knowledge 2) the elevation of science and the rationality it embodied to the status of arbiter of truth 3) the relegation of religion to the realm of the private, the subjective and the self-validating experience of the divine.(Fowler,1991; Placher, 1989).¹¹⁵

James Fowler, a theologian and psychological counselor, has researched and categorized the stages of faith, and he has recently summarized four theological strategies for addressing postmodern experience in his book, *Faithful Change, The Personal and Public Challenges of Postmodern Life*.

These four categories will encompass various forms and concepts of spirituality, which address these four theologies and spiritualities. The first

approach is liberation and political theology, which responds to the concern that radical pluralism and relativity have broken down confidence in the modernist consciousness in North America. Suffering and mass destruction mark society more than care taking. Liberation theology and its spiritual lifestyle urge action, strategy, change, justice and equality. God is the voice of those who suffer.

The second approach concerns itself with creation and unified cosmology. Theology and spirituality are grounded in the doctrine of creation. Thomas Berry and Matthew Fox are proponents of the relevant creation spirituality, which seeks to unite us with the larger interests and the ecological survival with humankind and its universe. God's praxis is the creative source and pattern within the cosmic process. This spirituality is very global and received much acclaim for its other centeredness, universality and cosmic significance for a spirituality of the future.

The third approach uses the hermeneutical method to purport the normative claims and 'classical' tradition to evoke meaning today. David Tracy, a Catholic theologian, sees a *religious classic* (books by authors such as St. Augustine, St. John of the Cross, St. Ignatius, etc.) as an expression of the human spirit. Tracy seeks to bring the interpretations of the Christian classic into mutual correlation with present situations because the classics have universal spiritual messages that are not bound to history or culture.

¹¹⁵ James Fowler, *Faithful Change: The Personal and Public Challenges of Postmodern Life*. (Nashville, Abingdon, 1996). p. 179.

Finally, the fourth approach consists in the narrative-linguistic experience of particular situated traditions, which often express in religious or spiritual experiences what is universal in religious experiences among human beings. Doctrine and spiritual classics serve to record a cultural-linguistic approach to theology and spirituality.¹¹⁶

In this same study, Fowler discusses the postmodern theology of the praxis of God, by which he means, “the characteristic patterns of God’s involvement in the providential guidance of the processes of our evolving universe, including God’s interaction with humankind.”¹¹⁷ Today’s society is often challenged to respond to the query, ‘Are we doing this altruistic act of kindness out of love and concern for a human being, or because God is within the call and action of benevolence to human beings?’ The first motivation is humanism; the second way of life is spirituality.

Fowler’s conclusion states that there is a cluster of qualities, which can be nurtured in a pluralistic postmodern society. They are as follows:

1) individuated identity with intimate connectedness 2) cognitive operations with emotional integration 3) tradition with preparations for continual change.¹¹⁸

These qualities would seem to be the qualities for a postmodern spirituality if the summation included ‘with the grace of God’. The final qualities are demonstrated

¹¹⁶ This is a summary of Fowler’s approaches taken from Fowler, pp. 181-188.

¹¹⁷ Fowler, p. 191

through the process of finding purpose in one's life that is also the purpose of God.

C. Types of Modern and Postmodern Spiritualities

John Carmody, like Fowler, offers a positive balanced and fruitful spirituality, which is intended to move beyond mere survival of postmodernism, pluralism and secularism into a spiritual, physical and psychologically holistic spirituality:

A Holistic spirituality is a religious outlook and regimen that emphasizes the connections among a person's various interests, problems and responsibilities. As religious, it stresses the ultimate questions that make all human beings potential philosophers, beginning lovers of wisdom... taking note of these questions...people develop an outlook in which they are "bound" (*religata*) to the mystery of life, the primordial reality Western civilization has named "God". If they are serious about answering this call and sense that such binding might liberate their deepest self...they will put together a regime, a schedule that provides for these key factors. Let us call that regime a "spirituality".

When a spirituality emphasizes the connections among the different concerns that a person might consider, it knocks on the door of holism. Holism (wholism) is an aspiration to deal with one's life adequately, giving each significant factor its due. Work and love, prayer and politics, sex and social service each of the many ingredients or dimensions in our lives clamors for attention...We have to make our peace with this clamor. This requires hard choices about what is central and what is peripheral...Wholeness begins with religion...Since religion deals with the end of things, that mystery which death makes it imperative for all to consider, religion is the wise person's abiding interest. ¹¹⁹

For Carmody, holistic spirituality, or a regime of life, includes continuous questioning about ultimate concerns, prayer which lifts our minds and hearts to

¹¹⁸ Fowler, p. 234

¹¹⁹ John Carmody, *Holistic Spirituality*. (N.Y.: Paulist Press, 1983). p. 3-4.

God, the holy Mystery, and gratitude for life, forgiveness and inner quiet in communion with God.

Carmody also brings our attention to the fact that the traditional word for healing or making whole is *salus*, meaning salvation. This requires the free human to turn around to the divine light instead of a spurious independence. This is the paradox included in a holistic spirituality in an age when human effort and productivity is paramount. Carmody discusses holistic education briefly. He summarizes a holistic education as follows:

God's pedagogy is personal, existential, unique, tailored to what our questions and individual experiences have made us...An educational process that makes people whole includes reflection, reading and research that construct the map of knowledge from within.¹²⁰

Carmody also cites Lonergan's eight functional specialties to enhance a holistic theology and spirituality (research, interpretation, history, dialectics, foundations, doctrines, systematics and communication). The first four functional specialties are the listening stage of theology and spirituality, and are so important in spiritual development and growth.¹²¹

For Carmody, a holistic spirituality encompasses all facets of life to include: ecology, economics, politics, small communities, diet, health, exercise,

¹²⁰ Carmody, p. 105

¹²¹ Carmody p. 108, taken from Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology*. Ch 5 pp. 125-145

play, sexuality, education, meditation and theological reflection. This type of spirituality provides hope in a somewhat ailing, disheveled society.

Along with Carmody's holistic spirituality, there is an increasing amount of literature that supports spiritual wellness as an antidote to depression and other forms of mental illness. Charlene E. Westgate has studied the correlation of spirituality with depression and has identified four dimensions of spiritual wellness. These dimensions include; "a sense of meaning in life, a transcendent perspective, an intrinsic value system and a sense of belonging to a spiritual community of shared values and support."¹²²

Westgate sees the shift away from the Age of Enlightenment, when reason was glorified and spirituality was viewed as irrational and irrelevant. The body, soul and spirit were also viewed as separate parts, all of which would have viewed spirituality as having no value to the treatment of depression. Holism is in direct contrast with these previous views. Westgate traces holism as an ancient concept of the East in which "human functioning is viewed as synthesized whole and each component is seen as inextricably interrelated with other components (Addis, 1995)."¹²³ She notes that this philosophical framework or spiritual functioning has equal relevance to the physical, mental and emotional functioning. The four dimensions, which were mentioned for spiritual wellness, are recurring themes for depression, creating a link between spirituality and

¹²² Charlene E. Westgate, "Spiritual Wellness and Depression" *Journal of Counseling and Development*. (Alexandria: September, 1996). p. 26

depression, which is significant. Westgate cites several studies that indicate that depressed persons usually lack some or all of these dimensions of spiritual wellness. Westgate suggests that counselors assess the client's spirituality with the following questions:

A) *Meaning in life*: What provides the client with a sense of direction and meaning in life? To what extent has the client explored his/her spirituality? How has the client's spirituality affected his/her sense of well-being? B) *Intrinsic values*: Is the client's value system based on external, visceral considerations or on internal stable factors? Are the client's spiritual beliefs functional or dysfunctional? C) *Transcendence*: Does the client believe in a "higher power" or in some force or plan greater than herself or himself? Does the client view this relationship as a source of support and guidance or of punishment and retribution? D) *spiritual community*: Is a spiritual community a part of the client's support system? Does the client's spiritual community provide support for the client as well as for the client to be supportive to others? ¹²⁴

This article is of interest because it not only supports spirituality as a reality, but it links spirituality to depression and finally moves to the use of spiritually related questions as a tool for assessment of spiritual wellness or spiritual "sickness". Westgate notes the symptoms for depression, which stand in stark contrast to the criteria for spiritual wellness. These symptoms include: "meaninglessness, emptiness, hopelessness, a sense of alienation from values, a narcissistic focus, social withdrawal."¹²⁵ Westgate notes that with this literature and research, a growing appreciation of holism of human functioning has heightened the need to approach depression spiritually as well as somatically, affectively and cognitively. It almost seems for psychologists and scientifically oriented persons, in a

¹²³ Westgate, p. 26

¹²⁴ Westgate, p. 32.

¹²⁵ Westgate, p. 33

postmodern era, that empirical studies and testing are necessary for belief in the reality of spirituality and its overall effect on humans. For those who are spiritually active now and those who have been spiritually aware over past centuries, scientific proof of spirituality would never have been conceived of or even considered because it might be considered wanting in faith of the divine power in the life of an individual. Spirituality of today must undergo the same rigorous testing and challenges of other disciplines if it is to be considered real and authentic. Fortunately, authentic spirituality usually meets the necessary criteria for scrutiny and skepticism, which are signs of the times in which we live. Lonergan is a theologian who has been able to systematically meet these demands from the scientific world through his method of theology, which is gaining respect from the secular, scientific and rational segments of society.

The modern trend in spirituality, especially among the young, has been the shift from traditional Western and usually Christian spirituality to Eastern forms of spirituality and religion, which at first glance may seem to have a more exotic appeal, especially to individuals who perhaps feel laden by authoritarian, structured and dogma-ridden religions in Western society. David Bradley in his article, "The Western Crisis and Attraction of Asian Religions", discusses the crisis of the spirit as leading some toward Eastern religion and leaving behind the symptoms of malaise in society. Bradley gives four causes of Western discontent: war and social change that brings couples from opposing sides of previous sides into relationship and alienation from their families. This new

global availability of multicultural relationships often causes rootlessness, displacement and depersonalization. A second cause is the new morality and *death of God school* which leaves no substitute for traditional mores. This has led to interest in astrology, horoscopes, divination of the future and drug use. The third factor is the disillusionment with the so-called utopias promised by science and technology, which has left divorce, alcoholism, violence and poverty in a world of plenty. Finally Bradley cites the decline in respect for authority where political and religious institutions demonstrated an abuse of power.¹²⁶ Bradley is quick to point out the various ironies that face individuals when they probe more deeply into Eastern society and spirituality.

The Westerner who chafes under discipline and authority often turns to Zen thinking to find freedom and release from responsibility. But if he is serious he soon learns how rigorous are the demands of Zen for self-discipline to achieve total control of one's life...Many who reject biblical mythology and prayer often appear eager to believe in divination, Asian astrology and mythologies of Hinduism and Mahayana Buddhism.¹²⁷

Bradley is writing from a Christian perspective and he sees that the Christian truth is found in the Gospel message, which must be evangelized as in the early church, because Christianity has within its message the means of self-renewal. He fears the Gospel being imprisoned by institutionalism and thereby losing its message in the periphery.

¹²⁶ David Bradley, "The Western Crisis and the Attraction of Asian Religions." Duquoc, Christian, ed., *Dimensions in Spirituality*. (N.Y.:Herder and Herder, 1970). pp.133-141.

¹²⁷ Bradley, p. 141.

One of the most widespread modern concepts of spirituality is the phenomenon of *New Age Spirituality*. Wouter J. Hanegraaff attributes the origin of new age with the publication of *The Celestine Prophecy* by James Redfield which "functions as a sort of thermometer for what is happening in society."¹²⁸

Hanegraaff sees the new age spirituality as a broad type of folk religion rather than a marginalized subculture, because *The Celestine Prophecy* had a broad spectrum of readers due to the inferior quality of this popular novel. Hanegraaff notes that New Age thinking appeals to individuals because it is characterized by culture criticism. New Age denounces dualism, reductionism and is based on the primacy of personal inner experience. Many view *New Age Spirituality* as esoteric, which bears a strong resemblance to Gnosticism, and nineteenth century 'occultism'. Hanegraaff notes that because New Age is not necessarily related to religion, as such it is a secular spirituality without a traditional religious base. Hanegraaff notes the following about *New Age Spirituality*:

New Age Spiritualities are not rooted in any existing religion. They are based upon the individual manipulation of religious as well as non-religious symbolic systems, and this manipulation is undertaken in order to fill these symbols with new religious meaning...*New Age Spiritualities* concentrate on whatever is not associated too closely with traditional churches and their theologies. Hence their preference for alternative traditions, from gnosticism and western esotericism and various religious traditions from other cultures...the most important area is popular mythologies of science...new agers give a spiritual twist to the symbolism of quantum mechanics and the theory of relativity, various psychological schools, sociological theories and so on...bits

¹²⁸ Wouter J Hanegraaff, "New Age and Secularization." *Instructional Review for the History of Religion*. (Numen, 47, 2000. pp. 288-312). p. 289.

and pieces recycled by the popular media. As such New Age is the manifestation par excellence of the secularization of religion: religion becomes solely a matter of individual choice and detaches itself from religious institutions, that is from exclusive commitment to specific religions...New age sources state that man has finally managed to free himself from the tyranny of religious power structures: religions are perceived as being based upon blind acceptance of dogmas, which have long prevented the faithful from discovering the divinity that resides within themselves.¹²⁹

New Age Spirituality, although popular and present in stores and malls, is not based so much on a positive transcendent relationship with God and a service to others, as a negation of institutionalism, authority, and bonding in community. The elements for authentic spirituality are replaced with individualism, science, privatization, secularism, occult phenomenon, Gnosticism and self-induced discovery of the God within self. The very self-centeredness of the new age "spirituality" is a strong indicator of unauthenticity because authentic spirituality is self-transcendent and borne out of the experience of the unconditional love of God.¹³⁰

Closely related to *New Age Spirituality* is the modern interest with *parapsychology*, which includes out-of-body experiences, *telepathy*, *clairvoyance*, *extrasensory perception*, *psychokinetic changes* in inanimate matter, *reincarnation* and any *out of the ordinary phenomenon* which might suggest a supernatural dimension to the human soul. David Ray Griffin, a constructive postmodern thinker, has created a link between parapsychology and postmodern spirituality. A constructive postmodern thinker in contrast to the

¹²⁹ Hanegraaff, pp. 304-305.

deconstructive thinkers (Martin Heidegger, Jacques Derrida etc.) believes in providing support for ecology, peace, emancipatory movements, and emphasizes the advances of this world in contrast to the negative revulsion of this age. The constructionist postmodern thinker agrees that the basic supposition of spirituality is having a soul, which is distinct from the brain and is self-determining. Griffin presents the concept of God as creator ex nihilo, the theory of materialization and paranormal experiences which all stimulate discussion about God as creator. The spiritual journey in this terrestrial location, or perhaps a journey to another life after this one, whether the soul actualizes the paranormal experience or whether it is an act of divine intervention, are all popular postmodern topics which he includes in his study.¹³¹ Some students of parapsychology are believers in God and God's power to initiate these phenomena, while others are convinced that God is nonexistent in these occurrences. Both theists and atheists are involved in the study of the cause and effect of these phenomena and many interesting postmodern theories concerning God, creation, life and afterlife have emerged as a result of this interest in the paranormal. The conclusions are usually reflective of either a deconstructive (nihilistic) or constructive (hope-filled) postmodern perspective.

This chapter will conclude with a brief explanation of the modern concept of spirituality as presented in the educational documents of the Province of Québec (Bill 118, Proulx Report, *Developing the Inner Life and Changing the*

¹³⁰ Lonergan, *Method. Chapter 4, Religion. c.f.* Chapter 3 on authentic spirituality in this thesis p.38

World). The following chapter will present a dialectic, which has emerged between this modern concept of spirituality and its relation to the traditional concept of spirituality. The religious and educational situation has been included in this thesis because it is a unique example of a society that has evolved from a monolithic Christian society whose educational system was largely founded by the religious institutions of the Catholic Church and to a lesser degree by the Protestant denominations. Spirituality was overtly Christian in its expression and public schools were either Roman Catholic or Protestant. Children of faiths other than Christian attended the Protestant public schools or private schools. The predominance of the Roman Catholic tradition was enmeshed in the political institutions until 1964 and the Quiet Revolution, when the Ministry of Education reclaimed public education as the responsibility of the government. The confessional status of schools was Catholic and Protestant, with a Superior Council consisting of a Catholic and Protestant Committee. The place of religion in the public sector was gradually subject to the political whims and concerns of the political party in power at a given time. This shift in education meant that politics, not religion, was the dynamic force in the public sector for religious education in Québec. With the growth of Nationalism and the decline of religious authority in education, the religious and clerical influence waned. The nationalist separatist movement moved toward independence and freedom from church influence, which was being perceived as a deterrent to nationhood and

¹³¹ David Ray Griffin, *Parapsychology, Philosophy and Spirituality: A Postmodern Exploration*. (N.Y.: State University of N.Y. Press, 1997). P. xii – xiii, pp. 271 – 277, p. 287.

autonomy. In 1996, the Educational Reform of the Estates General preceded the Proulx Report and began a process of secularization.

The time has come to define the place of religion in our schools from a new perspective. The new perspective provides for open secular schools that would draw the common value of citizens and include the study of both religious and secular worldviews. It recognizes the spiritual dimension of individuals and allows schools to offer common spiritual and religious services if they wish to do so. It provides that schools may, outside school hours and in keeping with priorities, make facilities available to religious groups who wish to offer services to their members.¹³²

The “outside school hours” clause was a clear symbolic indication to the Québec public that a definite secular character was within the system and the religious character of schools was “outside school hours”. The linguistic issue was a reason to eliminate the confessional character of schools, which now became English and French rather than Catholic or Protestant in 1998. Québec was challenged by the Canadian Charter of Human Rights, article 41, which states, “ Children receive a religious or moral education in conformity with their parents’ convictions. Similarly freedom of choice would apply to pastoral and religious animation.”¹³³ Bill 118 followed with article 1:1 and 1:2 which states:

The confessional character of public elementary and secondary schools will be repealed as of July 1, 2000...Public schools in a pluralistic society can hardly be defined using religious references...They must take into account pluralism within their walls...The Education Act will be amended as to expressly exclude the possibility for a public school to adopt a specific educational project of a religious nature.¹³⁴

¹³² Jean Pierre Proulx, “Religion in Secular Schools: A New Perspective for Québec.” Gouvernement de Québec. Ministère de L’Éducation, 1999-2000. introduction.

¹³³ Proulx Report, introduction

¹³⁴ Bill 118, *Responding to the Diversity of Moral and Religious Expectations*. Gouvernement de Québec. Ministère de L’Éducation, 2000. p. 6-7, article 1 :1 and 1 :2.

Having established by law the pluralistic secular character of education, what is interesting is the manner in which the terms religion and spirituality are used in the various documents. It is clear that the perception of religion is institutional and associated with another political force, which might be perceived as a threat to the autonomy of the political society. What is also clear is that the documents insist on a spirituality that is no longer associated with a particular religion, which leaves the concept of spirituality open-ended and vague, if not amorphous. The following are some excerpts from both Bill 118 and the working document for spiritual care and guidance and community involvement service, *Developing the Inner Life and Changing the World*, which replaces the traditional pastoral and religious animation.

Spiritual support refers to the meaning of life, reflective and responsible experience and values. *Spiritual* is therefore different from *religious*, a term referring to the divine and including the spiritual dimension, but in connection with faith in God and a community of faith. Spiritual support consists in helping students deal with issues related to the meaning of life, life events and everyday situations: family problems, search for identity, ...it will help them develop their conscience, see the meaning of things and find fulfillment in their lives....providing support to all students who are looking for meaning in their lives or pursuing a spiritual quest.

¹³⁵

Spiritual life is an individual quest within the context of community, one focused on the fundamental questions of the meaning of life, and that tends toward the construction of a consistent, motivating and continually-evolving vision of existence...spiritual life and community involvement are distinct, yet interrelated, notions... For many people, spiritual life may lead to a transcendence of

¹³⁵ Bill 118, article 3:1

personality whereby they feel compelled to treat all beings with the same compassion and disinterested goodwill.¹³⁶

From these definitions and reflections on the concept of spirituality from the Québec Government, one sees the individualization and privatization being supported in deference to the institutional and public church, which had defined the spirituality of the French culture for three hundred years. The 'transcendence of personality' is used instead of the transcendence of God, which again humanizes the concept of spirituality such that it becomes a self sufficient, ego-developing journey instead of a journey filled with the Spirit of God, and seeking to grow in a closer relationship with the Transcendent One who is beyond the scope of "human personality". The secularization of education and society has influenced the definition of spirituality, such that spirituality has become a journey into self and community without the mention of the divine influence in one's life.

¹³⁶ "Developing the Inner Life and Changing the World." Ministère de L'Éducation, March 29, 2001. p. 7.

7. The Relationship Between Traditional, Modern and Postmodern Concepts of Spirituality

A. Postmodernism and Traditional Spirituality

The various concepts and approaches in spirituality, which have emerged in the postmodern age, sometimes bear little or no resemblance to the traditional spirituality, which was examined in the first and second chapters of this thesis. It is still amazing that hidden within the package of the modern “spiritualities” are often traces of authentic and traditional spirituality that goes back to the ancient Greek and early Christian notions of the *via negativa* which affirms the inability to totally grasp and articulate the “cause to all in reference to which all words fail in the brilliant darkness of a hidden silence.”¹³⁷ The common denominator of silence among religions has been a unitive force between modern and traditional spirituality. Apophatic spirituality and mysticism is often more readily embraced by the postmodern culture because this age is more comfortable with unknowing and irrationality than the age of Enlightenment. The persons of today facing undecidability and ambiguity are the persons whom Dupre calls “modern seekers of spiritual meaning.”¹³⁸ These modern seekers seem to align themselves with mystical literature and the spiritual teachings of some of the traditional mystics who have entered into silence and mystery without knowing the end result or without having the language to verbalize their experience of silence and prayer. Dupre finds this silence to be the way for many modern seekers. Dupre states,

¹³⁷ James Wiseman, “Mystical Literature and Modern Unbelief.” Carmody, John, *Christian Spirituality and the Culture of Modernity Thought of Louis Dupre.* (Michigan: W.B. Erdmans, 1998). p.180.

"The language of silence may in many cases be the only one the modern seeker understands at the start of his journey."¹³⁹ This resonates well with Bede Griffiths and Thomas Merton and other contemporary writers who teach that silence is the way to unitive pluralism. Silence seems to be the common denominator to religious pluralism as well as the bridging of the gulf between postmodernism and traditional spirituality. Today's youth may view mysticism as an attractive way of being spiritual without necessarily being religious or bound to any religious institution. At first glance, mystical prayer may seem to be a very private insular experience but the way of prayer always leads to a self-transcendent way of life, which will eventually cause a conversion of heart. The selfish motives which may begin the journey of mystical prayer will soon be erased by the spiritual force of a transcendent God who is all loving. A heart filled with love generates love for others. The author of the *Cloud of Unknowing*, insists that, "God can be taken and held by love but not by thought."¹⁴⁰ Both Louis Dupre and Karl Rahner see a sense of future in the embrace of mysticism and mystical writers by our postmodern society. Dupre sees the hope and caution of this trend in embracing the mystical tradition:

The doctrines, life styles, and methods of a previous age were conceived within the reach of a direct experience of the sacred. This has for the most part ceased to exist. The language of past mystics, those of the eighteenth as well as those of the fourteenth century, strikes the modern reader as antiquated in a manner in which that of philosophic and literary classics does not, because the very experience that is being articulated is no longer present even in that minimal way in which virtually everyone in the past

¹³⁸ Wiseman, p.180.

¹³⁹ Wiseman, p.184, taken from Dupre, general introduction to *Light to Light*, p.24.

¹⁴⁰ Wiseman, p186, taken from *The Cloud of Unknowing*. Ed. James Walsh, (New York: Paulist , 1981). ch.6 p.130.

shared it. A confrontation with the past may be necessary, but the shape of spiritual life in the future will be entirely our own.¹⁴¹

Dupre certainly sees a difference between the postmodern reading of mystical literature and the traditional embracing of the same literature. Although the surrounding circumstances may be different and those who read these texts may be at low or non-existent faith levels, there is an attraction to the mystical by postmodern society, which is uniquely postmodern in its approach to mystical literature. James Wiseman, in his book, *Mystical Literature and Modern Unbelief*, quotes an observation on mysticism by Karl Rahner, which might prove beneficial to the spiritual seekers of this age:

We can master life with scientific formulae insofar as one has to make one's way among various events, and this may frequently be successful. But man himself is grounded in an abyss, which no formula can measure. We must have sufficient courage to experience this abyss of the holy mystery of love – then it may be called God.¹⁴²

Both Dupre and Rahner are optimistic that the grace of God can operate and is still operative in this postmodern age of uncertainty and confusion. In fact these factors may very well be the catalyst for spiritual seekers of the postmodern age.

¹⁴¹ Wiseman, p. 188, taken from Louis Dupre, "Spiritual Life in a Secular Age," in *Ignatian Spirituality in a Secular Age*, ed. George Schnerr, (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier Press, 1984). pp. 23-24.

B. Traditional Concepts and Approaches in Spirituality

While it is quite evident that much of the spiritual search in postmodernism does not eradicate traditional spirituality, there is much in traditional spirituality that might have difficulty coexisting with the postmodern era. One of the traditional approaches to spirituality is the concept that spirituality should somehow be categorized and classified, as one would approach a scientific experiment or academic thesis. Previous theologians and spiritual masters have endeavoured to make spirituality an almost well documented science or field of study, which is so characteristic of the classical and modern thinkers. Joseph De Guilbert, a Jesuit scholar and theologian of this classical tradition, demonstrates in his book, *Introduction to the Study of Ascetical and Mystical Theology*, just how much this concept was applied to the theology of spirituality.¹⁴³ De Guilbert is representative of many theologians and spiritual masters of that long period of history, which includes writers from the twelfth century to the middle of the twentieth century. St. John of the Cross, while very poetic in his spirituality, was also very methodical in his commentaries of his famous poems, which include the *Ascent to Mount Carmel* and *The Dark Night of the Soul*. St. Ignatius of Loyola and many of his followers like Jules Toner and David Fleming took the categorical *Spiritual Exercises* and proceeded to subdivide and create an even more elaborate empirical study of the original spiritual exercises. Evelyn Underhill in her many treatises on *Mysticism*, Louis Bouyer with his historical

¹⁴² Wiseman. P. 188, from Karl Rahner, "God is no scientific Formula," in *Grace in Freedom*, trans, Hilda Graef, (New York: Herder and Herder, 1969). p. 195.

¹⁴³ Joseph De Guilbert, *Theology of the Spiritual Life*. (London: Sheed and Ward, 1954).

study of spirituality, Pourrat's, *The Graces of Interior Prayer*, and Alphonsus Rodriguez, *The Practice of Perfection and Christian Virtues*, are some illustrations of this trend to make spirituality a classified science and academic systematic study. Many of these classical texts were used by novice masters and mistresses to "form" members of religious communities in a regulated, regimented and rigorous training, which would be uncharacteristic of a postmodern approach.

To illustrate this methodical approach in the mid twentieth century, Joseph De Guilbert, a Jesuit theologian and spiritual writer, carefully draws distinctions among various spiritual terms as follows:

The *spiritual life* is distinct from the natural...denotes the activity of man's spiritual being, involving the use of the intellect and will. But strictly speaking, the spiritual life means man's activity in regard to the supernatural goods of the soul, goods to be completed and fully possessed in the future life...*Spiritual perfection* means a certain fullness of the spiritual life which lacks nothing for its complete development in this world or the next...*Sanctity* means the freedom of the soul from sin, and its union with, or consecration to God...*Prayer* is an elevation of the mind to God, an act by which a person is made more holy and united to God, his final end.¹⁴⁴

De Guilbert, like many of his contemporaries, devoted much of his time and research into mystical theology through systematic classification and definition of terms and levels of sanctity. The ascent to the *God above* was the visual paradigm in this form of spirituality, and the spiritual journey was divested with good works, ascetical sacrifices, and various forms of prayer, all aiming for

¹⁴⁴ Joseph De Guilbert, pp.3-4.

and reaching heights of sanctity. The spiritual journey travelled through the passage of various levels of grace and acquired virtues that encouraged loss of ego and further self sacrifice and union with God, which seemed onward and upward into the hereafter. It is interesting to note that De Guilbert even uses the term "science" in his definition of *spiritual theology*.

Spiritual theology can therefore be defined as the science that deduces from the revealed principles what constitutes the perfection of the spiritual life and how man can advance towards and obtain it. This science can be called ascetical insofar as it points out the exercises by which man can, with the help of grace, tend actively and by his own efforts towards this perfection.¹⁴⁵

De Guilbert has some observations about why there might be interest in mysticism and studies in spiritual theology. Although his book was written in 1954, some of his reasoning might be applicable to spiritual searchers today. He notes that the interest in spiritual studies is not just among Catholics, but also among *heretics and unbelievers*. He does not yet demonstrate in his writing a comfort with difference and other, and he views the Catholic tradition as central, with the traditional *we and others* approach to pluralism. This widened interest by spiritual searchers was evident in his time as well as in present times. He notes the reasons for this interest as follows:

This sympathetic interest explains the appearance of so many books, commentaries, publications of all kinds dealing with spiritual matters, particularly of a mystical character. Some enthusiasts, however, are drawn by motives, which are not very praiseworthy—curiosity about extraordinary occurrences, hunger for new and unusual sensations, and a kind of intellectual snobbery. But, on the other hand, many modern students have commendable reasons... their reaction against materialism and the worship of science, their

¹⁴⁵ De Guilbert, p.11.

desire for a more interior life, for a spiritual renewal after the calamities of war and its effects, an intimate persuasion of the necessity and value of the interior life.¹⁴⁶

Whatever the relationship is between traditional spirituality and the modern and postmodern quest, what is more evident is that there *is a relationship*, even if the motives or the reasons are sensational in the beginning of the quest. This interest is a catalyst for further growth, which cannot be ignored by modern spiritual theologians. The modern approaches and interest in the study of spirituality are as yet untapped and may simply require one's observation and attention as the quest and modern interest develops. The classical texts are sound in content, if not boring, as reading material to some or most of this generation. Some of the more recent spiritual writers (Thomas Merton, Bede Griffiths, Kathleen Norris, Annie Dillon and Anthony de Mello) might be able to attract the postmodern generation with a more experiential, affective or poetic appeal and style in presenting spirituality. The relationship will most likely continue as long as humankind continues to ask questions of ultimate meaning. What is uncertain is the *form* this relationship will take, if humankind chooses any form at all, since one of the characteristics of the postmodern generation is the ability to live in an amorphous and uncertain state without stability and form.

Some thinkers are not content to simply wait out the postmodern spiritual quest, but rather they wish to challenge and confront this formless spirituality which has emerged in postmodernism. Louis Dupre, in his article, "Christian

¹⁴⁶ De Guilbert, p.30.

Spirituality Confronts the Modern World”, challenges postmodernism with Christian mysticism, which he believes contains the essence of sound spirituality for today’s society. Dupre notes that there has never been so much talk about ‘religious experience’, but that actual experiences are few and of low intensity. The term ‘mysticism’ is also utilized in current language, yet religious immediacy has been less available. Dupre concludes with the following observation:

Our existence has become so thoroughly secularized that the act of faith once supported by a wealth of communal and private experience must now almost totally dispense with direct evidence and be satisfied with the will to believe...Of course the will to believe still relates to some experience. But that experience is no longer unambiguously religious... What once was direct and self-interpretative has now become open-ended and accessible to a multiplicity of interpretations. The assent of faith has to move far beyond the premises of experience. One such ambiguous experience is the feeling of utter contingency. For some this may point to a transcendent horizon. For others it simply signifies the irremediable absence of ultimate intelligibility in life. By and large we no longer perceive things as sacred; we hold them to be so on the basis of ambiguous experiences.¹⁴⁷

Dupre is not discouraged by this period of darkness and ambiguity in postmodernism, but rather he views it as an opportunity for one to enter into the darkness of the unknowing where in the secular world one is left no other choice but to enter one’s own darkness and confront the apparent divine absence within the self and the surrounding world. In fact Dupre is quick to point out the very nature of a deeper spirituality that requires a detachment and solitude in order to encounter mystical contemplation. Dupre sees the elements of postmodernism

¹⁴⁷ Louis Dupre, “Christian Spirituality Confronts the Modern World.” *Communio – U.S.* (Fall, 1985) p. 334.

to be the very same elements required and admonished by the spiritual classical writers such as John of the Cross and Pseudo-Dionysius.

In the earnest exercise of mystical contemplation, abandon all sensation and intellection and all objects sensed or seen and all being and all nonbeing and in unknowing, as much as may be, be one with the beyond being knowing.¹⁴⁸

Dupre continues his thinking by noting that it is in this darkness that the creator and creature touch. He notes the uniqueness of Christian mysticism as contrasted with other forms of mysticism.

What characterizes the best of Christian mysticism is that it embraces one as well as the other. The Christian is invited to love all life, also deformed and sickly life, because all of it results from God's creative act...One cannot understand the prominent position of Christ in Christian mysticism without taking the essential role of the creature as creature into account. Christ does not merely play the role of the teacher of divine Enlightenment, as the Buddha did, or even of the prophet, as Moses or Mohammed did. He is the very object of mystical love – both in his divinity and his humanity. This unique significance of the Incarnation distinguishes Christian mysticism from any other and gives it its marvelously earthly and humane quality...Through the Incarnation Christ includes all creation within Himself (also in its finitude) and reunites it with its divine Source. His God-filled humanity presents the exemplar of creaturehood that the Christian is invited to accept and to love without reservation...Christ is the one figure to which we can unconditionally surrender ourselves. In him Christians come to love all creatures unselfishly.¹⁴⁹

Dupre indicates the unique Christian dynamic that carries one beyond the one-way assent to God. The mystical dimension of Christian love of God is *vertical transcendent* accompanied by a *horizontal communion* with creation, a two-way spiritual journey. Dupre mentions the classical spiritual mystics (St. Ignatius, St.

¹⁴⁸ Dupre, p. 335, taken from Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Mystical Theology*, Migne, P.G. 3, 997.

¹⁴⁹ Dupre, p. 338.

John of the Cross and St. Francis) who saw God in all creation. For those living in a *postmodern world of difference*, it is important that the Christian who loves all creatures and creation, must also allow others to be themselves and to love without a conquering posture. Dupre sees *otherness* as being at the heart of each creature, and Christian love as one of acceptance and loving respect for that difference.

In seeking a relationship between the traditional and modern concepts of spirituality, one might conclude from Dupre's article that a spirituality of pluralism is very much integral with Christian spirituality in its most classical and traditional sense. The relationship of creator with creation is paramount in traditional spirituality, and its far-reaching effects will certainly not be lost in this age of postmodernism, secularism and pluralism. In fact, this may very well be a significant link for traditional and modern spirituality.

C. Conclusion

The dialectic between traditional and modern, while being present in spirituality, may well be a very dynamic tension between the two, which continues to draw them together to view the difference and to draw upon the similarities. Because a dialectic is shaped between two concepts, does not necessarily imply a separation or remote distancing between the concepts. One will constantly be referring to the former way or philosophy of a previous time to challenge the authenticity of the present theories, simply because the traditional dimensions of spirituality have withstood the test of time. This endurance of spiritual tradition invites a seeker of spiritual truth to at least peruse these thoughts and recordings of spiritual experiences, if only to negate them in one's own thinking and present reality. If there were a universal dimension in the traditional that can be applied to the present spiritual reality, then it would be beneficial to explore and rediscover the richness of the past tradition of spirituality, and to modify and adapt that which is merely peripheral and customary to an era in history. One must seek the core of the spiritual truth and apply its universality to the present spiritual quest. This is the challenge of the spiritual theologian who seeks to move through postmodernism rather than to simply survive and cling to customs, which are no longer applicable in society. A dialectic confronted with an open, accepting and discerning disposition will sift out the unauthentic from the authentic in spirituality, and allow a new, or not so new, spirituality to emerge, which will be relevant for the age in which we live.

8. Fostering Spirituality in a Pluralistic Secular Society:

Responding to the Modern/Postmodern Quest for Ultimate Meaning

A. Introduction

The term *fostering* implies an encouragement and a supporting of a particular concept or way of life in spirituality. In order to foster spirituality in a postmodern society, with cultural and religious diversity and lack of structure and transferability from subject to subject, it would certainly be helpful for one to be aware of some principles of communication, as well as the various levels of learning and faith, in order to transmit what is authentic and of value in spirituality to those who are seeking some answers to questions of ultimate meaning and who may have an openness to learning about and experiencing a spiritual life. The challenge to foster spirituality begins at the early stages of a child's life, when the simple but complex questions emerge, such as: *How did I get here? What happens after you die? Where does a dead person go after he/she dies? Who is God? Why can't I see God?* Parents and educators have faced the trauma of trying to respond in an understanding and positive manner to children when these questions arise because they are teachable spiritual moments in the life of a parent or educator. If the response is beyond the grasp of the child or is unsatisfying or too simplistic, then the process of inquiry or the opportunity for growth may be stymied.

B. Communication and Levels of Learning and Faith

In order to communicate and foster spirituality, it would be beneficial to be aware of Lonergan's levels of learning, as well as Fowler's faith stages, as a good basis for spiritual development with others, especially if one is an educator or spiritual animator. Lonergan's transcendental method¹⁵⁰ in theology teaches four levels of learning or self-emergence. The first level is *empirical* with the conscious operations of seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, tasting, remembering, imaging and perceiving. The second level is the *intellectual level*, which includes the operations of inquiring, imagining, understanding, conceiving, formulating, and expressing what one has understood and what is implied by this expression. The third level is the *rational level* that includes reflection and judgment. The fourth level is the *responsible level* that includes deliberation, evaluation, decision, speaking and writing.

James Fowler divides a faith or spiritual development into various stages.¹⁵¹ Fowler's first stage is called the *intuitive-projective* stage of early childhood, which is rich in fantasy and imagination. The second stage is the *mythical-literal* stage of childhood in which drama, myth and the family story are taken quite literally. Parables and mythical literature from various faiths are important learning tools at this stage. The third stage is the *synthetic-conventional* stage of adolescence whereby the ideology along with the external authority becomes a model for the child. Fowler notes a period of transition after this stage where there is a move from the external authority to authority in self. It

¹⁵⁰ Lonergan, chapter 1, pp.3-25.

is obvious that on the faith and spiritual level, many individuals never leave the *synthetic-conventional level* in their faith journey. The fourth stage is the *individuating-reflective stage* of young adulthood whereby the individual leaves the familiar home base in both religion and culture and constructs a rationalized worldview. The fifth stage is the *conjunctive stage*, whereby an individual can find validity in other systems and can live with paradoxical situations. The sixth and final stage is the *universal stage* of a mature well-balanced person who can see universal truths, can transcend conflicting loyalties and become a prophetic voice in an educational or religious community. This person lives comfortably with pluralism and has universalized his or her thinking and approach to other centered reality.

If we combine Lonergan's levels of learning and operations with Fowler's faith stages, we might recognize more clearly where an individual is in his or her capacity to grasp a spiritual or religious value or truth, and what operations could be undertaken in order to foster spirituality in this individual. If one parallels Lonergan's levels of learning with Fowler's faith stages, one can see a pattern of development which is helpful for both the religious, spiritual and educational leaders whose task it is to foster both learning and spirituality. Stephen Happel and James J. Walker in their book, *Conversion and Discipleship: A Christian Foundation for Ethics and Doctrine*, examined and positioned Fowler's faith stages, Kohlberg's stages of development, and Lonergan's conversions in their

¹³¹ James Fowler, Samuel Keen, Jerome Berryman ed., *Life Maps: Conversations on the Journey of Faith*. (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1978). Pp. 34-36.

chapter, "The Journey of a Pilgrim People in Faith and Moral Development".¹⁵² In the light of *Fowler's faith stages* and *Kohlberg's developmental stages* (preconventional, conventional and post conventional), they have been able to position Lonergan's *moral, affective or intellectual conversion*¹⁵³ on a grid with Fowler and Kohlberg. A *moral conversion* is demonstrated when a person turns from personal satisfaction to value, and Happel and Walker place that with the *synthetic conventional stage*. They place the *affective religious and critical moral conversion* just before the *individuating reflective stage*. Finally they place the *critical religious conversion* just before the *conjunctive and universalizing stage*. They seem to split the *intellectual conversion* into moral and religious, with *critical-moral* coming first. They see the critical realist as the one who has undergone an intellectual conversion and who can survive the sea of conflicting interpretations.

Only the critical realist can acknowledge that the facts of human knowing and judging value are related to the appropriation of our own operations of self-transcendence. The real world is the world mediated by meaning and motivated by value, and it is constituted by reference to the invariant process of experiencing, understanding, judging and deliberating. The criteria for objectivity are not just the criteria of what regularly happens in the world and what various authorities say. They are the compound criteria of experiencing, of understanding, of judging and of deliberating...It is particularly at stage 6 (Fowler) that the critically converted person accepts and chooses the self as the criterion of the real and of the truly good in his or her self-transcending judgments of value.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵² Stephen Happel and James J. Walker, *Conversion and Discipleship: A Christian Foundation for ethics and doctrine*. (N.Y.: Fortress Press, 1986). p. 53-82.

¹⁵³ Lonergan, *Method in Theology*. Chapter 4. p 101-124.

¹⁵⁴ Happel and Walker, p.76.

The grid of the various levels of learning, the stages of growth and faith and the kinds of conversions which are required in order to move from one level to another are the guidelines for those who will foster spirituality in individuals of different levels of understanding, faith, and human development. If an educator is at the conjunctive or universal level, he or she will be able to foster spirituality in a pluralistic secular society. The development of the educator or animator is crucial to a balanced presentation of authentic spirituality. The person is also the message in that if the educator or animator were fixated in an underdeveloped level, then he or she would not be comfortable in presenting spirituality in a paradoxical or differentiated environment.

Communication is a valuable theological method and functional specialty,¹⁵⁵ which facilitates the fostering of spirituality. According to Lonergan, the ongoing process of communication is the genesis of common meaning of people coming to share the same cognitive, constitutive and effective meanings.¹⁵⁶ When a group shares common meaning, this constitutes community, while divergent meaning and dialectic divides the community. In a postmodern society, which consists of divergence, difference and dialectic, the challenge for communication is more difficult than if the community shared common meaning. What is required for commonality and communication is the conversion of individuals at the intellectual, moral and religious level in order to

¹⁵⁵ Lonergan's eight functional specialties: Research, Interpretation, History, Dialectics, Foundations, Doctrines, Systematics and Communication. Functional specialties are a set of related and recurrent operations cumulatively advancing toward an ideal goal. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*. chapter 5. p. 125.

¹⁵⁶ Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, chapter 14. pp. 355 -368. pp. 356-357.

transcend self and to possess a differentiated consciousness, which will allow the other to be different. Lonergan views the church as a community, which works toward moral, religious and intellectual conversion. The church community operates from the outer communication of Christ's message (kerygma) and the inner gift of God's love (agape). Practical theology is concerned with the effective communication of God's love. The way this meaning and message is primarily communicated is through preaching and teaching. In today's society one might communicate through animation, media and technology, which might be included in Lonergan's *resources of culture*, which are dynamic and progressive if conversion is present from the communicators. Lonergan supports those who expand their horizons and adopt a sense of universality about the Gospel message, with a form of evangelization which enculturates among the various groups in a community and appreciates a pluralistic differentiation of consciousness in communicating the Christian message. Lonergan mentions that the church radiates outwardly from its inner dimension and that the church is redemptive, bringing healing and reconciliation to alienated mankind. Communication in the church must be cross curricular in that theologians must be able to dialogue with other disciplines and other cultures and religions. What Lonergan has stated about the way the church has to communicate the Gospel message could be applied to those in other institutions in society who have to communicate authentic spirituality in a church or educational environment. The new role of spiritual community animator would require the animator to have the same qualities, which Lonergan advises for authentic communicators, and the

message about the inner gift of God's love must be radiated outwardly from one's inner dimension. Those who receive the message must sense the authenticity of the communicator who is evangelizing spirituality to them.

C. Spirituality in Children

Robert Coles has studied the spiritual dimensions of children in various situations and over long periods of time. He insists that adults have to stay with children long enough to evoke their trust before they will share their deepest thoughts and concepts of God. Coles observes that, "The questions asked ("Where do we come from? What are we? Where are we going?") are the eternal questions children ask more intensely, unremittingly, and subtly than we sometimes imagine."¹⁵⁷ One way in which Coles has fostered some thought and expression about spirituality was to ask children to draw a picture of God. He noted that most children would only draw a picture of the face of God. "Even children who have pictured Jesus as a man and have seen him pictured...are often reluctant to go beyond the representation of God's face."¹⁵⁸ He often observed a sense of awe when children stopped drawing after the neck, as if fear and a strong sense of sacredness overcome them. Coles notes that he does not ask Islamic or Jewish children to draw God because images of God are not part of their religious tradition. A Pakistani girl of twelve recounted to Coles that there were no pictures, *only patterns* of living creatures, however at some future time

¹⁵⁷ Robert Coles, *The Spiritual Life of Children*. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.). 1990. p.37.

¹⁵⁸ Coles, p. 41

she would meet Allah and Mohammed and she would see both of them. To bring the abstract to concrete representation is usually a creative way of fostering a deeper feeling or concept, especially in spirituality. However, for the educator or animator, the religiously correct procedure must be known and respected before plunging in with techniques of animation. Pluralism means that customs and traditions of many religions and cultures must be known and respected by the animator or facilitator of spirituality.

Of course story telling and story sharing are the most effective with elementary children because of the mythical level of faith and the symbolization and universality of the myth, parable or story. Visuals can accompany the verbal story, which will meet the child at the empirical attentive level of learning while offering a multifaceted and multilayered growth opportunity for being intelligent, reasonable and responsible (Lonergan's Levels of learning). Coles remarks that in sessions of story telling, sharing and exchanging thoughts and ideas with an educator and peers, many aspects of learning occur.

Children try to understand not only what is happening to them, but why; and in doing that, they call upon the religious life they have experienced, the spiritual values they have received, as well as other sources of potential explanation...God can take almost any shape for children. He can be a friend or a potential enemy; an admirer or a critic; an ally or an interference; a source of encouragement or a source of anxiety, fear or even panic.¹⁵⁹

Coles is quick to point out that the religious tenets of the home and culture have much to do with the concepts and images of God among children. One

wonders what children of the postmodern, secular, humanist environment would express, either cognitively or symbolically, as the image of God. This requires observation and similar procedures to Coles in order to attain the information necessary to foster spirituality in children. Artistic expression of the image of God and other spiritual feelings and concepts is a sure way to foster spirituality not only in children, but at all age levels. The artistic representation of God is an important signifier for educators and animators in determining the locus of the individual, and can be the catalyst for further spiritual growth. At this stage, it is not necessary to have all the answers regarding the spirituality of children in a pluralistic secular society. What is more significant is that we have the understanding of the person in his/her culture and environment, an awareness of the level of knowing and faith, and an ability to approach the child with openness in order to learn from him/her by asking appropriate questions and suggesting respectfully and delicately, further steps for the child to pursue. Fostering spirituality and spiritual development in children requires that we view both the animator and child as pilgrim people in a quest for ultimate meaning in life.

D. Spirituality in Youth and Adulthood

Fostering Spirituality with adolescents, youth and adults may be more complicated than with children because of the many obstacles and previous negative experiences, which may have been encountered in a religious and /or cultural context. Some of the obstacles include: indifference which simply ignores or is lacking in awareness of any spiritual significance in one's life;

¹⁵⁹ Coles, p.119

privatization of religion which may have been fostered in a family setting and which now makes an individual uncomfortable to engage in conversation about God or spirituality; an undifferentiated consciousness which refuses to listen to any truth except the absolute truth which has been instilled in one since early childhood or through some heightened fundamentalist experience, which prohibits discussion of difference; a previous hurt or abuse of power from an authoritarian institutional religious tradition, which has damaged trust in religious institutions, spiritual persons and anyone who wishes to foster spirituality or religion; an atheistic or agnostic attitude which denies or doubts the existence of a spiritual dimension in human beings and who only trusts that which can be seen or proved empirically. For someone who wishes to foster spirituality with such individuals, much time and effort will be placed on restoring trust by simply being present to these hurts and negative experiences through silent listening, affirming the injustice and validating the feelings which one might be experiencing. A spiritual director is trained to listen, to recognize and discern the obstacle and level of faith, and to apply the appropriate approach for healing prayer. There are methods for healing of memories, which can be applied after much patient presence and quiet unobtrusive witnessing to the healing unconditional love of God. The initiator of the healing and conversion is the overpowering love of God, which will come through the cracks of the brick wall of resistance if the spiritual director can wait for this graced moment. The method of passive presence with gentle prodding will foster the overcoming of obstacles

to spiritual growth, and the eventual release and freedom to enter into a loving relationship with God by the resisting individual or group.

For the encounter with the normal groups of youth or adults, fostering spirituality will mean beginning where the learner is. In a secular environment, one can usually engage in God-talk with pluralistic secular groups. Anton Grabner-Haider, in his article, "God Talk in a Multireligious Society", gives some principles for humane God-talk which might be beneficial to those who foster spirituality:

People of every culture are capable of personal and social learning processes from which their authentic needs can be satisfied. But for long periods of time religions have had fixed images of themselves and others. However, the progress of knowledge, especially in the social sciences, constantly challenges us to correct these images...Socially acceptable God images should not retard personal growth, nor should they apply negative self images to anyone...Neither gender should be devaluated, nor should one gender appear dominant...God images must help satisfy people's authentic needs and develop their ability to love.¹⁶⁰

Grabner-Haider warns religions that in today's society, religions are to relinquish monopolistic claims, absolute assertions, evil stereotypes and dishonest hermeneutics. He feels that God-talk needs to be compatible with the natural and social sciences. He feels it makes sense to talk about God as personal and anthropomorphic, because humans are the most complex creatures in the cosmos, and the acceptance of a meta-empirical "source" or personal creator is possible with all theories of Cosmo genesis. (Big Bang, self-organization of

¹⁶⁰ Anton Grabner – Haider, "God-talk in a Multireligious Society." *Theology Today* 45:1 (Spring, 1998). Pp.51-55. p.55.

matter, chaos theory). He advises that Islam, Judaism and Christianity abandon their patriarchal, andocentric and monopolistic God-talk. In Buddhism the personal element of being human must become stronger. The folk religions of India must overcome caste systems. He believes that a "world ethic" will make for better relations and dialogue among religions and among individuals who wish to explore spirituality and religion. In a sense Grabner-Haider is suggesting the removal of obstacles in the fostering of religious dialogue and spiritual growth. Removal of obstacles in an individual through spiritual direction, and removal of obstacles at a global level in society to enable religious dialogue are effective means of opening the door to freedom of expression that is so essential to the fostering of spirituality and spiritual growth in individuals and in society.

Another consideration in the fostering of spirituality is the need for a mature spirituality by many youth and adults. Often in religious institutions and traditions, a level of devotion, piety and spirituality is maintained at an infantile level, which becomes unsuitable for a person who is at a deeper level of reflection or inquiry about ultimate concerns and meaning. Historically, in some ecclesial circles, the only persons encouraged to advance in a spiritual life were those in a clerical, religious or monastic environment. Laity were often fed the same concepts and spirituality that were meted out to them at their early childhood stage, and which have now become anachronistic for their adult yearnings and sufferings which are far beyond early childhood.

Mark Gibbs, the Director of the Audenshaw Foundation, which answers questions on laity, discusses these concerns of laity regarding spirituality in an article, "Spiritual maturity is for the Laity Too". Gibbs notes the need in today's society for a satisfying spirituality for the laity:

Let us be careful before we dare to proclaim in sermons and discussions that the whole People of God are called, but privately restrict this to white people, or university graduates, or respectable families of our own nation, tribe or cultural tradition. Spiritual maturity is never a matter of such exclusiveness.¹⁶¹

Spirituality to be mature, according to Gibbs, must be inclusive, public minded and not privatized or hidden and it must address the needs of individuals, families and their economic, relational concerns and societies with poverty, health needs, violence, racism, sexism and systemic injustice in political institutions. Interiorly, the more mature classics on contemplative prayer, which deal with the darker purifying journeys of spirituality and a suffering soul, must be known and taught by those who foster spirituality. It is ironic in today's society that so many of the laity have embarked on mature spiritual journeys without the assistance of those in leadership in ecclesial institutions. By sheer necessity or divine providence, laity have sought out and found deeper forms of spirituality (Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, The Cloud of Unknowing, The Dark Night of the Soul etc.) often through other like-minded laity. In a sense, self-help groups in the spiritual life have often spiritually formed the laity (Cursillo, Charismatic Movement, Meditation Groups, Lay Retreat Movements). One wonders why this

social phenomenon has occurred. Did the Age of Enlightenment somehow depend too much on the rational theological formation resulting in the neglect of spiritual formation of their clerical leaders? Was the prioritizing of the exterior liturgical movement after Vatican II an unconscious polarization of the deep interior life, which was still required for ecclesial leadership, albeit with liturgical reform? Fostering spirituality in youth and adults today invites a mature response to those who are suffering deeply from a society, which offers little in the way of soul satisfaction or spiritual nourishment and fulfillment.

E. Fostering the Fulfillment of an Intrinsic Need of Humankind

If one is to be engaged in the task of fostering spirituality in children, youth or adults, it is important that one have a sense of worthwhile ministry, which comes not from the affirmation of a pluralistic, secular postmodern society, but rather from the conviction that fostering spirituality in individuals or groups is an authentic value of and in itself. The spiritual dimension of humankind has been acknowledged from the time of Plato and probably in unrecorded history within the artistic expressions on cave walls and with the indigenous native cultures in the Americas and throughout the world. The innate desire to “see God” has been a concurrent theme and desire of humankind throughout history. Jacques Maritain, in his book, *Approaches to God*, assures us of this need for fulfillment from humankind. He mentions *the sixth way* as the primordial intuition of existing. He notes that through this intuitive experience the mind discovers the

¹⁰¹ Mark Gibbs, “Spiritual Maturity is for the Laity Too.” *The Ecumenical Review* (Vol.31#1, 1986),p 57-

approach to God, which this experience brings with it. Maritain speaks of the natural spirituality of intelligence which leads one to ask in thought, "How is it possible that I was born?" Maritain views thought and the spiritual as beyond time as follows:

Thought as such is not in time. The distinction between the *spiritual* and the *temporal* appears here in its primary sense. That which is spiritual is not subject to time. The proper place of the spiritual is above temporal existence...The quest of the superhuman is natural to man...There is in the human intellect, a natural desire to see in His essence that very God whom it knows through the things which He has created...To say that our intellect naturally desires to see God is to say that it naturally desires a knowledge of which nature itself is incapable. This desire is transnatural, it moves toward an end, which is beyond the end for which the nature of man is constituted...a desire whose satisfaction is not due to nature.¹⁶²

Maritain has reflected deeply on the intelligent quest to satisfy that which is beyond intelligence and time, that which is in the realm of the spiritual. The desire is real, because the intellect perceives the desire, but the satisfaction of that same desire is transcendent, transnatural and beyond the power of humankind to naturally fulfill. One who fosters spirituality in another knows fully that the spiritual fulfillment must go beyond the satisfaction of the intellect to a deeper realm within and beyond human nature. The spiritual animator or spiritual director facilitates the path of prayer which puts one in touch with the spiritual dimension, and helps one to satisfy a deeper yearning, perceived by the intellect, and within one's spiritual nature, which is beyond the temporal and is transnatural. The value of fostering spirituality is in the transcending from the

63). p 58.

natural to the supernatural and the temporal to the spiritual and infinite. In offering this journey to others one is perhaps giving the greatest gift of all to those who cry out for this gift in so many ways, often unrecognizable to this postmodern society.

¹⁶² Jacques Maritain, "Approaches to God." *World Perspectives* vol.1 (N.Y.: Harper Bros., 1954). P.111

9. Conclusion

The history and development of spirituality have undergone several transitional phases and radical alterations, which have often changed the exterior expression of spirituality. As we have observed in this study, several aspects of spirituality have remained constant, which provides spirituality with an authenticity which is valuable to society and which can be fostered even in today's pluralistic secular society.

The main concept, which prioritizes all others, is the existence of humankind's spiritual dimension. The historical recording of this existence dates back to the fifth century B.C. with Plato's *nous*. Without this premise, the whole of this thesis would not be possible and for some it may never be possible because of their denial of one's spiritual existence, or its need to be fostered. This thesis acknowledges the existence of the human spiritual dimension and with this existence, the thesis has developed methods and approaches to furthering the growth of the human spiritual dimension. The historical development of spirituality has experienced *Gnostic and agnostic* approaches to spirituality, which has created a perpetual dialectic with those who have a *special knowledge* of God and those who shun this knowledge of God with skepticism. We have observed the two main ways to enter into a transcendent relationship with God:

apophatic and kataphatic approaches to spirituality. These two basic approaches have endured in various forms throughout the history of humankind, and are therefore to be rediscovered each time a supposedly new way of prayer or transcendental technique emerges in society. The various *schools of spirituality* can be channeled in the direction of either the apophatic or kataphatic spirituality.

In defining spirituality, this study explored the elements of an authentic spirituality: a self transcendent experience of God's unconditional love; an expression of this love resulting from deliberation, decision and action (fourth level of intentionality); a constant state of *being in love* with God and accepting the graced purification which leads to the unitive state of *being with* the God of unconditional love. Any definition of spirituality, which contains these elements of authenticity, will be the kind of spirituality that can be authentically fostered with children, youth and adults in an educational or ecclesial setting. This kind of spirituality will detect the counter positions of spirituality, which might cause deceptive, self-seeking unauthentic spirituality to be presented to vulnerable persons who are seeking a pleasurable narcissistic experience. Knowing and recognizing an authentic spirituality requires spiritual discernment (knowledge of good and evil spirits), which is of vital importance for those fostering spirituality with others.

The reality of pluralism in today's society has cautioned us about the extremes of reductionism and relativism, which could endanger authentic spirituality and faith expression. For pluralism to be authentically applied in society, a *differentiated consciousness* must be fostered and encouraged so that society might enjoy the beauty of difference and learn to grow in mutual respect for the richness of the various faith traditions. The appreciation of difference in no way implies a weakening of the faith tradition which one embraces personally. Unitive pluralism allows one to embrace one's own absolute truths without demeaning the absolute truths of the other faith tradition. To respect difference does not imply an intellectual agreement with the teachings of other traditions, but a respect for their right to have their tradition and to learn how to dialogue and coexist in peaceful respect for this difference. The *differentiated consciousness* provides one with the ability to move from one realm of meaning to another and therefore to appreciate and respect difference without imposing change on another.

The dawning of secularization has led some to embrace the ideology of secularism, which in some ways becomes as authoritarian as the institutional religion from which it wishes to distance itself. Secularism began as a movement of freedom from religious intolerance and this very movement has often demonstrated this same intolerance toward those who wish to freely embrace a spirituality or faith tradition. Secularists must reexamine their intent and manner of dialoguing with religious persons. Again, a *differentiated consciousness* is

required by secularists in order to prevent an undifferentiated bias about all religions and the missionary need to eradicate such expression of spirituality or religion from society. Secularists are encouraged to coexist with those who have and practice a traditional religious or spiritual expression in their lives.

One of the more enlightening aspects of this research was the rediscovery of traditional spirituality by our postmodern spiritual seekers. This relationship between postmodernism and tradition has led to some interesting developments in the field of spirituality and this trend is worth future observation. The mystical renewal and the adoption of contemplative prayer by those who are dissatisfied with the malaise of postmodern society is a promising dynamic in spiritual theology.

After examining the emergence of the *God is Dead* philosophy, Karen Armstrong, in her book, *A History of God*, concludes her study of the four-thousand year quest of Judaism, Christianity and Islam with a chapter entitled, "Does God Have a Future?" She summarizes the thinking about God by various philosophers and in her summation about Martin Buber (1878-1965), she notes that no matter how soiled the term "God" had become, there is no need to relinquish God.

Modern life was characterized by depersonalization and exploitation: even God was reduced to a thing to be manipulated and made to serve our purposes. Consequently religion became dull and insipid: we need a "depth theology" to delve below the structures and recover the original awe, mystery and wonder.¹⁶³

¹⁶³ Karen Armstrong, *A History of God*. (N.Y.: Ballantyne Books, 1993). p.387.

In a sense, advocating a depth theology or spirituality is a way of advocating an authentic spirituality in the depths of one's being. An authentic spirituality will affect all levels of conscious and often subconscious behaviour. If one follows the paradigm of Bernard Lonergan's four levels of conscious operation,¹⁶⁴ then a person with an authentic spiritual life will *be attentive* and aware of God's presence in daily life and in unitive prayer at the subconscious levels of being; at the intellectual level such a person would *be intelligent* and know that reality is not only at the empirical level of knowledge, and so would know that deep spirituality is a transcendent reality beyond empirical thinking; an authentically mature spiritual person would *be reasonable* and grow in a balanced, discerning spirituality; finally this person would *be responsible* in his/her actions, which would be radiated from a deeper union with a transcendent God who gives unconditional love to all humankind.

Globalization might help mankind to sift out what is authentic and what is unauthentic more quickly because information is more readily available to us. The discerning person must then take the operations into the deeper levels to authenticate information as much as is possible with the available data. God's love is a global unifier for our society. The fact that a reality (God's love) cannot be proven empirically does not in any way imply that it is any less real. Reality does not depend on intellectual verification alone. God's love, which is a spiritual reality, transcends intellectual verification, and yet it is not opposed to intellectual

verification. For anyone who has experienced God's love, this reality is verified at all levels of conscious operation, all realms of meaning and all forms of conversion (intellectual, affective, moral and religious). If one has not had the experience of God's love, then there is no real verifiable data. The experience of God's love is a reality worth fostering in a pluralistic secular society.

Hannah Arendt, a Jewish political theorist who lived through the period of the holocaust and beyond, pondered the love of God and its expression in society in her doctoral dissertation, *Der Liebesbegriff bei Augustin*. In her biography of Hannah Arendt, Elizabeth Young Bruehl explores Arendt's doctoral dissertation on Augustine and the love of God, and through this exploration Bruehl expresses in an exceptional manner, the twofold dynamic emanating from the love of God:

Arendt claims that we meet others as fellow members of the human race, but that we only become neighbors to others when we are isolated in our singular relation to God... Only in this twofold relationship can we understand the neighbor's relevance. In individual isolation we realize that the other is our neighbor, as a member of the human race. But this mere coexistence of believers in the same God turns into the common faith, the communion of all the faithful, when we realize that our origin in the human race is complemented by our origin in God's love, our natality by our redemptive rebirth."¹⁶⁵

This passage is reflective of an understanding of authentic spirituality and a knowledge of the twofold dynamic of that authenticity: love of God and love of neighbor. The initiator of God's love is God, but humans can dispose themselves

¹⁶⁴ Lonergan, *Method in Theology*. Chapter 1. p.3-25. Experiencing- Be attentive; Understanding-Be intelligent; Judging- Be reasonable; Deliberating, Deciding, Doing – Be responsible.

to receive that love through an isolated prayerful loving relationship with God. The isolated solitude and removal from society is an important dynamic in the love of God and neighbor, as Arendt states after years of lived experience and reflective thought.

Hopefully both God and spirituality have a future in our society, which may be embarking on a different phase of postmodernism, a phase *beyond reaction* to institutionalism and the god of the Enlightenment. This new phase, which includes globalization and synthesis, might be the catalyst for the movement into deeper and more authentic spirituality, simply because this deep emptiness will only be satisfied by an even deeper and authentic spirituality. The challenge of the future is the reclaiming of this authentic spirituality and the courage to introduce and foster the deeper meaningful response to the postmodern quest for authenticity.

¹⁶³ Elizabeth Young Bruehl, *Hannah Arendt For Love of the World*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982). p. 497.

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11. Appendix

The following documents and information fliers are illustrations of how one might implement a spiritual community service in an educational setting which is pluralistic and secular. Bill 118 has created a linguistic educational division of schools in place of confessional distinction. All schools are public, pluralistic, inclusive and democratic in principle. The two components of the new service are spiritual and community. The new service requires programming, publicity and an appeal to a secular postmodern society. The use of graphics and the web are reflections of the manner in which spirituality has to be “marketed” if one is to promote spirituality in the educational institutions of today. Included in the appendix are items A and B which assist the administrators of schools in the English Montreal School Board in the implementation of a transitional period which encourages respect and sensitivity for various faith traditions. Items C, D and E are school board information documents for spiritual community animators, administrators and the public. The following appendices are listed as follows:

- A. Sensitive Issues in the Implementation of Bill 118**
- B. Guidelines for the Implementation of Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service**
- C. Values and Visions for Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service**

- D. Web Site for Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service**
- E. Pamphlet for Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service**

Sensitive Issues and Possible Approaches to Implementation of Bill 118

Environment - Visuals

> Sacred Space

Schools, in which a chapel or Pastoral Room has been in existence, may have to gradually make adjustments. Rather than eliminating, taking down, removing in a sudden fashion such items as crucifixes, statues, altars, pictures of saints or popes, it might be valuable to examine the location and the prominence of the article in question.

A picture of the Pope at the main entrance might be relocated to the Spiritual Community Room and combined with other prominent religious leaders to make a wall of Leaders etc. If a school is named after a particular saint, and has a picture of this saint at the entrance, this is just as normal as having the picture of a prime minister, if that is the name and tradition of the school. At some point the question of renaming the school or exploring the values of the saint **as a person with virtues to be exemplified** might be explored to discover the value of this person as a model for a school, or to choose another model if that person is no longer an appropriate model for that particular school. (Gradual consultative approach).

A plain cross might be placed with other symbols of various faiths. Classes with crucifixes might add some other symbols to be more sensitive to all faiths. This could be a positive project with the staff to **Pluralize** the environment. Sensitivity to former Catholic Schools would encourage **relocation, adjustment or "Pluralizing" the articles and locations** rather than abrupt removal. Gradual awareness of Pluralism is best implemented in a sensitive gradually inclusive approach, rather than an abrupt purging or iconoclastic approach.

Schools with no sacred space or no religious symbols, will on the other hand, have **"to make room"** for the implementation of Bill 118 and the Spiritual Community Animator. To deprive the animator of a desk, workplace, office, or sacred space directly or inadvertently gives the message that the school wishes the whole issue would go away, that somehow if one ignores, represses, hides or is antagonistic to the presence of Spiritual Community Service and the animator, the sensitive issue will cease to exist. Those who propose that spirituality and religious expression should be privatized or somehow expressed outside the

school milieu are denying a very basic fundamental right for the education of children. The fact that a child has a spiritual dimension which should be nourished; the fact that a student may be expressing a religion at home and in another religious community, and that at school it is "unmentionable" or "private" becomes a contradiction to the student because the very essence of religious expression has a **communal dimension and exterior manifestation** which is good and healthy for the education of the complete student. Providing a sacred space, no matter how small, gives **validity** to the child's fundamental right to religious freedom of expression in an **appropriate way**.

The **sacred space** should reflect the character of the school population without being exclusive to any one-faith expression. Flowers, cushions, soft lights, candles, spiritual / moral pictures with appropriate inclusive quotes or quotes from the leaders and scriptures of many faiths is inviting to students to discuss and express in a healthy way an important development of their interior life. The animator requires a space for counseling students, and for meeting groups of students. The room should be **permanent and visually inviting to the students to foster their spiritual dimension**.

A **Sacred Corner or Display Table** at the entrance of the school should be made available to the animator. This reflects the deeper interior dimension of the school and its inhabitants. The display could reflect the current season without being too exclusive. (Christmas trees, Hanukkah candelabra, Divali lamps; Thanksgiving; Remembrance day; Valentines day; Spring and new life. General themes following the seasons can reflect religious expression without being too exclusive. Theme of light in winter, new life in Spring, Gratitude at harvest time, peace during November etc.).

Communication

➤ **Memos / Fliers**

- Gradual use of terms like "Pluralism, inclusivity, multi faith, ritual, service, Spiritual Community Room/service" in written communication.
- Explaining the reasons for a possible change, asking opinions, consulting before "enforcing" a change. Change or adjust by addition or relocation rather than **abrupt** removal or addition. Traditions and symbols are **deeper issues** than what they seem to be on the outside, and sensitive chords can be touched by insensitivity. Always accompany with a memo or flier to staff in consultation with the administration.
- **Letterheads** with specific religious Symbols (e.g. cross etc) should be replaced with something more inclusive and pluralistic.

➤ **Meetings for Information**

- Staff, administration, governing boards, parents need to be informed about the new Bill 118 and its subsequent changes and adjustments.
- Awareness exercises and workshops with fun games to educate and sensitize re. Multi faith.

➤ **Feedback**

- Questionnaires, exercises to acquire the pulse of the school population about various activities and attitudes.
- Priority of needs for school and surrounding communities with a Needs Analysis.
- Suggestion Box and surveys.
- Importance of Large / Small group rituals/ services and suggestions for adjustments.

Sacraments and Sacramentals / Liturgies

- ***Sacramental Initiation (i.e. Preparation of Sacraments of Initiation) Education of a Particular Faith*** (through prayers, expressions and practice of a particular belief, as well as Sacramental practices) become the responsibility of the Parish, Church, synagogue, temple etc.
- **Eucharistic Celebrations**
- Gradual implementation of multi faith services.
- If the majority of the school population is Catholic (95%) and has had a long tradition of Eucharistic celebrations, then the Eucharist cannot be abruptly ended, but rather it should reflect a multi faith dimension, inclusive to other faiths among the staff and student body. The Eucharist should not be the **only** means of celebrating the spiritual life of the student body, and as such the gradual addition of multi faith celebrations would be more in keeping with the pluralistic reality of our society, even if the school were predominantly of one religion. This school is now invited to explore and celebrate with other faiths, and to discover the richness of "otherness". Schools can no longer claim to have a particular faith as their status, therefore change in attitude and inclusivity needs to be encouraged with the exercise of good will.
- Graduation Ceremonies are better to have an **invocation and blessing at the beginning and end** rather than incorporating the graduation ceremony with Eucharist. This is a **civic ceremony** which requires students and families of several faiths to attend and participate in an exclusively religious celebration. The voluntary dimension is lost and religion is being "**imposed**" on the gathering. It is better to have a graduation ceremony in the school or civic building.
- The traditional "Grad Mass" could gradually be replaced with a creative Multi Faith Service with prayers and blessings from many traditions. Again the traditions of schools are sensitive issues, which require positive adjustments with time for replacement.

- **Sacrament of Reconciliation**
- Gradual Process
- Students cannot be prepared for any sacrament in the school. The value of offering the sacrament on a voluntary basis in a predominantly Catholic milieu with an offering of an alternative “blessing” for those who do not wish to receive the sacrament, but would like to talk to someone about their spiritual life might be a way to be more inclusive in this sensitive time. Ministers of several faiths could be invited to visit and be available for conversation on a one to one basis. The individual encounter for the student is such a sacred moment for the spirit, it would be beneficial to adapt rather than eliminate.
- **Distribution of Ashes on Ash Wednesday**
- Part of the Liturgical Calendar
- Gradual Process
- Voluntary offering in a location apart from classroom (spiritual community room, corridor outside class etc).
- Adjustment and sensitivity are required. A majority Catholic population with a long tradition might find creative ways of offering ashes to the students and staff on a voluntary basis without **imposing** on those who are not of the Catholic Faith. Small teams inviting students into the hall for reception of ashes with students reading a short general prayer might be appropriate. Lay teams can offer the distribution.
- Can be offered in the Spiritual Community Room at recess, lunch or after school on a voluntary basis.

<i>Knowledge and Practice of Religious Customs</i>

- **Fasting - (Ramadan / Lent / Yom Kippur/ Purim etc.)**
- Encourage the discussion and practice of these traditions. Muslims require a sacred space for prayer morning, lunch and after school for a month. Students might need exemptions because of fasting and general weakness. Holidays and sharing similarities can be very fruitful in a multi faith milieu.
- **Succoth**
- Building a tent / Booth for Jewish students, with a guest to come and explain the various customs (Schmooze Club for High Schools)
- **Divali**
- Hindu students might wish to have several divali lamps with colorful mosaics displayed in the school to celebrate this joyful colorful festival.
- **Multi Faith and Multi Cultural Dinner**
- A good way to joyfully get to know the otherness of groups in a pluralistic setting.

Issues of Faith and Belief

- Many schools have **no expectation of religious content** within the school system. Many have no expectation that their religion will be acknowledged in any informed manner.
- Christians of Protestant denominations may have to dispel some **myths** about Catholics such as: Catholics do not have a personal relationship with God; Roman Catholics are anchored in a credit system in order to gain God's approval, Catholics worship Mary as a god etc.
- The term "**Ecumenism**" is often confused with "**multi faith**"
- Parents may be **protective** against the presence of any religious features in schools because they are fearful that their children may be exposed to another religion which will somehow "contaminate" their own faith or belief system,
- Former Protestant schools may feel that any reference to "**Spiritual**" may be harmful; while former Catholic schools may feel that something of **absolute value** is being removed from their school.
- All encounters with students regarding belief systems must be welcoming, respectful and open to the diverse backgrounds of others.
- Open dialogue, celebration of choice and freedom, security in one's own faith, the humility to listen and consider all reasonable statements, must be modeled by the animator and other collaborators.
- Celebration involving the whole school should have an inclusive, cultural or humanitarian dimension, so that students are not offended by a perceived pressure to participate in a celebration of a particular faith dimension. Prayer of a generic nature or multi faith readings are acceptable in a school community that is open and acceptable to a gradual spiritual dimension in the school celebration. The animator must read the pulse of the community before introducing such celebration (e.g. funeral, crisis assembly etc)

Conclusion

Sensitivity and adjustment with a gradual awareness of the other and how the other feels will be required for implementation of Bill 118. A "**walking in the other's shoes**" approach will be an exercise in goodwill for all participants in the process. Avoidance and silence are unhealthy responses, which will inhibit growth, whereas openness and curiosity for learning about the "other" are the components in establishing a pluralistic multi faith environment. Differentiation with respect and equality of expression should be the objective of the process of implementation **of Bill 118, Responding to the Diversity of Moral and Religious Expectations.**

Pluralism is a multi faceted gift to one another, which requires time to unwrap and the curiosity to see the gift beyond the wrapping paper. We are called to overcome our fear of approaching a differently wrapped gift; to experience the joy of discovery; the newness of otherness; the simplicity of being together in community with difference and commonality.

The success of this undertaking will require patient faith and trust, no matter what our particular faith expression may be. We will be encountering three categories of collaborators and participants: people able and willing; people willing and not able; people able and not willing. The process will have to work with all categories of persons, allowing for time, gradual and often slow progress, especially in formed staid mindsets. We are called to see, not just look; listen, not just hear, and to take our time to absorb and adjust for comfort. The challenge before us is to grow in openness, respect and love for one another, all the while respecting difference and seeking commonality with one another.



**General Guidelines
for
Application
of
Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service**

**In accordance with Bill 118, Orientations and
Secrétariat aux Affaires Religieuses Directives - November 29, 2001**

Bill 118 - Non-Confessional Pluralistic Status

- Art. 1.1 'The confessional status of public elementary and secondary schools is repealed as of July 1, 2000.'
- Art. 1.2 'The repeal of the confessional status of public schools means that it will no longer be possible, even in exceptional circumstances, for a public school to adopt a specific religious persuasion or to serve as a place of instruction for one religion in particular.'
- Since the law has been in effect for two years now, it is outdated for the spiritual community animator or administrator to continue referring to a particular school as 'Catholic or Protestant' regardless of the composition of the student body. All schools in the EMSB are public and non-confessional.
 - The suggested term(s) to be used by animators and administrators are '**public, pluralistic, inclusive**'.
 - Any project, activity or assembly must therefore correspond to the **public, pluralistic and inclusive** dimension of **all** schools in the EMSB.

School Service

- Art 3.1 'Spiritual is therefore different from 'religious', a term referring to our relationship with the divine and including the spiritual dimension but in connection with faith in God and a community of Faith.'
- A clear distinction has been made between spiritual care and guidance and catechesis/faith development, (e.g. preparation for sacraments) which is the responsibility of the Faith Community.

Secrétariat aux Affaires Religieuses Directives- November 29, 2001

Pg.3. 'The Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service is a **School Service**, meaning that it is offered to students and takes account of everything that characterizes the school. The Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service is **non-confessional**. This means two things:

1. It is **not** intended to carry out the specific mission of the churches or religious groups or to serve their interests.
 2. Regardless of their religious beliefs, those who provide this service **will not act on behalf of churches or religious groups**. They are **not** entitled to promote either the perspectives or the rituals of any church or religious group.'
- The role of the spiritual community animator is to be **open, inclusive and impartial**. If the animator of a particular school was formerly a Catholic pastoral animator or a Protestant religious animator in the confessional system, it is the **professional responsibility of this animator to clarify to all parties** in the school (i.e. students, staff, administration, governing boards) that he/she is **no longer representative of one particular confession, church or religious group**. The animator is a **professional employee of the EMSB**, aware of, and respectful of the Law, the new service and its implications in the school setting.
 - The success of this new service is dependent upon the leadership, respect and competence of the animator and the co-operation of the administration and staff in its implementation.

*If you have any questions or require further information, please contact:
Irene Miller, Spiritual, Religious and Moral Education Consultant at 483-7200 ext. 7330
or Dora Cesta, Coordinator, Student Services Department at 483 – 7200 ext.7295*



Commission scolaire English-Montréal

English Montreal School Board

Student Services Department

These guidelines are intended to facilitate the implementation of the new service of **Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service**, in the spirit of **Bill 118, A Law responding to the Diversity of Moral and Religious Expectations**.

Specific Guidelines

Activities sponsored by the school must now be **inclusive, pluralistic and educational** as follows:

- Religious services, for one particular faith, cannot be held within the school during school hours, or after school hours, **as a school activity**. In accordance with Bill 118, **pluralistic, multi-faith services** may be sponsored by the school, as a school activity.
- Spiritual Community Animators cannot be requested by a church, religious group or the principal to work on projects that are "**promoting either the perspectives or the rituals of any church or religious group**". (SAR Directives , pg. 3 / *Developing the Inner Life and Changing the World*, pg. 6)
- In compliance with Bill 118, article 1.1, the Principals, in their professional capacity, shall refrain from attending religious functions of a confessional nature involving students, if their attendance could be perceived as "**promoting either the perspectives or the rituals of any Church or religious group**." (S.A.R. Directives, pg.3, / *Developing the Inner Life and Changing the World* Pg. 6)
- Graduation is a ceremony, which is organised by the school, for the school, and as such it is considered a **school function**. Graduation may be complemented by a **spiritual dimension which is pluralistic and inclusive** within the actual graduation ceremony, or a school may wish to have a **separate pluralistic spiritual or multi-faith assembly**. Creativity and student involvement are important **educational elements** in the process.

- **Distribution of fliers, information sheets from churches, or religious groups**, falls into the same category as other community groups. Therefore, the principal must exercise sound judgement. General distribution cannot be promoted if they (fliers, pamphlets etc.) *'carry out the specific mission of the churches or religious groups or to serve their interests'*.
(*Secrétariat aux Affaires Religieuses Directives*, November 29, 2001 pg.3. sect.1/ *Developing the Inner Life and Changing the World*. Pg. 6)
- Religious symbols in the schools are within the law provided there is representation from several faith traditions within the school. (Pluralistic)
- These guidelines are based on *Bill 118 and the Secrétariat aux Affaires Religieuses Directives of November 29, 2001*, and *Developing the Inner Life and Changing the World (SAR 32-5405-A)*.



Commission scolaire English-Montréal
English Montreal School Board

SERVICE AUX ÉLÈVES/STUDENT SERVICES

Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service

Team Values and Visions

Team Time Line

Holistic Approach

Life's meaning

& Action

Peace and stillness

Creativity

Diversity
of Traditions

Global Awareness

School

Family

Spiritual
Self

Local
Community

Earth

suffering
death

Grieving

joy

Celebrating

Transformation

Relationship & Reconciliation

Community Component

Diversity

Faith Traditions

**Life's meaning
& Action**

Local

Community

School

Family

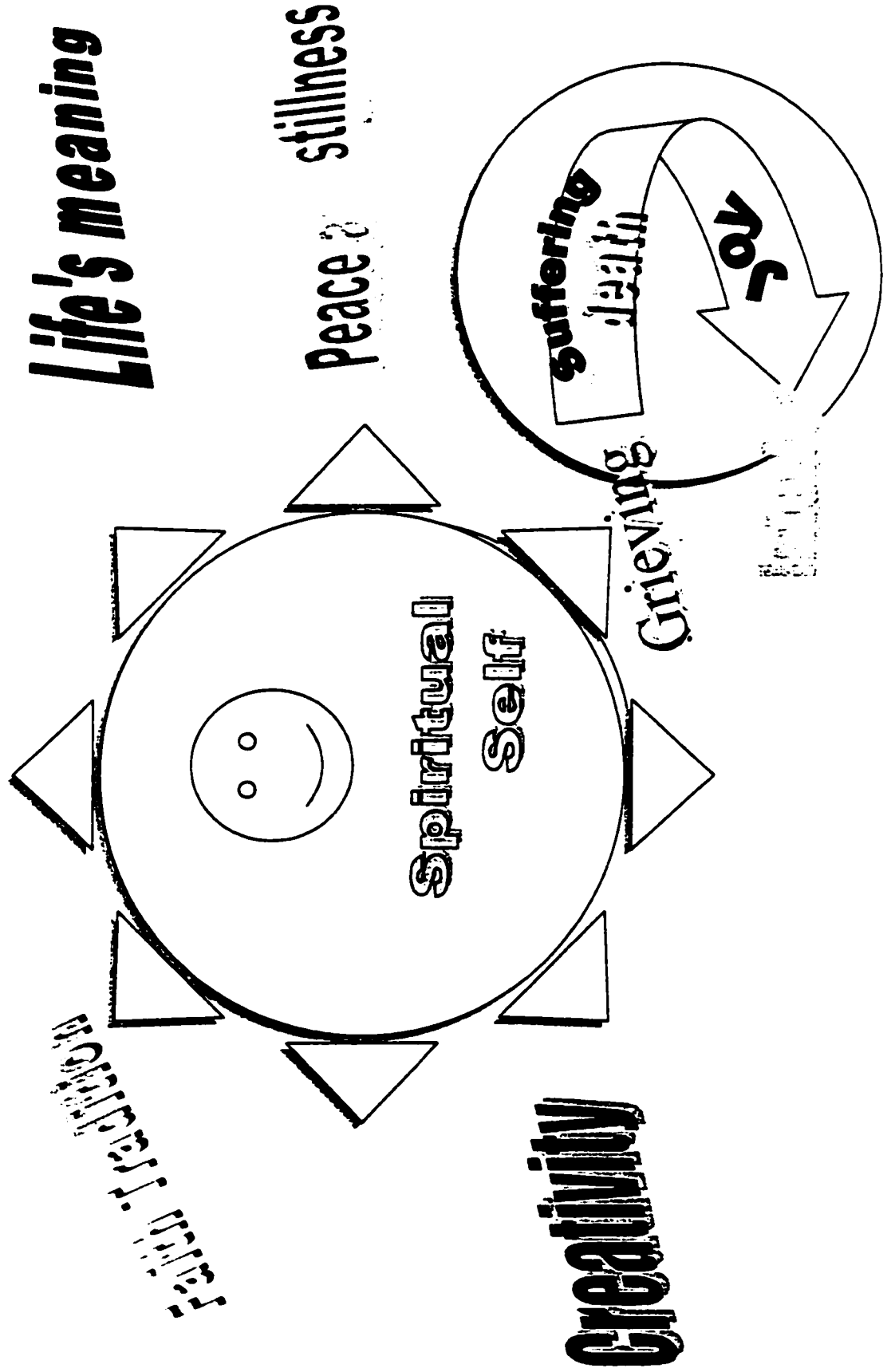
Earth

Global Awareness

Transformation

Relationship & Reconciliation

Spiritual Component



Picture 1
Spiritual Self and Community

- The self and community components are all together, crowded, busy, the spiritual self becomes almost invisible and insignificant in the midst of this global society in which we live today.
- Where is the spiritual self?
- Does the spiritual self have any relevance in today's society?
- Does the educational system acknowledge or affirm the spiritual self?

Picture 2
Community Component

- Begin from the outside and then go in.
- Examine what is visible and out there.
- The outside is easier to talk about because everyone can sense it with sensory and intellectual data.
- How does the inner spirit of a student respond to the social dimensions in which he/she lives?
- How and when do we touch the spirit of a human being which is so delicate and sensitive, that many fear to even mention that students have a deep spirit, which might be calling out to express itself, or just to be named by another human being.
- We must name and isolate the human spirit if we are to facilitate the spiritual growth of a student.
- The unexamined life is not worth living... The unexamined spirit is waiting to be awakened .

Picture 3
The Spiritual Component...The Spiritual Self

- Peace, love, joy, self- control, wisdom and patience are the fruits of a spiritually-awakened person.
- This awakening requires silence, stillness, self- examination, and self- transcendence, a going out beyond self into the mystery of the beyond, into the community to help and care for one another.
- Sometimes a spiritual awakening requires that we might not have all the answers. Sometimes the spiritual awakening requires that we be vulnerable and soft and kind to one another. Sometimes a spiritual awakening requires that we do not know all the answers in life and that there is a Higher Power, or God who exists in the mystery of life and creation.
- The physical needs of a child are acknowledged. The intellectual needs of a child are acknowledged. The psychological and emotional needs of a child are acknowledged. The spiritual needs of a child also need to be acknowledged by educators who acknowledge that this dimension has perhaps been neglected or stifled by other dimensions in the student's life.
- What will the difference be in a student when educators encourage the awakening spirit which in many cases is crying to be valorized by educators?
- The spiritual community animator is challenged to facilitate the awakening spirit in the students in his/her care.

Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service

Activities and Projects Team Approach

1. Assessment of needs and resources of Region 1,2,3

- 1.1 Teamwork – Roles (mentor, administrator, community organizer etc.)
Members will determine roles based on one's strengths.
- 1.2 Population and needs of schools – survey of culture, religious traditions – reports
- 1.3 Local organizations – senior residences, hospitals, clubs, churches, soup kitchens,
EMSB Day Care Centres
- 1.4 Speakers for schools
 - Humanitarian – elder abuse, street kids etc.
 - Interfaith Council speakers & symbols
 - Prevention – Ami, violence, LOVE
Roots of Empathy etc.

2 **Resource List Exchange**

Ami	LOVE	Benedict Labre House
Schmooze Club	Interfaith Council	Old Brewery Mission
Manoir Westmount	Dans la Rue	Ma maison St, Joseph
Borden Place	Willbrod Soup Kitchen	Juan Moreno Refugee Centre
Operation Christmas Child	Father Dowd Home	Elder Abuse CC, Kids Help Phone
World Vision	Peace and Development	
2.1	Establish Community Service Program for Region and Schools	
2.2	Time Line for Yearly program with themes	
2.3	Time Line for Monthly program with themes and activities	
2.4	Monthly schedules – Presence in Schools – accountability	
2.5	Spiritual Activities – Celebrations based on population and culture of schools – pluralistic and inclusive	
2.6	Multifaith Retreats with high school and elementary students	
2.7	Class visits and activities – Proposals for teachers – schedules	

Time Line for Planning Activities 2002 – 2003

Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service Time Line 2002-2003

August- September	October	November	December	January
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HS Professional Development August 22, 29, Sept 26 • EL Professional Development Aug 26 Sept. 30 • Monthly Regional Meetings(3) • Contacting schools • Assessment of region, community, school populations & cultural / religious background • Inventory of local resources • Action Growth Plan for Region – schools • Location Schedule • Important Events/Dates Rosh Hashannah-Sept.7-8 Yom Kippur- Sept 15 Sukkot -Sept 15 Ullambana (B)-Sept 23 Baha'i – Sept 27 • Possible Themes: Who Am I? Introduction to self Introduction to Community Introduction to Spiritual Self 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HS Professional Development October 11 • EL Professional Development 3days • Monthly Regional Meetings(3) • Monthly schedule and Action Growth Plan • Thanksgiving / Sukkot • Multi Faith Thanksgiving Services • Community Service Contacts & Sign Up Days • Community Service Centres in schools with symbols • Interfaith Council Ceremonies with symbols in schools – organize dates. • Class Visits – schedules • Contact Local Legions – poppies for sale • Important Dates Thanksgiving – Oct 14 Eradication of Poverty – Oct 17 Dussehra (Hindu)-Oct 15 Halloween -Oct 31 • Possible Themes Attitude of Gratitude With Thankful Hearts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EI Professional Development Day • Monthly Regional Meetings(3) • Monthly Action Growth Plan • Preparation for Remembrance Day • Peace – War Why? • Community Service Schedule • Operation Christmas Child • Important Dates Diwali (Hindu) – Nov 4 Ramadan(Islam) begins – Nov 6 Remembrance Day- Nov 11 BD Bahullah (Bahai) – Nov 12 Elimination of Discrimination against Religion – Nov 25 Hanukkah begins – Nov 30 • Possible Themes Least We Forget Why Remember? Love not Hate, Peace not War 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly Action Growth Plan • Monthly Regional Meetings(3) • Prepare for Holiday Season • Food Money Drives • Decorations • Multi Faith Services • Festivals of Light (Diwali, Hanukkah, Christmas) • Community Service Soup Kitchens, Food Drives Operation Christmas Child • Important Dates Disabled – Dec 3 Eid al Fitr – Dec 5 Hanukkah ends – Dec 7 Human Rights Day – Dec 10 Christmas – Dec. 25 • Possible Themes Follow the Light Light the Way You are Light 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR & EI Professional Development Days • Monthly Regional Meetings(3) • Monthly Action Growth Plan • Community Service • Week of Christian Unity • Religious / Humanitarian Speakers • Come in from the Cold Multi Faith Retreats • Random Acts of Kindness • Leadership Retreats • Class Visits New Year- New Life- New Spirit • Possible Themes New Year New Life New Spirit What is Your Timeline? Visiting a World at Peace

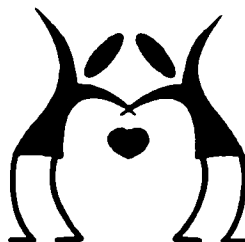
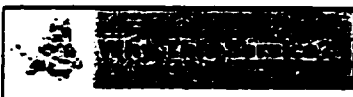
Spiritual care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service
Time Line 2002 - 2003

February	March	April	May	June
<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Professional Development•Regional Meetings•Monthly Action Growth Plan•Friendship Assemblies•Valentine's In Community Service Organizations•Singing Valentines•Teacher Appreciation Events•National Flag Day Ceremonies•Carnival Week•Important DatesValentines day – Feb 14Teacher Appreciation WeekChinese New YearNational Flag dayHajj (Islam)Purim (Jewish)•Possible ThemesLove is the AnswerLove One AnotherDo You Love Me? Do I Love Me?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Professional Development•Regional Meetings•Monthly Action Growth Plan•Mid Term Break March 3-7•Community Service•Multi Faith Services Prep. Passover / Easter/ Spring•Multi Faith Retreats•Important DatesEradication of Racial Discrimination WeekWorld Day of PrayerBahai FastLent•Why Fast? – Fast DayWorld Vision / Peace & Development(Global Poverty & Starvation)•Junk Food Rubbish Day•Speakers on Poverty•Tzedakah (helping needy)•Possible ThemesA World of Plenty??What the World Needs Now	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Professional Development•Monthly Regional Meetings•Monthly Action Growth Plan•Community Service•Will the Real Me Please Stand Up- Grad Retreats,•Services for Spring Easter Passover•Nature Walks –Retreats- Peace and Nature•Visit to Funeral Parlour (Death)•Important DatesBuddhist New YearHolocaust Remembrance DayGood Friday – April 18Easter – April 21Passover•Possible ThemesNew LifeWhat is Life? What is Death? Choose Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Professional Development•Monthly Regional Meetings•Monthly Action Growth Plan•Community Service•Will the Real Me Please Stand Up- Grad Retreats•Preparation for Grad Multi Faith Services•Awards – Wind up for Community Service•Team Evaluation & Reports•Final Visits to Classes•Important datesMothers' DayMissing Children's Day•Possible ThemesLife is a JourneyGoodbye and HelloTurning the Page of Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Professional Development Evaluation Days•Monthly Regional Meetings•Annual Reports•Grad Retreats•Grad Multi-Faith Services•Awards Certificates of Recognition for Community Service•Clean The Schoolyard Day•Important datesEnvironment DayVictim Children's Day



Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service

Commission scolaire English-Montréal
English Montreal School Board
Student Services



Welcome

The Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement
Service Web Site, or

The Spiritual Community Site.

As of July 1, 2002 the English Montreal School Board will offer a new service to all students in the board , except vocational and adult education students (Education Act 1:6). In keeping with the the Ministry of Education's time line for Bill 118, EMSB initiated this service at the secondary level in September, 2001 and will initiate this service at the elementary level in September, 2002.

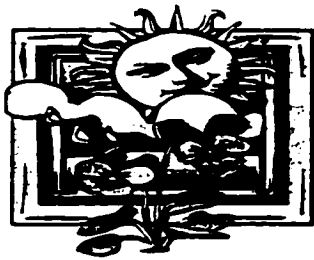
The new service has two components:

Spiritual & Community

To find out more about us, click onto our links on the left.



We call on you to show us the Good Way



Student Services

Commission scolaire English-Montréal
English Montreal School Board



 **Spiritual
Community Service**

 **Student Services**

 **What is the Service?**

 **How does the
Service work?**

 **Calendar of Events**

 **Related Links**

Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service is one of several services in **Student Services** which is intended to promote and foster the holistic development of our students.

A Student Service fostering students'

- **Sense of responsibility**
- **Moral and spiritual development**
- **Personal and community relationships**
- **Sense of belonging to school and community**

Student Services

Complementary Services

Guidance Service
Psychological Service
Speech and Language Service
Drug Education Resource
Health and Social Services
**Spiritual Care and Guidance
& Community Involvement
Service**

Special Education

Consultation
Individual Educational Plan
Support System
Itinerant Services

Bill 118

Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service is stipulated in Bill 118, a law that guarantees this service to all elementary and high school students of all faith and cultural traditions.



**Building
Self &
Community**

Why This Service?



**Spiritual
Community Service**



Student Services



What is the service?



**How does the
Service work?**



Calendar of Events



Related Links

**Spiritual Care and Guidance and
Community Involvement service
is meant to develop, promote
and foster two dimensions in the
life of a student:**

Spiritual and Community

**The spiritual dimension of a
student is a deeper interior
dimension that may be
overlooked in our technological
society, and yet it may be the
very part of a human being that
is crying out for attention and
nourishment. This service fosters
the interior spiritual life by:**

- **Promoting a spiritual inner
quest within the context of
community**
- **Deepening the students' inner
life**
- **Focusing on the fundamental
meaning of life from the
students' personal experience**

**The interior life of a student is
often touched at the heart level
by doing good works for others
in a community service. The
Community module of the service
develops the student by:**

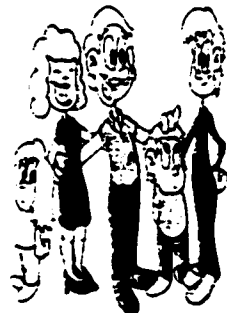
- **Improving the world through
student action**
- **Recognizing the values of
human beings**

A

Laboratory

Of

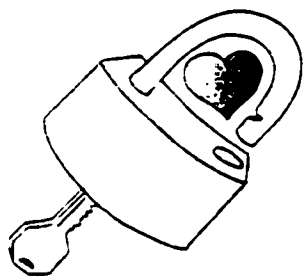
Life



- Recognizing the values of human beings
- Building a more harmonious and supportive society by helping others in the community

Building a Better World





How does the Service work?

Commission scolaire English-Montréal
English Montreal School Board
Student Services

Spiritual Community Animators Regional Teams



- **Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service** is a new service which will be available to high school students in 20 high schools, 10 outreach and social affairs schools, and elementary students in 42 elementary schools for a total service to approximately 26,432 students in 72 schools.
- The new team structure introduces, 15 spiritual community animators who will be divided into three regional teams. The professional teams of animators will meet regularly, in consultation with administrators and staff, to assess the needs of the schools and community, and create Action Growth Plans for the schools. Each animator will be responsible for a cluster of local schools and will have a base school in the location.
- The pluralistic inclusive team approach to spiritual care and guidance and community involvement service is intended to be cross-curricular, and beneficial to the spiritual and communal life of the students and the whole school.
- The service is intended to provide a holistic approach to education of students, by developing the inner spiritual and social self, within the context of the school and local community.

Who is the spiritual community animator ?

- A member of the non teaching professional staff whose university training is mainly in the areas of spiritual life, religious knowledge and social life.
- A person who is open-minded, possesses critical thinking skills, and whose role is to provide guidance and facilitate projects and spiritual-community activities for the students.
- A person who respects the students, especially by recognizing their right to freedom of conscience

- A person who respects the students, especially by recognizing their right to freedom of conscience and religion, and whose words are consistent with his/ her actions.



Building a Better World

Information: Irene Miller 483-7200 ex. 7330
Fax: 483-7460
Email: imiller@emsb.qc.ca



Calendar of Events

Commission scolaire English-Montréal
English Montreal School Board
Student Services



Spiritual
Community



Student Services

Orientation Days for Spiritual Community Animators



High School Animators

Thursday, August 22, 2002 at EMB - 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.



How does the
Service work?

Elementary Animators

Monday, August 26, 2002 at EMB - 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.



Calendar of
Events



Related Links

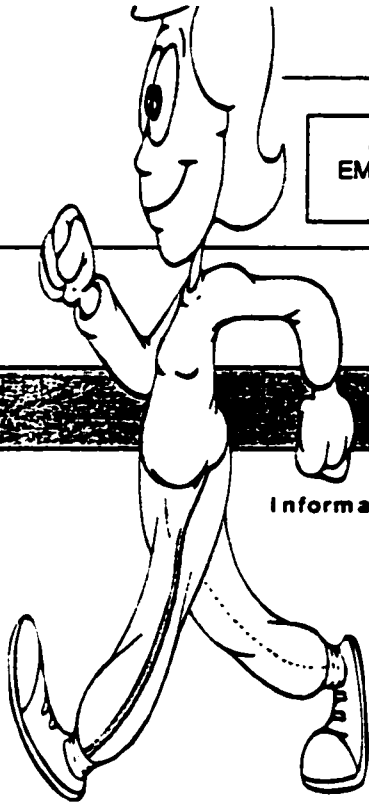


Dr. Pamela Bright & Irene Miller



Dr. Pamela Bright, Dr. Christine Jamieson & Irene Miller

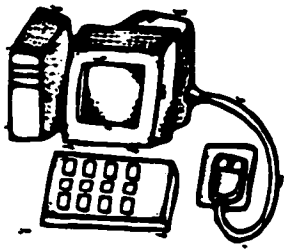




All Professional Development Sessions will be held at :
EMSB Administration Building, 6000 Fielding, Montreal, QC.
Room 114 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Building a Better World

Information: Irene Miller 483-7200 ex. 7330
Fax: 483-7460
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Related Links



**Spiritual
Community**



Student Services



**How does the
Service work?**

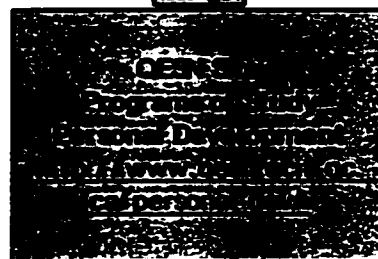
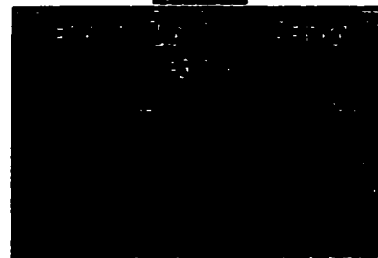
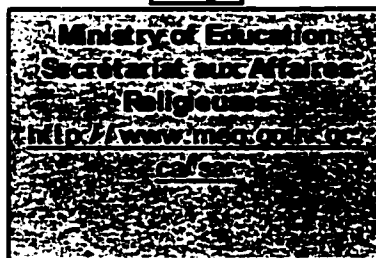


Calendar of Events

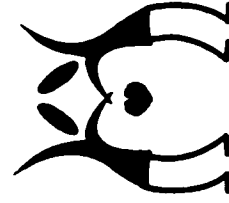


Related Links

Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service is interested in a pluralistic approach to animation, which includes information from the Ministry of Education, Secrétariat aux Affaires Religieuses, Character Education, and various religions and cultures. The following sites are of interest to animators, parents and students.



- Guarantees Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service to all elementary and high school students of all faith and cultural traditions.
- A student service fostering students'
 - autonomy
 - sense of responsibility
 - moral and spiritual development
 - personal and community relationships
 - belonging to school and community
- Secondary schools implemented this service on July 1, 2001.
- Elementary schools will implement this service on July 1, 2002.



Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service

Two Dimensions

Spiritual

- Promoting a spiritual inner quest within the context of community
- Deepening the students' inner life
- Focusing on the fundamental meaning of life from the students' personal experience

Community

- Improving the world through student action
- Recognizing the values of human beings
- Building a more harmonious and supportive society by helping others in the community



EMSB Spiritual Community Animation Team The Role

- To facilitate progress in the spiritual life of students through activities which encourage *quiet peaceful reflection* and *community involvement*.
- To provide *spiritual guidance* to students on questions and issues of ultimate meaning of life, death, experience of reaching beyond self, moral issues, human relationships, pain, illness, suffering and joy.
- To offer activities conducive to the growth of *spiritual life* and *community involvement*: pluralistic services, silence, nature walks, soup kitchens, visiting seniors, the sick, singing, day care, tutoring, breakfast clubs.
- To promote a positive presence in the community, while respecting the students' freedom of conscience and religious traditions.

