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Phenomenology of spiritual experience

Kim Ann Cornish

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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Kim Ann Cornish entitled "Phenomenology of spiritual experience." I have examined the final electronic copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Psychology.

Howard R. Pollio, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation and recommend its acceptance:

Jack Barlow, Sandra Thomas, Wesley Morgan, Ralph Hood

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Carolyn R. Hodges

Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

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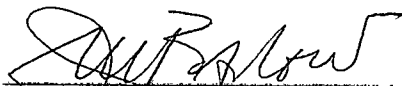
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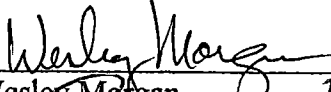
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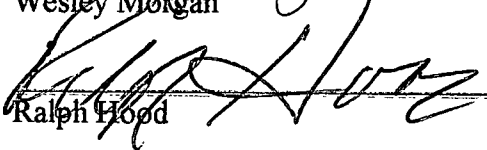
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Wesley Morgan



Ralph Hood

Accepted for the Council:



Interim Vice Provost and
Dean of The Graduate School

PHENOMENOLOGY OF SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE

A Dissertation
Presented for the
Doctor of Philosophy
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Kim Ann Cornish
August 2001

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory
of my father, John H. Cornish, Jr., whose
love encouraged a desire to learn, and
to my brother, John H. Cornish, III,
whose has always believed
in me,
and
to all the women who came before me,
who fought for the right to
to learn, study, and write their reality.
You paved the way for me.
Thank you.

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There have been many others, teachers and friends who have made my achievements possible. First, is Janet Carnes who faithfully and tenaciously assisted in the final preparation of the manuscript. Without her help, I could not have finished at all. I also appreciate her friendship over the years and her assistance with navigating my way through the doctoral program. I would also like to thank Nadia Lahutsky and David Grant my teachers at Texas Christian University, who pushed me and guided me in my scholarly endeavors. Faculty at Vanderbilt Divinity School were instrumental in engendering critical thinking and writing skills. I also want to thank my friend and long-time clergy colleague, Harold Dowler, for his generous

support and encouragement over the years. Also, I am grateful to Jim Akins, who has been my friend and confidant, whose nurturance sustained me. Thank you all.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to describe the phenomenon of spiritual experience in the lives of contemporary persons. Using phenomenological interview procedures, twelve participants were asked to describe when they were aware of or felt spiritual. Results of the present study indicate that spiritual experiences are located within the realm of everyday human experience, involving the existential grounds of others, world, body, and time.

The present thematic descriptions are based on a rigorous hermeneutical analysis of phenomenological interviews covering this topic without a priori assumptions. Data were analyzed within the dialogic process of a phenomenological research group in addition to the researcher's individual work. The thematic structure derived from the data describes the experiential themes of spirituality and their interrelationships.

Participant narratives revealed that connection was the ground against which the each of the various themes emerged: around which they revolve and are interrelated. The major themes emerging against this ground were: (1) awe and wonder, (2) knowing, and (3) possibility.

Findings indicate that spiritual experiences occur in the realm of human experience that Heidegger termed everydayness. Such experiences are profoundly relational and are described in terms of relationships with other people and the world around them. The majority of the spiritual experiences described did not involve

descriptions of transcendence or God, suggesting that psychological analyses using such concepts have adopted unnecessary theological presuppositions about spiritual experience.

Contemporary spiritual experience is connection to other people and the world that evokes a sense of awe and wonder that is powerful and peaceful, engenders awareness that brings about knowing that is not arrived at by cognitive means and cannot be adequately described by language. These experiences provide possibilities for persons to be open to new ideas and ways of behavior, and permits them to make significant changes in their lives. As such the results have something significant to tell the clinical psychologist about the importance of spiritual experience as therapeutic and potentially curative.

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CHAPTER I

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Cherish your doubts, for doubt is the handmaiden of truth. Doubt is the key to the door of knowledge; it is the servant of discovery. A belief which may not be questioned binds us to error, for there is incompleteness and imperfection in every belief.
(Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1975)

Philosophical Context

The development of modern thought had its beginnings in the last centuries of the Middle Ages (500 - 1500 C.E.), which saw a bifurcation of thought in philosophy. Scholastic theology, which reached its apex with Thomas Aquinas (1224-1275), had begun to show a deepening division between philosophy and theology; between what can be known through reason and what can be known only through revelation. During this time, the return to classical antiquity that became known as the Renaissance also was taking root (Gonzalez, 1984). Until the 11th century, crusades against foreign, non-Christian forces, such as Arabs, Vikings, and Lombards, consolidated Christians against outsiders and protected economic interests. By the 12th century, challenges to the power and authority of the Christian Church began to come from within its own ranks (Moore, 1977).

As early as the 15th Century, the stronghold that the Christian (Catholic) Church had on knowledge and truth had undergone serious challenge. Sir Francis Bacon in 1620, in his work *Novum Organum*, proposed a new division of the sciences

and a new method of inquiry: an a posteriori inductive method that defined a radical departure from Aristotle's a priori deductive method. Bacon's basic assumption was that we could know the world only through the scientific observation. Following Bacon, Descartes presented his "proofs" for the existence of God and provided a foundation for mind/body dualism (*Meditations*, 1641/1986). The publication of *Meditations on First Philosophy* by Descartes in 1641 provided a new epistemology and became foundational for new paradigms in natural science. Descartes' assertion *Cogito ergo sum*, that the intellect is superior to the body, codified a dualistic interpretation of the world.

In the 16th century, for the first time in human history, Gutenberg's printing press made the dissemination of books and other written material in the vernacular a common event. The Renaissance brought tremendous changes to Europe. By the end of the 16th century, Luther had tacked his communication of dissent (95 theses) to the door of the Wittenburg church that essentially led to the Protestant Reformation. By the middle of the 17th century, the Renaissance was drawing to a close and Galileo had been condemned as a heretic (1633) for proposing a new cosmology. His assertion that the sun was at the center of the universe and that the earth rotated around it shook the foundation of the Christian theological world. Even though the Western Christian Church condemned him, Galileo had many followers. Theologians and educated believers within the Christian Church had carried the banner of seeking "truth," a position that began to be questioned when "scientific" findings and Galileo

himself were so radically dismissed. The seeds of this discontent brought forth fruit in the widening split between religion and science.

By the 18th century, philosophy was concerned with epistemology, and religion became a problem to be solved by scientific methods. Another radical shift is to be found in David Hume's empiricism that led to his assertion concerning the weak probability of the existence of God. Immanuel Kant, in 1781, attempted to defend the attack on religious faith by proposing an internal gyroscope as the mechanism by which persons could know "truth," including the evidence of God's existence; that truth was separate from the "natural world" of interest to science. This approach gave rise to the transcendental ego, again providing support for considering human experience as dualistic.

In 1799, Friedrich Schleiermacher wrote a new kind of theological apology designed to be a final plea to "men of science" to register the significance of the Church and officially sanctioned theology that it might have its rightful place in the modern world of thought. Schleiermacher believed that religious experience was more than a rational endeavor and declared an affective ground, a "feeling of absolute dependence," which he felt provided the foundation for knowledge and imbued information with meaning and value. Dilthey later picked up this concept (Palmer, 1969) and Gadamer developed the ideas further. Although important in its time, Schleiermacher's attempt was unsuccessful and the Cartesian formulation was systematized not only into a spirit/matter division but also into a radical distinction

between religion and science. Science, which dealt rationally with the "world," provided the preeminent view of reality and the basis for modern thought; on both counts, religion was left to the superstitious and irrational.

The continuing hegemony of a scientific worldview gave rise to an opposing philosophical tradition in the 19th century that sought to re-center human concerns in and of the world: Existentialism. The scientific creed, that a higher order of truth could be sought only through objectification of the world, went to the heart of the religious belief that both nature and humans had an ordained teleology. The scientific worldview suggested, instead, that nature contained no inherent meaning and that an individual was distinct from society. It is into this separation and banishment that the existentialists addressed their critique of the scientific perspective.

Existentialist writers began to address the question of "being" and of the human relationship to the world. Hegel proposed a philosophical 'dialectic' as one way to encompass the multiplicity of ways in which this relationship could be understood. Kierkegaard suggested that Hegel's proposition that the dialectic could be used as rational mediation to resolve the disparities of existence was faulty. Although initially shunned, Kierkegaard's attack on rational progress became quite influential, and a later existentialist, Jean Paul Sartre, argued that humans choose to come into being out of nothingness. Interestingly, he seemed to preserve half a Cartesian perspective by proposing two kinds of being: being-in-itself and being-for-

itself. Friedrich Nietzsche's proclamation in 1882, that "God is dead," was influential in the development of psychoanalysis. Nietzsche proposed human nature as self-deceiving and self-destructive, humanity's active inhibition of threatening thoughts, and the idea that unmasking unconscious information could remove self-deceptions.

Sigmund Freud, influenced by Nietzsche, in 1914 developed these ideas and established the notion that the primitive practice of totemism was an attempt to manage the desire both to kill the father and to possess his strength. Later, in 1927, he expanded this line of thought in *Future of an Illusion*, proposing that religion was a neurosis and that adherence to it pathological. The use of Christianity in the rise to power of the Third Reich under Adolph Hitler lent some later credence to Freud's proposal.

In 1902 America, William James published his book *Varieties of Religious Experiences* that examined human experience in the religious realm. James investigated cultural expressions of religion, which he defined as "the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men [sic] in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine" (James, 1985, p. 31). His work is unparalleled in contemporary psychology. As Martin Marty suggested in his introduction to the 1985 printing, James' undertaking is "too psychological to have shaped most religious inquiry and too religious to have influenced much psychological research" (James, 1985, p. vii). An important basis of James' work derives from his theory of radical empiricism, which holds that the

relationship between things is at least as important as the things themselves.

Continuity comes from the stringing together of experiences through their relationships, and which are, according to James, themselves part of experience.

James did not overcome Cartesian dualism, but in his *Principles of Psychology* (1890/1950), he clearly outlined that scientific theory was not free of metaphysics. All of science is based on preconceived assumptions about how the physical world can be studied. There were two problems that became important with James' assertion: 1) what is consciousness if it is not a faculty independent of objects, and 2) what then is truth if reality is a function of different states of consciousness.

The different contexts in which Freud and James found themselves are striking considering their different beginning points and assumptions. James' context was one of post-civil war reconstruction, the rise of industrialization and prosperity and the secularization of society (Marty, 1984). By the time his book *Varieties of Religious Experience* was published, religion was primarily a private concern for the individual since the alliance created between minister and magistrate in the early formations of the new colonies had been broken by the Civil War (Reuther and Keller, 1981). Across the ocean in Germany, Freud, who was Jewish, found himself in the aftermath of World War I and in the rise of the Weimar Republic (1918-1933). This context opened the possibility for the rise of the Third Reich under Adolph Hitler who found many Protestant theologians willing to provide justification for the faint promises of a stable social order and a recapturing of German pride (Forstman,

1992). The atrocities committed by Nazis, that we have come to call the Holocaust, profoundly altered the fabric of our meaning structures in theology *and* our ideas of human nature.

Also in 1927 Germany, Martin Heidegger wrote *Being and Time*, which asked again the age old question in metaphysics "What is the meaning of being?" Since Plato's metaphor of the cave, truth was identified as a matching between a physical state of affairs on the one hand and its mental representation (or verbal description) on the other. Heidegger proposed that we cannot detach ourselves in an objectified view of "things" and derive any meaning of being. He proposed that such a (objectified) theoretical view of the world was far removed from the "everydayness" of human life that he labeled Dasein. The idea of a subject and object split, which underlies the modern scientific paradigm, is not equivalent to "Dasein and the world" (Heidegger, 1962, p. 33). Heidegger acknowledged the existence of the world of objects but held that they, and the world of which they are a part, cannot be known "objectively." He understood that humans and the world co-constitute one another and one cannot be seen as causing the other, but together as constituting human existence. "Phenomenology is our way of access to what is to be the theme of ontology, and it is our way of giving it demonstrative precision. Only as phenomenology is ontology possible" (Heidegger, 1962, pg. 60).

Heidegger advanced the idea that scientific activity takes place within a context of pre-understanding that derives from a certain situatedness in the life-world

that includes practical dealings with tools and implements. Such practical dealings (and understandings) are achieved in the course of everyday transactions with objects and the environment. These dealings occur within a taken-for-granted cultural and historical background that consists of practices, habits, and skills that are not easily spelled out explicitly because they are largely invisible to us. This is the lived-world Heidegger called "everydayness."

Heidegger also argued that the fundamental mode of human is not detached knowing but engaged activity. In his view, other modes of experience, like the disinterested contemplation of the scientist or, even, the phenomenologist, are preceded, both temporally and logically, by everyday situations of involvement with the world. Thus, for Heidegger, everydayness is not just a possible mode of existence; it is the primordial foundation from which other modes derive. In Heidegger's view, human being (Dasein) involves what might be called an implicitly sensed "ground," which is the context or totality within which human experience takes place. This ground, which undercuts the Cartesian opposition of subject and object, and reveals the error of Plato's correspondence theory of truth, is in a sense the most important aspect of human existence, for it is the very condition or possibility of anything at all appearing or being known. Moreover, it is *that* place where the being of either "man" or "world" is disclosed.

Gadamer (1975; 1976) begins with the Heideggerian assumption that all knowledge has an inescapably hermeneutic character in the sense that it ultimately

derives from the fundamental human activity of interpretation. Since what is known is always known by a knower situated within history and society, interpretation is always influenced by the tradition and horizon of understanding within which the interpreter operates. For Gadamer, there is no overcoming of our prejudices or socio-historical vantagepoint, and there is no technique capable of yielding an absolute objectivity in interpretation. In fact, Gadamer points out that to seek absolute objectivity in interpretation is to misunderstand the interpretive enterprise. Tradition and history are not barriers to understanding, but indispensable to it. Because the socio-historical context constantly changes, as does our vantagepoint within it, there can never be final or absolutely certain interpretations. Understanding, and especially understanding based on language, is a primary form of being-in-the-world. Human beings come to know not only through the hermeneutic process, but are formed and constituted by it.

Philosophically speaking, Existentialism, Psychoanalysis, Phenomenology, and the scientific paradigm all set the stage for Merleau-Ponty. What is unique to Merleau-Ponty is his phenomenological methodology: a doorway by which one can begin to understand Husserl's earlier maxim *Zu den Sachen selbst*. For Merleau-Ponty, these "things" of which Husserl spoke were not situationless, eternal, transcendent truths that could be "discovered." Science had gone the way of this assumption by proposing ultimate truth could be ascertained on the basis of a de-contextualized, ahistorical methodology. Human beings are located in this world and

consciousness is always contextualized. Knowledge of ourselves and of the world is always based upon experience. The phenomenological method allows the "network of relationships" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. xx) that *we are* to emerge. "Because we are in the world, we are *condemned to meaning*, and we cannot do or say anything without its acquiring a name in history" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. xix).

Theological Approaches

In 1951, Paul Tillich, a Protestant theologian and ordained Lutheran minister who fled Nazi Germany, began writing a systematic theology approaching Christian faith in an existential manner. Human existence consists of incompleteness, brokenness, and despair in the existentialist sense. Theology is based on revelation or on human experience by those who have gained insights into the depths of the "Ground of Being," which for Tillich is God.

The structure of Tillich's ontological theology hinges on his vision of eternal tension between Being and Non-Being (Vol. I pp. 163-210). Tillich says that the basic human problem is that of Being and Non-Being. The concern for establishing an ontological foundation for his system represents his attempt to relate the problems of the human existence to its ontological referent. Human beings exist pre-eminently among all creatures because of an awareness of our existence and of the possibility of our own death: that is, our own non-being. We exist in anxiety--not fear--for fear has an object and is psychological, whereas ontological anxiety has no objective referent

but arises out of our awareness of possible non-being. This situation yields an "ontological shock" (Vol. 1, pg. 113) in which we are shaken beyond reason against the notion of Being and Non-Being. God as the "Ground of Being" is important for it is in God alone, according to Tillich, that ontological elements are perfectly balanced, whereas they are polarized (divided along the subject-object continuum) in humans and nature. He argues for "a 'mystical a priori,' an awareness of something that transcends the cleavage between subject and object" (Vol 1., p. 9), effectively co-opting Cartesian dualism and the Modern paradigm. Ontology, for Tillich, is given by the space between subject and object.

In his book, *The Courage To Be* (1952), Tillich presents an existentialist "Ground of Being" theology as a basis upon which to address the concerns of people living in a period increasingly characterized by anxiety. The purpose of *The Courage To Be* is to address the question of how it is possible to confront the ontological reality of anxiety without succumbing to the temptation to enclose oneself in an inauthentic, self-limiting but ostensibly secure belief-system. The book begins with the analysis of the nature of courage through the ideas of Plato, the Stoics, Aquinas, Spinoza and Nietzsche. What links these philosophers or traditions is the recognition of the finitude inherent in the human condition and the consequent inevitable human participation in nonbeing. Nonbeing, which is central to Tillich's theology, is an ontological reality that perpetually threatens to undermine the order of things. In

human terms, to live under the threat of nonbeing is to live in a condition of finitude with the constant possibility of failure, disintegration, and death.

The recognition of the fact of finitude and nonbeing creates anxiety and Tillich identifies three types of existential anxiety. The first is anxiety of fate and death. We live with the awareness that one day we will be extinguished by death and are constantly reminded of our vulnerability through encountering factors affecting our lives over which we have no control. Second, humanity lives with the threat of meaninglessness. To live meaningfully is to experience a source of "Ultimate Concern" which gives purpose and value to existence. Ultimate concern is the source of our spiritual center; without it we incur the risk of self-disintegration. Third, there is the anxiety of guilt. To live is to live with the responsibility to affirm or to realize oneself: to fail to do so creates a sense of guilt that our essential nature has been neglected.

For Tillich, courage is the principle which enables people to recognize the fact of nonbeing and to affirm and develop their own being in the face of nonbeing. Such an ontology provides the means to define the identity of the individual as a social being interacting with the group and as an isolated individual. Self-affirmation through the group is called the "courage to be" as a part, and such courage provides the means to diminish the anxiety of death, meaninglessness and guilt. By identifying with the group one becomes part of something that will outlive one's own existence and which, therefore, confers to some extent the power to overcome the

anxiety of death. Similarly, the society, the community, or the collective can provide a sense of meaningful engagement and, therefore, reduce the possibility of spiritual disintegration. Finally, as a source of collectively held values, the community provides its members with an opportunity to live relatively free from the anxiety of guilt, so long as one adheres to its values.

The courage to be as oneself is more relevant to the character of the modern period. This form of courage entails the affirmation of the individual as a being significantly distinct from the group or society to which the individual belongs. The Enlightenment through the proclamation of the universality of reason gave individualism. Tillich identifies romanticism, naturalism, pragmatism and existentialism as examples of movements that promote individualism. Following this thought, there are existentialist motifs in Pascal's denunciation of Descartes' conception of humanity as essentially rational, in Kierkegaard's criticism of the Hegelian equation of the real and rational, and in Nietzsche's concept of the will to power, which is understood by Tillich as "the self affirmation of life as life" (Tillich, 1980, p. 26).

Since the time of Nietzsche's proclamation that "God is dead," Tillich believed that the loss of a sense of transcendent and divinely legitimated values leads initially to despair, which he calls the "courage to despair." Despair is necessary to radical individualism because it entails the loss of those things that tie us to other people. This motif is found in literary works, such as Kafka's *The Trial*, Camus' *The*

Outsider, and de Beauvoir's *She Came to Stay*, which all depict characters whose experience of the loss of a sense of belonging to the world leads to a total loss of a sense of meaning. Tillich's answer is that we should seek to participate in the power of being, a sort of mystical union, to overcome our despair and loss of meaning; he terms this power of being as "the God above God" (p. 186), which is the God who appears "when God has disappeared in the anxiety of doubt" (p. 190). Tillich is unable to escape the dualism of Descartes.

Rudolf Otto, in 1923, wrote *The Idea of the Holy* (1958). Otto sees religion as a universal category, which stands above all natural processes and whose essence is irreducible and cannot evolve. He writes "if there is any single domain of human experience that presents us with something unmistakably specific and unique, peculiar to itself, assuredly it is that of religious life"(1958, p.4). This essence he calls the "numinous," which is the object of religious experience, and which "we cannot but feel"(p. 5) for "it eludes the conceptual way of thinking"(p. 2).

Otto calls this experience "numinous," designating three components with a Latin phrase: *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*. As *mysterium*, the numinous is "wholly other"; entirely different from other life experiences, and evokes a reaction of silence, which brings forth feelings of wonder, amazement, and awe. The numinous is also a *mysterium tremendum*: eliciting terror because of the experience of overwhelming power. For example, Otto characterizes the dread of the *tremendum* as something other than natural fear. He says, the *tremendum* is "a terror fraught with

an inward shuddering such as not even the most menacing and overpowering created thing can instill" (p.14). In addition, the numinous presents itself as *fascinans*, an experience of mercy and grace.

The numinous cannot be known through rational thinking; awareness of it comes only through the feelings it evokes. Consequently, Otto devotes a great part of *The Idea of the Holy* to a description of these feelings, the first of which centers in the subject's sense of creature-consciousness, "the emotion of a creature, submerged and overwhelmed by its own nothingness in contrast to that which is supreme above all creatures" (p. 10).

Throughout this book, Otto draws sharp distinctions between the natural and the supernatural and between the rational and the non-rational, but is clear that the term 'holy' is " *a purely a priori* category" (p. 112, emphasis in text). The "numinous" is not a natural phenomenon and knowledge of it cannot be gained experimentally. Instead,

It [numinous] issues from the deepest foundation of cognitive apprehension that the soul possesses, and, though it of course comes into being in and amid sensory data and empirical material of the natural world and cannot anticipate or dispense with those, yet it does not arise *out of* them, but only *by their means* (p.113, emphasis in text).

Further, the numinous is nonrational and "completely eludes apprehension in terms of concepts" (p. 5) and "can only be suggested by means of the special way in which it is reflected in the mind in terms of feeling"(p. 12). Words, concepts, reasoning, and rational thought are incapable of producing "true" experience of the

wholly other, which can only be "firmly grasped, thoroughly understood, and profoundly appreciated, purely in, with, and from the feeling itself," (p.34) which originates in Schleiermacher.

For Otto, religious experience is the encounter with "something" that is totally separate and different from any other life experience that can render us wordless, invoke awe, awaken terror, and wash over us bringing comfort and peace. Otto traces these experiences of the numinous to the most primitive religious consciousness, where the feeling-response was one of "daemoniac dread." This primitive consciousness of the numinous evolved over the centuries to a more elevated and noble experience. Throughout this process of religious evolution, the object of these feelings remains the non-rational numinous, and the element of dread felt by the primitive savage, though superseded by other responses "does not disappear on the highest level of all, where the worship of God is at its purest" (p.17). And although this process of evolution has occurred in all the great religions, according to Otto, it has reached its culmination in Christianity, which "stands out in complete superiority over its sister religions" (p. 142). Thus, against all those who would see the rise of religion emanating from any number of "natural" factors, Otto holds the numinous to be "the basic factor and basic impulse underlying the entire process of religious evolution" (p.15).

Otto's conceptualization of the holy as *mysterium tremendum et fascinans* places it largely within a Christian framework and a interpretation of the world within

the subject/object. Not only does he enumerate these various reactions to the numinous, he also emphatically contends that these feelings are the only manner through which the numinous, or reality, can be known.

In 1922, Martin Buber published *I and Thou*. Born and raised in central Europe, Buber was teaching in Germany when Hitler came to power. In his book, Buber described a mode of being that involves mutuality, spontaneity and presentness. Experiences, events and relations can be described and analyzed, although description, no matter how vivid, and analysis, no matter how acute, cannot serve as alternatives for the responsiveness, of "here and now," between two subjects "over against each other." The two subjects in this relation Buber calls by the pronouns "I" and "Thou." The encounter between I and Thou does not make Thou a mere object, it is a subject in its own right that confirms the I in recognizing and addressing it. The Thou, in turn, is recognized and addressed by I, so that the I and the Thou, as they directly respond to each other, are united in a bond that maintains their individualities but brings them into living relation with each other. By way of contrast, in the I-It mode, the I observes or makes use of the "It" whether that "other" is a thing or a person. Because persons cannot exist independently of relationships, the I is different in the two primary relational modes: in I-It the I judges and observes in the context of an established scheme of things; in the I-Thou, the I risks security by listening as well as speaking, ready to receive something new and to respond in a new manner.

We necessarily move back and forth between I-Thou and I-It. There is no I without It no It without I because "basic words do not signify things but relations" (Buber, 1996, p. 53). Buber insists that he does not disparage the value of I-It relations, which are required for the practical skills and scientific achievements of human life. For Buber, the emphasis on I-It in modern times threatens to overwhelm openness that is a condition for realizing personal and social good.

Domination by I-It is particularly fatal in matters of the spirit because the basis of authentic religious existence is the revelatory encounter of a whole human being and the eternal Thou. In Buber's philosophy, God is the eternal Thou, the ground of all specific Thous. God addresses and is addressed by the I in the full range of unique situations and occurrences of everyday life as well as in moments of extraordinary power and destiny that are the formative moments of traditional religions.

For Buber, God is not objectifiable and can never become It. Words serve only as mute gestures pointing to the irreducible, ineffable dimension where God is. God cannot be a metaphysical concept, a doctrinal term, or a liturgical allusion. God is not found by fleeing the world to private moments of mystical union; God is met in the world with its concrete demands and ethical duties.

Psychology of Religion

Historically, psychology has conceptualized religion in various ways. As seen with Freud, the view of religion proposed by psychology has not always been positive nor has it engendered amiable conversation. Jung (1971) takes a more positive approach to religion when compared to Freud. However, in America, the interest in the psychology of religion has been a small subcategory of the development of scientific psychology since the early 20th century (Hood, 1999).

As Hood (1999) pointed out, the study of religion by psychology has not been a collective undertaking. Academically, the scientific study of religion by psychology is attributed to G. Stanley Hall who under William James' tutelage at Harvard received a Ph.D. in philosophy, the first doctorate awarded in psychology in America (Wulff, 1997). Hall, noted for advocating biological determinates of religion, posited that "the religious development of the individual. . . follows the religious development of the species" (Wulff, 1997, p. 58). Under Hall, psychology abandoned its broad philosophical roots and adopted the modern scientific paradigm. With this change in methodology, the focus of investigation switched from theological interpretations and religious praxis to psychological explanation of religious experience.

Hall, who began his education in theology, felt that studying religion scientifically would accomplish at least two goals: 1) assist in religion being taken seriously as essential to the development of an inner life, and 2) promote

contemporary theological interpretation that would be more appropriate to modern culture (Wulff, 1997). Much like Tillich, Hall felt that the rise of industrialization in the culture had served as an alienating force in moral development both for individuals and for the culture at large. While Tillich expounded a theological and existential solution to the dilemma, Hall felt that scientific validation of religion would prove religion's irreplaceable function in the development of a religious inner life. Hall was concerned about moral and ethical decline and believed that religion could be restructured from scientific discovery to meet the moral needs of modern society.

James Leuba and Edwin Starbuck were two of Hall's students who have had a profound influence on the development of the scientific study of religion in psychology in what came to be known as "The Clark School" (Wulff, 1997). A major innovation of the Clark School was the use of questionnaires. Both Leuba and Starbuck began researching religious conversion using self-report questionnaires. As students of Hall's, both Starbuck and Leuba had interest in uncovering the physiological foundation of religious experience; however, it was Leuba (1925) who wrote *The Psychology of Religious Mysticism*, which spelled out his belief that mystical experience was best explained physiologically (Hood, 1996). Similar to Freud's idea that religious beliefs are based on controlling primitive wishes, Leuba maintained that the mystics' beliefs provided the framework of interpretation. Leuba believed that the mystics experiences were not encounters with God, but were best

explained scientifically as physiological processes (Hood, 1996). Leuba, like Freud, was fundamentally unsympathetic to religion and sought reductionistic explanations of religious content, which were significant of the rise of spirituality and religion being interpreted pathologically.

William James took a different approach to religious phenomenon than "The Clark School." James opted for an examination of personal documents that related religious experiences. Instead of viewing religion as "causing perversions" in the lives of those he observed, he found that religious involvement and beliefs were largely dictated by characterological needs. James believed that the significance of religion lay within the experience of an individual and that the subconscious was the doorway through which the ultimately transforming experiences that we call "mystical" appear to come--transient, passive, states from which the intellect itself may be derived.

James (1982) noted four qualities in mystical experiences. The first of these is that mystical experiences are ineffable. Language cannot adequately capture them. This inexpressible quality leads mystics frequently to employ contradictory metaphorical language, such as a "teeming desert" or a "whispering silence," in an effort to describe experience that is beyond description and to capture the feeling of transcendence elicited by such experiences. These images are used to attempt to assist the uninitiated to understand. James also noted that mystical experiences impart knowledge previously unknown--what James refers to as "noesis." The

recipient experiences being caught up in the experience and is a passive vessel or bearer of the new knowledge. There is a sense, in mystical literary tradition, that God chooses the mystic rather than the mystic choosing God (e.g., St. Paul, St. John of the Cross, St. Teresa of Avila, Juliana of Norwich, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Augustine, etc.). Finally, James writes, mystical experiences are characterized by their transience. Lasting only minutes, they leave their recipient longing to return again and again to the mystic state.

James asserted that consciousness did not exist as an independent entity, but as a function of particular experiences. Consciousness and object had to be considered in the same functional complex. For him, pragmatism solved the problem. In 1907, James maintained that truth claims could be evaluated by examining the moral and aesthetic outcome instead of evaluating the truth or falsity of the primary definition. As outlined by James, different beliefs that led to common and consensually validated ways of acceptable social behavior were indeed "true."

James Pratt, a student of William James, detailed conversion experiences that developed over time. These conversion experiences were typically not as dramatic as those of interest to James, Leuba, and Starbuck. In fact, Pratt felt that many conversion experiences developed over time by persons who were more intellectually inclined (Hood, 1996). Pratt felt that much of the interpretation of conversion was based on the examination of sudden transformation within a largely Protestant Christian framework (Hood, 1996). Pratt, like James, was sympathetic to religion,

which was evidenced in his many books. Most notable was Pratt's (1920) *The Religious Consciousness*, which included more non-Christian writing from around the world and more diverse religious phenomena (Wulff, 1997). He felt that James' work in *Varieties* had unintentionally perpetuated a fallacy that the dramatic "definite crisis" conversion experiences were the most common (Wulff, 1997, p. 307). In fact, Pratt outlines two types of mystical experiences, mild and extreme, which he felt were significantly different forms of conversion.

Unlike Freud, Maslow (1968, 1970) did not think of religion as neurosis and he regarded many of our basic tendencies as predominantly healthy and benign. He emphatically affirms the human capacity for constructive growth, honesty, kindness, generosity and love. Maslow felt that these instincts often are weak fragments, easily overwhelmed by more powerful forces of learning and culture. He argued that the supposedly supernatural revelations claimed by prophets and seers were probably nothing more nor less than peak experiences, the potential for which is in every human being. For Maslow (1970), persons who reach self-actualization often have enjoyed deep religious experiences even though they often are not religious in any formal sense. In fact, Maslow believed that the "essential core-religious experience may be embedded in either a theistic, supernatural context or a non-theistic context" (1970, p. 28). Maslow was strongly committed to the view that spirituality is a human phenomenon and that it is more basic than, prior to, and different from traditional expressions of religiosity. This was not to say that traditional religion

cannot provide sustenance to spirituality, but does indicate that spirituality is not the monopoly of institutional religion. This concept follows Stace who felt that mystical experience are "fundamentally identical at the purely experiential level and that only the report of this experience varies" (Hood, 1977). For Maslow, these experiences belong to humanity and are not the exclusive possession of organized religion or traditionally religious persons. In fact, the trend of spirituality growing up outside of traditional, organized religion was noted by Fromm when he said, "it is not true that we have to give up the concern for the soul if we do not accept the tenets of religion" (1950, p. 9).

Carl Jung, a contemporary of Freud, agreed with Freud's structural model and concluded that innate physiological urges or instincts, motivate human life (Jung, 1971). He also incorporated aspects of Freud's topographical model of the conscious, preconscious, and unconscious into his own analytical theory. One major difference from Freud is Jung's idea that the unconscious is relatively autonomous. For Freud, the unconscious was part of the psyche that includes material not within one's awareness and that cannot be readily brought to mind. For Jung, the messages and wishes emanating from the unconscious are events that happen to us, not actions of our own. Some people hear their unconscious as a voice within themselves and actually carry on a conversation with it, "as if a dialogue were taking place between two human beings with equal rights, each of whom gives the other credit for a valid

argument" (Jung 1971, p. 297). A substantial part of the unconscious is collective, and contain predispositions and guidelines inherited from past generations.

Jung takes a more positive approach to religion when compared to Freud. Like Frankl (1963), Jung felt that the breakdown in Western culture was a result of a loss of spiritual sensitivity. While Frankl felt that spiritual distress and conflict were the root of clinical pathologies, Jung felt that society had "stripped all things of their mystery and numinosity; nothing is holy any longer" (1964, p. 84). He was, however, highly critical of religions that emphasize blind faith and minimize the importance of reason. For Jung, such devaluation of thinking is merely another form of pathological one-sidedness. He postulates the existence of a God archetype, capable of triggering intense religious feelings. Jung attributes contradictory aspects even to God, including kindness and cruelty, and treats religious myths as symbolic representations of the human unconscious. Unlike Freud, Jung's idea of the unconscious includes wellsprings of creativity and sources of guidance that enable us to suggest solutions when the conscious mind becomes hopelessly bogged down.

Empirical Studies

The positive view of religion among psychologists has continued to give rise to research. Much of the research continues to be concerned with scientific measurement; unless ones employs positivistic and reductionistic methodology to religious claims, results are still considered largely "unscientific" (Hood, 2000).

European psychology has not been so concerned with maintaining its reputation as a natural science (Hood, 2000). However, some interest in exploring religious experience outside of positivistic methodology has taken root in American psychology.

One of the early important works was by Laski who became interested in the question of how common were ecstatic experiences in the general public (Laski, 1961, p. 1). A novelist, Laski employed the use of an ecstatic experience to transport her central female character from present to past time. Using a semi-structured interview, Laski sought to find out "what ecstasy felt like" to her 60 respondents, mostly friends and acquaintances. In her book *Ecstasy* (1961), Laski thoughtfully outlines her definition of ecstasy and decided to ask about "transcendent" ecstasy. She did not feel that her choice of the adjective effected the answers, although she noted one disadvantage: embarrassment. Although Laski did not offer an explanation, her willingness to note it indicates her thoroughness.

From the semi-structured interview, Laski would ask her initial question; "Do you know a sensation of transcendent ecstasy?" If she was asked to define or explain what she meant by transcendent ecstasy, Laski replied "Take it to mean whatever you think it means." If the respondent answered in the affirmative, she continued with eight other questions, which were driven by her own curiosity and assumptions. Laski explained that she believed transcendent ecstasy also was referred to as "mystical experience, cosmic consciousness, soul-life, infused contemplation,

timeless moments [and/or] the oceanic feeling, etc." (p. 5, footnote 1). In an attempt to replicate her initial findings, Laski reworded her initial question to "Have you ever had a feeling of unearthly ecstasy?" and mailed the questionnaire to 100 homes in a working-class section of London, which yielded only eleven returns with one positive response to the initial question. Untrained in the social sciences, Laski did not comprehend that employing a different methodology would alter the data collected (Hood, et al., 1996). Instead, Laski used literary and religious resources from published texts that were similar to the reports from her interviews.

Laski used the words of her participants to categorize their experiences. She identifies two kinds of ecstatic experiences, which she names withdrawal and intensity experiences. Laski concentrated on intensity experiences noting that they could not be voluntarily induced and are typically rare. Three "gradations" of the intensity of experience were outlined: 1) "adamic ecstasies, characterized by feelings of purification and renewal, of life and the world transformed and of loving-kindness to all," 2) "feelings of knowledge gained, often believed to have been communicated from someone or somewhere else; . . . called knowledge or knowledge-contact ecstasies," and 3) "feelings of union with someone or something else. . . called union ecstasies" (p. 369-370). Intensity experiences have a wide variety of triggers that include people, types of objects, events, and ideas. Duration of the experience is momentary. Although ecstatic experiences are enjoyable, they are valued for their effective results that include "improved mental organization, whether this takes the

form of replacing uneasiness and dissatisfaction with ease and satisfaction, or of appearing to confirm a sought belief, or of inspiring to moral action or of enabling the expression of a new mental creation" (p. 371). Laski noted experiences that she described as being the obverse of ecstatic ones that she termed "desolations," which she felt were not uncommon in persons inclined toward ecstatic experiences. For Laski, transcendent ecstasy was not an experience of God but an experience of human joy that did not require religious sanctioning for validation.

Paffard in his book *Inglorious Wordsworths* (1973) described his investigation of mystical experience among grammar-school sixth-form pupils and university students. He provided a passage from W. H. Hudson's autobiography *Far Away and Long Ago* in which Hudson described occasional "nature-mystical or transcendental moments" and what he "felt" like at those times and asked the students to write about their own experiences that are similar to the one provided. In addition, respondents were asked twenty-three questions regarding age, sex, number of siblings, location of residence, religious affiliation, creative art endeavors, sociability, illnesses, and reading practices. Following the ninth question the passage was presented with the question "Does this remind you of anything you have ever felt? If you have ever had an experience which you feel is *in any way similar* to the ones the writer of this passage is describing, please try to write about it on the blank page overleaf. . ." (pp. 249-251). After writing their experiences, they were asked to

complete the remainder of the questionnaire, which included questions about their experience(s).

Paffard's respondents, like Laski's, indicated the "inadequacy of language" to convey their experiences. Generally, Paffard found that "transcendental experiences" occurred most frequently between the ages of eleven or twelve and sixteen or seventeen. Respondents indicated that the majority (67%) occurred when the person was alone and fully eighty-percent of the respondents reported being in nature when they had transcendental experiences. The most common word that the respondents endorsed that characterized their experiences was "awesome." Participants were invited to write additional comments about their experiences and five or more participants generated the following words: "'powerful', 'wonderful', 'beautiful', 'peaceful', and 'exhilarating'"(p. 128).

Glock and Stark's (1973) taxonomy outlined in their book *Religion and Society in Tension* is used by many researchers (for example, Hay and Morisy, 1978, and Hay 1979). Glock and Stark used responses from three thousand Protestants and Catholics located in Northern California who returned a questionnaire they received via the mail. Glock and Stark maintained historical precedence (citing both James and Leuba) that an "essential element characterizing religious experience, and distinguishing it from all other human experience, is *some sense of contact with a supernatural agency*" (p. 41, emphasis in text). Much research continues to display

this a priori assumption (see Paloutzian and Ellison, 1982; Paloutzian and Kirkpatrick, 1995 as examples).

Qualitative methods are being more frequently considered among researchers who employ quantitative methodologies. Hood (1973) used a semi-structured interview to explore the experience of transcendence to have more direct access to experience. Participants were identified from the top 25 extreme scores for Extrinsic and Intrinsic orientation on Allport's Religious Orientation Scale (ROI). The 41 interviews were coded using five operational categories identified from Stace's conceptualizations of introvertive mystical experience: ego quality, noetic quality, communicable quality, affective quality and religious quality. The participants were asked to describe personally significant experiences in detail. The interviews were largely non-directive; however, if the participant failed to provide information that fit all five of the coding categories the interviewer would ask more directive questions to gain information for the missing categories. Persons who were identified by the ROI as intrinsically oriented reported transcendent experiences more frequently than persons who were classified as extrinsically oriented. For the Intrinsically oriented persons (n=19), transcendent experiences were most frequently described as ineffable (words could not express the experience), and emotionally positive (joyful, peaceful, etc.). Extrinsically oriented persons also identified their transcendent experiences as affectively positive (n=12). The next highest of Stace's categories described by the Intrinsic persons (n=18) was an experience of awe and reverence. The next most

reported experience (n=17) concerned noetic experiences involving "insightful knowledge." The lowest number (n=14), reported a loss of a sense of self.

Hood and Hall (1980) explored gender differences of erotic and mystical experiences in a study using self-report and forced-choice word selection, since erotic language and experiences are often used in mystical reports (see Laski 1968, St. Teresa of Avila, Julian of Norwich, etc.) Mallory studied erotic experiences during prayer among contemporary Discalced Carmelites (Hood and Hall, 1980, p. 197). From the literature, Hood and Hall assume that male and female descriptions of erotic and mystical experiences will be different; mainly that female experience will use receptive imagery and language and that male descriptions will use more agentive metaphors. Their results indicated their hypotheses were partially predictive; females did use more receptive language for the erotic and mystical experiences they reported. Males, on the other hand, use agentive imagery for erotic descriptions; however, they also tended to use more neutral language when describing mystical experiences. Hood and Hall suggest that the primarily male metaphors and imagery for God in Western religious traditions (largely Christian) created sexual and erotic concerns for men, which could explain their use of neutral words in mystical descriptions.

Nursing has produced an important literature related to spirituality, and spiritual distress, which is a current diagnosis in the DSM-IV nosology. Burkhardt (1989) argued for a more holistic view of persons by health care providers, noted the

concepts of spirit and spirituality varied with different authors. Burkhardt further argued that spirituality does not lend itself to "natural science" measurement and that "learning to listen for indications of significant relationship and experience of connection" would be the direction nursing should explore to provide holistic care. Barker (1989) and Burkhardt (1991) have studied spirituality among Appalachian women who described spirituality as foundational to the way they made meaning in their lives. The Appalachian women described their experiences in terms of feeling connected to others, nature, God and engendering feeling of self-reliance. Travelbee (1971) proposed that "illness and suffering" had spiritual significance as well as having emotional and physical components (p. 61). Trice (1990) examined the meaningful life experiences of the elderly in her phenomenological nursing study and her results suggest a connection between spirituality and meaning in life. Smucker (1993) provided a phenomenological description of spiritual distress. Her work found that adults in the general population were concerned about the meaning of life and their beliefs about death and that their disruption experiences (such as a diagnoses of terminal illness, myocardial infarction, etc.) were often perceived as spiritual and/or existential conflict that contained a potential for growth (p. 118). Smucker found that time was the background against which experiences of spiritual distress emerged. The experience of spiritual distress was "biphasic," by which is meant the first phase termed "breaking the web" was described by participants when

"an event broke the continuity of life" (p.v). The second phase, termed "rebuilding the web," indicating that participants had found meaning in such experiences.

Spirituality

Scholars confirm that we are in the midst of an unprecedented period of spiritual activity and concern. According to Harvey Cox (1995) Pentecostalism has increased significantly and. Martin Marty (1991) has published a series of volumes documenting the widespread renewal of fundamentalism. Timothy Miller (1995) has released the most recent evaluation of America's new alternative religions, a scholarly work to examine the role of cults and sects in American culture. Miller examines such notables as People's Temple and the Branch Davidians of Waco, Texas fame. In addition, he explores other non-mainstream religious groups, showing that what was originally thought to be a passing fad of the 1960s has matured into a collection of altogether new and well-secured faith communities.

Natural scientists have also shown renewed interest in spirituality. The Boston Theological Institute, a consortium of divinity schools in the New England area, has launched the Center for Faith and Science Exchange, which invites distinguished scientists to speak on religious themes. This center is part of a much larger network of institutes and organizations interested in dialogue between science and religion. At least 40 medical schools in the United States have "spirituality" as a required component of their curriculum (Ziegler, 1998; Puchalski & Larson, 1998).

The relationship between religion and spirituality is not defined, and definitions of spirituality are as plentiful as those found in religion. While advocates of an affiliation between religion and science are growing (Koenig & Larson, 1998; Ellis et al., 1999; Hatch, et al., 1998; Sulmasy, 1999), not everyone in the medical and/or scientific community is excited about such an alliance. Discontent with the alliance takes the form of raising many methodological issues regarding research on this topic in addition to ethical issues regarding practice (Sloan, et al., 1999). Finally, the topic becomes particularly confused when unexplicated theological presuppositions guide the inquiry.

The use of the word spirituality appears to be taking place outside of formalized religion (Taylor, 1999), and within this context, spirituality is used both synonymously with religion and as its opposite. The lack of a clear definition for spirituality continues to plague attempts to investigate this phenomenon scientifically (Moberg, 1971, 1979; Zinnbauer, et al., 1997) and Christian ideas and concepts remain influential. One of the most salient features regarding a psychological consideration of spirituality is a decided lack of consensus about what it means. In fact, a definition of spirituality can be elicited from different theological positions, but which one is psychology to use?

What does spirituality mean? Attempts to generate a clear definition have usually been developed within the Cartesian tradition. For example, if we first consider the word "spirit," we find that Webster's Ninth Collegiate Dictionary (1984)

says, "an animating or vital principle held to give life to physical organisms," a term which originated from the Latin *spiritus*, literally meaning breath. In Greek, *psyche* and *pneuma*, refer to soul and spirit, respectively. In its more general use *psyche* means soul, self, and mind (Webster, 1984). Developing out of Pythagorus and Plato was a belief that the intellect made the soul (*psyche*) divine and gave it the power to know true, unchanging reality (Armstrong, 1964). From the Septuagint version of the Hebrew scriptures we find: "And God formed the man of dust of the earth, and breathed up his face the breath of life, and the man *became a living soul*" (Genesis 2:7, emphasis mine). Aristotle offered the concept of *pneuma* as a *life-giving* aspect that allowed the soul to act on the body (Aristotle, 1976, emphasis mine). In Hebrew, *ruah* broadly meaning breath or spirit is used differently; God breathed into *adam* the breath of life: "Then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being" (Genesis 2:7).

What is important to note here is that God creates a "living being," not a dual body and spirit. "God's breath animates the dust and it becomes a ...psycho-physical self" (Metzger & Murphy, 1991). The meaning in Hebrew is singular and not divided into separate body and soul. Plato and Pythagorus, however, provide a dualistic conceptualization and since early Christian writings and later canonized scriptures (New Testament) were largely written in Greek, they tend to confirm a dualistic understanding of human beings within Christianity. Later biblical translations,

beginning with Jerome's Latin Vulgate as well as subsequent English language versions, adopted the Greek dualistic categories largely based on the Septuagint (LXX) and much of Christian theology and its subsequent conceptualization of spirit developed out of Greek philosophy and theology (Armstrong and Markus, 1960). This understanding provides a clear predecessor to the Cartesian model and indicates some of the difficulties in clarifying the more general concept of spirituality, especially if religious assumptions serve as the starting point for investigation.

The National Interfaith Coalition on Aging (1975) approached the topic of spirituality by way of defining spiritual well being: "Spiritual Well-Being is the affirmation of life in a relationship with God, self, community and environment that nurtures and celebrates wholeness." The attempt to side step the issue of spirituality, by talking about spiritual well-being, is problematic. Defining spirituality would seem to be essential before issues of well-being can be addressed. The trend to date is that theorists use their own understandings of spirituality without explication. Moberg's (1971) comprehensive work regarding spirituality defined the concept of spiritual "as the source of life, enabling and sustaining values in society, providing the philosophical orientation to all of life, and touching every aspect of human conduct" (p. 3). Dualistic assumptions are evident in the language "*source* of life," and as something that independently "sustains values." A deeper problem is that the definition is vague and allows beliefs and tacit theological assumptions to be applied.

In 1998, the National Institute for HealthCare (Scientific Research on Spirituality and Health: A Consensus Report) provided criteria for assessing spirituality and religion with attendant definition limits. The NIH defined religion and spirituality as separate, but related, concepts or domains. The criterion for spirituality was:

- A. The feelings, thoughts, experiences, and behaviors that arise from a search for the sacred. The term 'search' refers to attempts to identify, articulate, maintain, or transform. The term 'sacred' refers to a divine being or Ultimate Reality or Ultimate Truth as perceived by the individual (p. 21).

The Criterion for Religion/Religiousness was:

- B. The feelings, thoughts, experiences, and behaviors that arise from a search for the sacred. . .and/or. . .A search or quest for non-sacred goals (such as identity, belongingness, meaning, health, or wellness) in a context that has as its primary goal the facilitation of (A)...and...The means and methods (e.g., rituals or prescribed behaviors) of the search that receive validation and support from within an identifiable group of people (p. 21).

The NIH report suggested that spirituality is primarily an outgrowth of religion/religiousness and that there is an overlap between the two concepts. What seems somewhat surprising is the suggestion that the meaning of religion/religiousness encapsulates a search for non-sacred goals such as “identity, belongingness, meaning, health, or wellness.” The panel does caution that while spirituality and religion are related to one another, they are not the same phenomena. Interestingly, they further suggest that spirituality **should not** be examined outside the confines of religion/religiousness.

This move by the panel appears to be a reaction to the current trend that seeks to "drive a wedge between spirituality and religion and depreciate or dismiss religion in the process" (Boyd, 1994, p. 83). The NIH definitions of spirituality and religion begin with predetermined ideas about what both "should be" and design instruments according to religious beliefs utilizing dualistic conceptions that guide the development of the instruments and investigation of spirituality. Again, psychology finds itself in the untenable position of having to decide theological "truth." If indeed we do define what we see by our expectations, then the creation of a definition prior to the investigation of the phenomenon guides what will be found.

Zinnbauer et al. (1997), explored conceptions of religiousness and spirituality of contemporary persons employing questionnaires and a description written by the individual. These instruments were handed out to church and New Age groups after worship services and meetings, given to community mental health agency employees, and distributed for extra credit in an introductory psychology class. The sample was predominately white (95%), female (68%), married (39%), median income was \$50,000 - \$64,000, and an education level of some college. Participants were asked to write their own descriptions of religiousness and spirituality, and these definitions were coded on the basis of the following dimensions: (1) the nature of the sacred and (2) content categories.

Over all there was a significant difference in content descriptions of religiousness and spirituality for the entire sample. Descriptions of spirituality

included references to "connection or relationship with a Higher power of some kind, belief or faith in a Higher power of some kind, or integrating one's values and beliefs with one's behavior in daily life" (p. 557). While religiousness also was described as having belief or faith in a Higher Power or integrating one's values and beliefs with one's behavior in daily life, descriptions included activities of organized religion, such as worship attendance rituals, and commitment to prescribed theological beliefs and dogmas. In general, definitions of spirituality were more focused on connection or a relationship to a Higher Power.

Correlational analyses of self-report spiritual/religious and psychosocial measures found a positive relationship between spirituality and level of education, income, frequency of prayer, New Age beliefs and practices, spiritual growth groups, mystical experiences, and experiences of being hurt by clergy. Persons who considered themselves spiritual and not religious reported that religiousness and spirituality were different and not overlapping concepts. A negative correlation was found between spirituality and self-righteousness, individual competitiveness, and spirituality as constricted and constrained. Religiousness, on the other hand, was positively correlated with church attendance, frequency of prayer, parent's religious attendance, intrinsic religiousness, religious orthodoxy, right-wing authoritarianism, and self-righteousness. Religiousness was negatively related to independence from others and New Age beliefs and practices.

What seems to be needed in psychology instead of an a priori definition of spirituality is a rigorous, empirical investigation of the experience of contemporary persons with regard to spiritual issues. Knowledge of the sociobiology and biological determinates of religion are "why" and "how" inquiries, without the foundation of "what" (Smith, 1979). We see the world as *we* are; extant transcendent truth is not "out there" to be uncovered and naming is always an interpretative task. Both our choice of the questions we ask and the very specific hypotheses we construct are influenced by where we stand: knowledge and consciousness are not separate. In our examination of spirituality, therefore, the first question must be one of *what--*to explore what the meaning of what spiritual experience is in the everyday lives of participants.

To explore the meaning of spiritual experiences in the everyday lives of contemporary people, an appropriate methodology is needed. Using the phenomenological method, participants will be interviewed about spiritual experiences in detail. These interviews will be transcribed and a research group looking for themes in their experiences using hermeneutical analysis. Using the words of the participants the results will be compiled and formed into a gestalt figure to represent their experiences. The typed interviews and the gestalt representation will be sent to participants allowing them to correct any part of the interview that was misunderstood in transcription, and asking them to consider if indeed the structure

fits their spiritual experiences. In the next section, the phenomenological method will be described.

CHAPTER II

METHOD

We do not see the world as it is we see the world as we are.
(The Talmud)

One of the key aspects to understanding phenomenological methodology concerns the importance of perspective. Humans are embedded in their cultures and in history; they think, construe, misunderstand, interpret, and reflect on the meanings they produce and have produced. At least since Heisenberg's assertion in 1927 of the uncertainty principle in scientific investigation, and Kuhn's (1962/1996) subsequent work on scientific paradigms, it has been clear that methods of scientific inquiry cannot be regarded as independent of the general theories, specific hypotheses, and other background assumptions serving to guide research. Our assumptions about computers, questionnaires, and other scientific "instruments" mold our beliefs about the veracity of historical archives. The problems are evident when we talk about the complexity of studying human beings, and our assumptions about human nature become so accepted (invisible) that we lose sight of the ideas against which aspects of the world come into view. Our conceptual limitations remain invisible until challenges to our beliefs force these ideas into reflective awareness (Gadamer, 1976).

For the phenomenologist, the world and the individual define a patterned whole, or gestalt. To examine the world or the individual as if separate from one another is to miss the meaning of human existence and experience. "The world is what we perceive" (Merleau-Ponty, p. xvi). Knowledge of ourselves and the world, and what is "true," are all based on our experience:

The whole universe of science is built upon the world as directly experienced, and if we want to subject science itself to rigorous scrutiny and arrive at a precise assessment of its meaning and scope, we must begin by reawakening the basic experience of the world of which science is the second-order expression...to return to things themselves is to return to that world which precedes knowledge, of which knowledge always *speaks*, and in relation to which every scientific schematization is an abstract and derivative sign-language, as is geography in relation to the countryside in which we have learnt beforehand what a forest, a prairie or a river is (Merleau-Ponty, p. viii-ix).

Our pre-knowledge is made known in our meanings. For science, the world becomes an object of investigation as if separate from perception. But this cannot be so; the world is known to us only through consciousness, and all knowledge comes from the experience of some particular thing.

Participants

Colaizzi (1978) described criteria for selecting participants in phenomenological research; "experience with the investigated topic and articulateness suffice..." (p. 58). The natural science method seeks an acceptable number of participants to meet statistical requirements for the purpose of generalizability from

sample to the population. In contrast, phenomenological research requires a reasonable number of participants "to generate a full range of variation in the set of descriptions to be used for analyzing a phenomenon" (Polkinghorne, 1989, p. 48).

Data Collection

Where and how are data to be collected for the study of experience? A wide variety of methods have been developed for this purpose, such as narratives written in response to an interviewer's question (Giorgi, 1989; Fischer, 1989), analysis of a variety of literary works (Halling 1979), and individual interviews conducted over the telephone (Fischer & Wertz, 1979). Pollio, Henley, and Thompson (1997), however, suggest that the traditional one-on-one dialogic interview is the most effective procedure for obtaining explicit and orderly experience descriptions:

Since experience is personal, the problem of other minds can be bridged only with the help of some specific other whose experiences are at issue. The method, or path, that seems natural to attain a proper description of human experience is that of dialogue in which one member of the dialogic pair, normally called the investigator, assumes a respectful position vis-à-vis the real expert, the subject... (p. 29).

Bracketing

Bracketing is a process of phenomenological interviewing designed to assist the researcher/interviewer in increasing an awareness of his or her pre-existing assumptions so as to ensure that the descriptions of experience given in the dialogic interview are not heavily guided by the researcher's own preconceptions and biases

(Polkinghorne, 1989). Initially, the researcher may reflect on his or her own experience (Colaizzi, 1973) or speak with a member or members of the research team about his or her own experiences with the phenomenon under study (Fischer & Wertz, 1979). A more comprehensive procedure is the bracketing interview, in which the investigator is interviewed about his or her experience of the research topic. A research group then analyzes the text of the interview in order to provide themes describing the investigator's experience of the phenomenon.

Interpretive Analysis

Phenomenological research is designed to explore human experience. In going about this research, phenomenological researchers have provided process information about data analysis (Fischer, W. F., 1989; Colaizzi, 1978; Giorgi, 1975a, 1975b; van Kaam, 1969). The nature of phenomenological research is designed to allow the meaning structure of some participant's experience to emerge. Because interpretation inevitably involves reference to that which is already known, understanding operates in a circular, dialectical fashion. Consider the meaning of a sentence, for example. The sentence derives its meaning from the individual words it comprises, but our interpretation of word meanings within a sentence is also governed by relations within the sentence and by the meaning of the sentence as a whole. Consequently, interpretation occurs within a circle in which parts are always interpreted within some understanding of the whole, which in turn is understood by

coming to re-understand constituent parts and so on in a continuing dialectical pattern.

The aspect of hermeneutic interpretation suggests that a "fact" does not stand on its own, independent from its context or its interpreter, but of necessity is partially constituted by them. A "fact" can be evaluated only in relation to the larger structure of a theory or argument of which it is a part. At the same time, this larger structure depends on its individual parts as well as on other related information. In explicating the circle of understanding, we move back and forth between part and whole (Bleicher, 1980); in analyzing a sentence, an interview, or a series of interviews.

Polkinghorne (1989) suggests that interview texts (referred to as protocols) can be broken down into manageable units, which can be determined by (a) a change in theme (Giorgi, 1975a,b), (b) points in the text where a change in speaker provides a automatic break in the flow, or (c) where there is a disconnection in meaning units. The research group provides a richness of contexts to the interpretative endeavor, and discussion by group members at these stopping points opens the text to richer possibilities of understanding. Disagreement about themes and meanings are discussed until a consensus is reached or when an additional aspect of the text supports one or another interpretation (Pollio, et al., 1997). Using the participant's own words is essential to understanding and interpretation of the experience of the participant, and helps guard against inevitable biases (Gadamer, 1976) of the interviewer/researcher and the group. By using the participants' own experience-near

words, specialized language and abstractions that are tied to theories are avoided (Pollio et al., 1997).

Smaller themes are examined in each protocol and summarized. Pollio, et al. (1997) refers to this process as "idiographic interpretation," which makes a part to whole comparison; the episodic meanings (parts) are examined in light of other meaning units and then to the totality of the interview (whole). Following this, meaning units are combined into categories that best describe participant experiences across all protocols. Each participant's experiences must be represented in each preliminary set of themes. Once preliminary theme sets have been created, they are presented to the research group for assistance in combining themes into a more concise arrangement, again working to achieve the smallest number of units capable of conveying the experiences of all participants. This process of aggregation is what Pollio et al. (1997) refers to as "nomothetic interpretation."

The goal of the complete analysis is to determine features of structural relationships and ascertain the gestalt--identifying figural aspects of experience against their relevant ground or grounds (Colaizzi, 1978; Polkinghorne, 1989; Pollio, et al., 1997). Results can be presented in textual descriptions and/or in diagrammatic form. Textual explication of themes is meant to describe relevant experience among the entire group and diagrams are used to represent structural relationships between themes. Attempts to describe and explicate move us toward an understanding of shared experience by describing what is common in participant experiences.

Procedures Used in the Present Study

The present study was undertaken to examine spiritual experience in the lives of contemporary persons.

Participants

All participants in the study were volunteers. Through word of mouth about the topic of this research, persons ranging in ages from 15 – 62 offered to participate by sharing their experiences. Participants who were minors, brought their parents to the interview, and procedures were explained giving both parent and child a chance to ask questions. A total of twelve persons was interviewed, after informed consent (Appendix A) was discussed and the proper paperwork signed. All tapes and paperwork were given a participant number to protect confidentiality. After each interview, a sheet asking demographic questions (Appendix D) was given to the participants. Ethical guidelines set forth by the American Psychological Association were employed in the treatment of participants.

There were twelve participants between the ages of 15 and 62 ($M=46$), comprised of eight females and four males (see Table A-1). All participants identified themselves as Caucasian. This group of participants was well-educated with a range between high school and the doctoral level ($M=18.1$ years).

In terms of religious affiliation, two participants did not consider themselves religious and were not affiliated with any formal religious community. One participant identified herself as Wiccan, three as Unitarian Universalist, two as Episcopalian, one as a non-denominational Christian, and three as Jewish. Eight of the twelve participants had changed religious affiliation since childhood. Two had been Roman Catholic, one Episcopalian, three Southern Baptist, one Methodist, and one Lutheran (Missouri Synod). The two participants who did not consider themselves religious and did not attend religious services noted they had been affiliated with a religious community in their childhood and had left when they had become an adult. Of the ten participants who identified current participation in a religious community, four identified their theology as liberal, five as moderate, and one as conservative.

As noted, two participants do not attend any kind of worship service identified with institutional religion. Ten participants identified themselves as attending worship on a regular basis: six persons attend 1-5 times monthly, one person attends 6-10 times monthly, two persons attend 7-15 times monthly, and one person attends over 20 times monthly. All twelve participants reported participating in devotional practices and were asked to indicate all that pertained to their practices. The list included: scripture reading (5), meditation (8), time in nature (7), prayer (12), self-improvement (6), and Habitat for Humanity, hunger project, etc. (5). A blank section was included for participants to include other devotional practices not listed.

Participants indicated Native American sweat lodge, dance, and shamanic practices, dancing and chanting, reading, writing, and group study, financial contributions to Habitat for Humanity, music, art and conversation, and study and work within their religious community.

Bracketing

To understand my own “inescapable prejudices” (Gadamer, 1976) concerning the topic of spiritual experience, I was interviewed by a member of the existential-phenomenological research group using the question designed for use with participants. The bracketing interview was then transcribed, and then taken to the research group to be thematized. This process allowed me, the researcher, to become more sensitized to any assumptions and/or preconceptions that might impede my ability to let participants speak in their own voice about their own unique experiences.

From my bracketing interview, I learned that I needed to be aware when participants described spiritual experiences that occurred in nature. Spirituality was an embodied and sensual experience for me described in the smell of the earth, the aroma of rain, grass, and flowering plants in the spring, and the fatness of earthworms. These experiences elicited awareness concerning newness of life. Many of my experiences were expressed in feelings of connection: to the earth, to others, and something beyond me. Ritual also was important to my experience: in worship and in nature. In addition, connection was experienced as independent of time and

space, with an inner awareness of unbroken or fluid connection to everything, although I do not continuously live in the midst of the awareness. My bracketing interview (Appendix B) combined with an examination of my experience of spirituality in the research group, was very instrumental in heightening my awareness of my own ideas. This new awareness helped me to avoid leading questions that mirrored my own experiences when I spoke with each participant.

Phenomenological Interviews with Participants

The next step was to undertake open-ended, in-depth phenomenological interviews with each participant. The interviews opened with simple instructions: “Think about some times when you have felt spiritual or been aware of being spiritual and describe them in as much detail as possible.” Participants were free to choose the specific experiences to be described. Once a narrative account was begun, my job was to follow the experience and ask clarifying questions for more detail so as to increase my understanding of the phenomenon. Leading questions were avoided, as were definitions of spiritual or spirituality, although participants wanted me to provide such definitions for them. Most interviews lasted between 60 and 90 minutes and were conducted in a location of a participant’s choice to insure privacy and comfort.

Interpretative Process

After each interview was completed, audio tapes were transcribed with all identifying information deleted, except for age and gender. Selected protocols were brought to the research group and analyzed using the phenomenological/hermeneutical method (see Pollio, Henley, and Thompson, 1997) to allow figural motifs to emerge. Using the words of the participants, meaning themes were proposed by the group within the context of each narrative as a whole. The research group specifically reviewed six of the twelve interviews, leaving six protocols to be analyzed by the researcher alone. Prior to presentation, each member of the interpretative group was asked to sign a confidentiality agreement in which they agreed to protect the anonymity of the participant. After each transcribed protocol was analyzed, themes were combined into the smallest number possible to encompass all twelve interviews. The "structure" of spiritual experience was found to be present in all of the different descriptions of the phenomenon. For this reason, participants' own words were used to identify themes.

The point to all of these procedures is to preserve the unique meaning of spirituality for each person while attempting, simultaneously, to discover themes held in common across the experiences of the twelve participants interviewed. Attention was given to patterns and connections across different themes in an effort to illuminate the overall structure of spiritual experience. A graphic representation was

assembled to portray this overall structure of spiritual experiences described by the participants.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

Existence is beyond the power of words to define: terms may be used but none of them is absolute. (Laotzu The Way of Life)

The purpose of this study was to describe phenomenologically the experiential meaning of spiritual experience in the everyday lives of participants. Spiritual experiences described by participants were situated in realms of human experience involving other people, the world around them, their bodies, and time (Van Den Burg 1972; Pollio, Henley, and Thompson, 1997). A summary of the contexts is presented in Appendix A-2. Each participant described between three and seven situations in which they were aware of being spiritual or felt spiritual.

Situational Contexts

Contexts were examined because the "where" of participant experiences are important to understanding the phenomenon of spiritual experience. Attempts to categorize the situations was burdensome until the categories of others, body, time and world were examined. Spiritual experiences take place in the realm of everyday human experience.

Experiences Involving Other People

Most contexts described by participants were relational. Three persons spoke of being part of the larger (Jewish) community that gave them a sense of connection from which spiritual experiences became figural. Experiences in which God was made known to individuals in circumstances such as being given a book, being in the right place at the right time to help someone else, and marrying your soul mate were also described as situations of spiritual experience. One participant was able to endure the loss of her father as an adult. As a child, she dreamed that her father died and awakened in terror. She ran downstairs to her father, which allowed him to comfort her. She remembered the dream when she walked into the funeral home and realized the surroundings and decorations had been in her childhood dream, what she described as her "pre-vision." She experienced at that moment a sense of comfort that she had felt as a child when her father cuddled her after her nightmare.

Several other participants described events involving groups of people, such as at a women's retreat, a women's conference, a men's group, a consciousness raising group, and at a Children's International Summer Village. Some participants described experiences during prayer, in which they argued with God, or described events that confirmed that person's belief in prayer.

Four participants described unusual auditory and visual experiences related to their spiritual journey. One participant, in her struggle with her identity after a brutal rape, heard an older woman's voice that comforted her. Another participant heard God's voice steadying her for the course ahead during Morning Prayer. Another

participant saw her father's release from suffering at his death as he danced into eternity. Still another participant began to explore her traumatic past in therapy when in a session she saw each of her fingers turn into a penis. This participant's therapist was able to be with the participant during this experience and the participant reported being able to begin integrating traumatic aspects of her past into her ideas about herself. As he was falling asleep, one participant felt electricity pass through his body from his feet to his head. He then saw animals in the house where there were none. This experience led him to open himself up to experiences at which he had previously scoffed. Another participant experienced time slowing down and she saw family members change before her eyes into what she felt were "essential" aspects of their identities. In one of these times, she gained insight into the essence of her partner that helped her understand him better. In another instance, one of her children was walking past; again she saw a glimpse of who this child would become in adulthood.

Only twelve descriptions of spiritual experiences, by seven participants, were described as taking place in the context of worship or special religious contexts and these experiences involve being related to others. Five situations described being a part of special religious rituals such as participating in a son's bar mitzvah, a worship experiences at Yom Kippur, studying religious materials in a group with a particular Rabbi, and a festival circle dance. Another person felt she had been given a special message from God in a worship service when an unknown man stood up in the service and said he had a message for someone there that day. Two participants

described Eucharist (communion) as the context for connection to others they were serving or by whom they were being served. Two Native American practices involved situations of sweat lodge and drumming in which people described spiritual experiences.

Experiences Involving Places

There were eighteen experiences that involved specific places. Eight of these descriptions concerned situations experienced while backpacking in canyons, deserts, and the mountains, as well as hiking in various natural setting. Two persons described spiritual experiences while floating on the ocean. Other descriptions concerned standing in a stream, sitting on rocks in a stream, and sitting by a pond. One participant felt spiritual as the keeper of sacred space (talking of her house) and her housework as holy: gifts for her family. Another described feeling spiritual after walking into a well-known church building.

Experiences Involving Body (Self without Others)

Five spiritual experiences took place in connection with bodily experiences. Two participants described consensual sexual experiences in which they were cleansed, or opened, to new aspects of their sexuality and pleasure. Other experiences involved two participants facing their own mortality in situations that threatened their lives. Facing life was also described in a participant's description of

birthing her babies and in a different participant's description of helping to deliver a calf.

Experiences Involving Time

Time was the figural in four descriptions. One person described being lost, both emotionally and geographically, while on tour across the country with a musical company. Geographically, he traveled in a charter bus and would wake up and not know what town he was in, or what day it was. At times, he would not ask and simply get off the bus and walk around, not sure where he was going or what he would encounter. Emotionally, this participant struggled with unhappiness and what direction he should take in his life. He talked of "being in a long tunnel with no light" where everything seems "dark" and "hopeless." He described his experiences as "dark nights of the soul" in which he experienced "that there may be no point to life, and there may be nobody that cares whether I come out of the tunnel."

Other descriptions involved the suspension of time. One participant's experience was when she was relaxing in a bath and "knew" that she was being called to ordained ministry. Another person felt time stop as she had a premonition of a hand squeezing a heart in an opened chest cavity only to later learn that the love of her life had died on the operating table during heart surgery. Another participant's experience was as if time opened up while looking at a loaf of bread. She found herself confounded when she realized that the "essence" of the bread could not be really be explained.

Themes

Phenomenologically, spiritual experience described by participants had one overriding theme that permeated all of their interviews: connection. Participants talked about connection with other people, with nature, to their religious community, and with God. To a person, all twelve participants talked about being connected.

One participant summed it up nicely:

(#9) I grew up on a farm, and we had dairy cattle. And so when a mom was ready to give birth, sometimes things didn't go well. I remember this one time that, and I was young, I was, I don't know, 10 years old or something like that. And dad could tell that the head was turned. And these are Holstein cows and calves that dad had. He couldn't get his arm in to turn that head his arm was too big. And he asked me to, I remember he had to prop me up 'cause the mom was standing up. And I was able to do that. And immediately thereafter the calf was born, and I can really still remember being really connected to that, so that was a real rush of awareness, I mean, it was, it was very profound.... I guess aware of, of the wonder of life, the wonder of what had just happened and that I was connected to that, I had a part in that. And there is a, I guess, it's really interesting I had, I was German Lutheran as a kid and pretty strict Lutheran teaching and so forth and so on. But I don't remember having what I consider to be close spiritual connections with all that. What I remember of having spiritual connections has to do with what I just described and my family. I grew up in a big extended family. My dad was one of 10 kids, and so getting back to the thing. On the farm, that, that happened more than once, that kind of thing, not as pronounced . . . Like I said, I guess, the thing that I felt was I was certainly in awe of everything and I felt really connected to what had just happened.

Connection was the ground against which all other themes became figural, and it was the center that held the other themes together like being "part of a web." Three themes emerged against this ground of connection: Awe/Wonder, Knowing, and Possibility.

Theme 1: Awe/Wonder

The theme of awe and wonder described experiences of dread and inspiration that were captured by two sub-themes: powerful/disturbing or comforting and peaceful/comforting.

(a) Powerful/Disturbing or Comforting

Spiritual experiences that were powerful and disturbing depicted dread and were described as: "weird," "terrifyingly frightening," and produced a feeling of being "shaken up." Powerful was also described as comforting from a sense that the Divine was in charge. One participant felt that the experience of power was also comforting as it meant God was in control.

(#7) and I remember noticing how much I was shaking and I wasn't cold a bit, it had to do with the scariness of the experience. . . .

(#6) And it was spooky, and again after the experience, which just lasts for a split second, I feel really shaky, and I thought wow, that was pretty weird. . . but it was just a real creepy kind of experience. Very dramatic and you get this very shaken sense of just seeing something important. But it feels important and I do feel quite literally kind of shaken up by it.

(#1) I started having these periods where I would lay down and go to sleep and just as soon as I was drifting off to sleep, my whole body would be racked by these like electrical vibrations and it was like somebody was plugging a 220 current into my foot and, you know, putting the other electrode on my head. And you know, it was terrifyingly frightening.

(#8) It does make sense spiritually for me. . . And it was so powerful. I mean it just, was so powerful, and made such a change. And the sense of it never really leaves even though the intensity of the

moment may but the knowledge of it and the real experience of it never goes away.

(#11). .like I heard this voice that said "have I let you down yet?" Okay, and that's a really weird thing, and I'm a really normal person. I'm a computer consultant, you know, I do things fairly logically.

(#12) Awe, but also certitude. I knew my prayer had been answered. I knew it was yes. I didn't understand how it was going to work out.

(b) Peaceful/Comforting

The theme of peaceful/comforting depicted spiritual experiences described as inspirational. They were described as: "overwhelming peacefulness," "amazing," exhilarating," "stable," and "wonderful." The participants that described this feeling of awe and wonder described spiritual experiences that brought tranquillity and serenity, often in the face of danger, emotional upset, or sometimes an unexpected happening.

(#5) When I was bout 20 years old I was floating on a bay at Ocean City, New Jersey, and just had this incredible sense of peace, of knowing that somehow my roots had come to the sea and that all of life was connected. It was just extremely peaceful and I can like those kinds of experiences, you know, it's there in my mind so that when I think of it it's almost like it's happening. I can feel the sun on my face when I talk about it.

(#8) . . . somewhere in the midst of it, it was like this overwhelming peacefulness, joy, and the sense that I was at one with the universe And I can remember thinking that thought that something about even rocks were my friends, and almost any words one says, only capture that it was such an extraordinary feeling.

(#6) I feel very connected and I don't know what I feel connected to, but I just feel very; I feel the sort of stability one would feel if one

were part of a web or part of a net. If you were just a little piece in a net and how stable that would be to be surrounded on all sides so that there's movement but it's just very connected...and they are very peaceful.

(#2) We were doing this chant. . . . And we were dancing around and around and around and it was just so amazing, an exhilarating feeling. And then we stopped and I opened my eyes, it was blue, EVERYTHING WAS BLUE! . . . And it was this wonderful feeling.

Theme 2: Knowing

The theme of knowing was described as an awareness and understanding of both life and God that were arrived at or "known" without words. The experiences of knowing were characterized by two sub-themes Awakening and Mystery/Ineffable.

(a) Awakening

Awakening was described as being "aware," as a "way of seeing," of things coming "together," of having a "sense of" something, and of knowing things "instinctively."

(#12) It is like a still small voiceless voice. I almost felt it more than heard it. And so that it's something that's palpable but not really describable.

(#9) I guess it is kind of an awakening to my connectedness to either other people or other things, things beyond me.

(#6) I think maybe it's a way of seeing, and sometimes I see that way and sometimes don't. And there may be something to that. There is the sense of it being like this, this thing that is enduring and is always there, like this shimmering thing that is just beneath us or just around us, or just right there.

(#11) still there's an awareness of you need to be connected to God.

(#1) . . . I was just kind of resting back against this rock and looking over the pond and then it was just like everything came together into this picture of perfection. It was just this beautiful, wonderful feeling and, you know, like how marvelous everything was, how perfect creation was and it's just like all this came together. I guess I just knew it then instinctively.

(#2) . . . I feel a connection with other people and with other things and with animals and you know, it's just, it's there, there's a connection there that I did not understand before and it's sort of the energy that's life, you know.

(#10) Then you know it was clear, from just looking at my own life, it was clear that the rules of that game weren't working. They didn't make any sense. So I think that's why, I don't know why that made me become more religious but at least it was a point to say that I didn't understand and I had to learn more.

(b) Mystery/Ineffable

The theme of mystery and ineffable described a different way of knowing that was not arrived at by cognitive means. Participants also noted that using words somehow diminished the impact of what they had come to "know" and they felt they could not adequately describe the intensity of their experience.

(#12) And I just prayed and all I prayed was Lord help me. And all of a sudden I just felt the, "yes." It's one of those moments that the word 'ineffable' was coined for. There isn't a good way to explain it.

(#4) . . . I don't know that I can go into detail, it's just again, it's kind of a knowing on a kind of a non-verbal level, you know. Even as I talk of all of these things it kind of reduces them to have to put them into words.

(#9) . . . I increasingly became more aware of what was there. And the longer that I did that the more, again, I just kind of felt kind of

connected to that...And it finally, and it was again I realized. . .the awareness came not by cognitive things, the awareness came all of a sudden and my hand just went up.

(#7). . .I had this sort of moment out of time, in the sense that I wasn't aware of time passing, but when I came out of it, I knew that was an experience of God. And it was my sense of being 'one-with' everything around me. And everything around me being one-with God. It wasn't some thought about God, and it wasn't something I was trying to get out, I wasn't thinking about God or consciously praying, I was just, I had let go and was in and of the water.

Theme 3: Possibility

Participants described the experience of possibility in terms of two sub-themes: different/changed and open. Possibility was characterized as a time when they saw things differently, felt their experiences had affected their ways of behaving and choices they made, or altered their ideas about themselves and/or the world. Other participants described opening to new experiences, new ways of thinking about themselves or others, and opened to new directions in their lives. Sometimes the effects of the experiences lasted, although many times the transformations were temporary.

(a) Different/Changed

Some participants described feeling as if their whole existence and self-definition was changed or different and the effects were long lasting. Other descriptions involved more temporary changes that allowed them to see what would be possible.

(#4) I just suddenly knew, I felt, as a matter of fact I felt cleansed, it was like I had just immersed myself in the cleanest water in the world. I felt right and whole and clean and clear and I don't know what that came from.

(#8) . . .and after that time I had an awareness that I was integrated in a way I had never been. Before that time I had always had this little voice in my mind that harshly criticized everything I did. . . .After that the voice was gone. It was totally not there. And I felt so extraordinarily different.

(#10) He had given a class and I think there's probably at least maybe two other people I know in that class who I think changed their lives and the way they looked at the world, you know, maybe the way I would put it is, quite significantly.

(#3) I'm having struggles with my children, my past did not give me the tools necessary to rear them correctly Somebody said, "here, read this!" To me that's God. "Here L read this book!" Now, I mean, I don't necessarily have to agree with everything that's in it but Gosh! It is an eye-opening experience for me, . . .and I have the choice of either letting that keep me down or just forgetting about it, 'cause, or recognizing it as an unmeetable expectation, and try to change my expectations, etc.

(#2) And I cried and cried, because, I mean I wasn't sad and I wasn't really happy, I was just so overwhelmed! And for days after that there was this clarity to everything I saw, you know, everything I heard.

(b) Open

Participants described being open to new ideas and/or solutions to long-standing difficulties. Some participants explained situations where the potential seemed to unfold before them and they could see a new options and directions.

(#5) I was open to it, that I knew that on that weekend I wanted to do something about this problem she and I were having. And I just let

myself listen instead of arguing in my mind with what I would disagree with him [the retreat leader], I forgot about all that, and just listened.

(#11) And it seemed like other doors and other opportunities opened up and there were other things that we were meant to do.

(#10) And then you know it was clear, from just looking at my own life, it was clear that the rules of that game weren't working. They didn't make any sense. So I think that's why, I don't know why that made me become more religious but at least it was a point to say that I didn't understand and I had to learn more.

(#3) And I distinctly remember, and it's odd for me that the opening of doors would symbolize this but I happened to be walking by and someone opened up the door and it was just like "wheow" I could just feel the spirit moving it was so amazing. They were, and it was through that experience and through the experience of working as a chaplain's assistant that I came to realize that as human beings we are all different.

(#12) And yet you know, you do, you find room that you didn't know was there and in the process of stretching you're better for it. Maybe not immediately, maybe in the middle of it, now I've got so much else to do. But yeah, in a strong sense it's true.

Visual representations are often helpful in understanding the figure/ground of human experiences. Figure A-1 is meant to demonstrate that Connection is both the ground against which the various themes and sub-themes emerged and the center point around which the themes and sub-themes revolve. The various themes and sub-themes are not disengaged and disconnected occurrences but rather overlap and are woven together into the experience of spirituality described by participants. Spiritual experiences are human experiences, and as such cannot be separated from the ongoing story of the individual or from the whole of his/her experience. As may be

noted in the excerpts above, experiences often contained aspects of all three themes or some other combination of themes and sub-themes. This overlapping is part and parcel of human experience. To attempt to separate these experiences as independent, disconnected events would require disruption of the gestalt, the "whole."

The results of the thematic analysis were mailed to eleven participants (one participant had moved, no forwarding) in diagrammatic form with a brief outline of findings (Appendix G), along with their transcribed interview. Participants were given an opportunity to correct their interviews, and respond to whether they felt the results were representative of their experiences. Of the eleven participants, six responded with affirmation that they felt it represented their experiences. One participant asked that comforting be added to the powerful theme, as this more adequately represented her experience.

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

From the perspective of the actualization of the human capacity to be spiritual, to be self-transcending--that is, relational and freely committed spirituality encompasses all of life.

(Joann Wolski Conn, Women's Spirituality)

This study is notable as one of the few empirical studies exploring spirituality in the everyday lives of contemporary persons using a dialogic method of open-ended, non-directive questions. The present thematic descriptions are based on a rigorous hermeneutical analysis of phenomenological interviews covering this topic without a priori assumptions. Results of the present study indicate that spiritual experiences are located within the realm of everyday human experience, involving others, world, body, and time. As such, spiritual experiences may be said to occur in the lived-world that Heidegger termed "everydayness." In fact, participants described specific situations that stood out for them in the course of everyday activities. Their stories about spiritual experiences were situated in the world and cannot be understood as solitary occurrences in a vacuum.

There were sixty-seven specific episodes described within the contexts of everyday life. When the world of other was invoked, the other was described as God, a religious community, special religious contexts with family, a spouse, and/or a specific group of people such as at a retreat or summer gathering. All twelve of the

spiritual experiences that occurred within a religious context involved an “other,” which in two cases were identified as God. Even though ten of the twelve participants in this study regularly attend worship, only twelve out of sixty-eight spiritual experiences took place in the context of worship, ritual, or special religious context. Zinnabauer et al. (1997) found that descriptions of religiousness corresponded with worship attendance, although the descriptions did not concern detailed descriptions of experience but rather were statements of belief.

The fact that spiritual experiences overwhelmingly involve others should not be surprising, since each participant spoke of the importance of connection, and connection is the ground against which all themes became figural. Connection, by definition, is relational. An experience of connection is the center of the themes, around which they revolve and are interrelated. Laski (1961) talked about people being a trigger for ecstatic experiences, although persons were not described as integral to the experience. Sixty-seven percent of Paffard's (1973) respondents reported being alone without any descriptions of others involved in their experiences. The passage by Hudson that Paffard used, was a solitary description by the author, which provided the context for others' reports. However, Barker (1989) and Burkhardt (1991) found that connection to others, nature, and God was figural in spiritual experiences reported by Appalachian women.

In eighteen of the stories, the world stood out as the major context. Several spiritual experiences that occurred in nature included another person, although that person was not the focus of the experience. Experiences taking place in nature

involved hiking and backpacking, floating on the ocean, sitting by a pond, being in the mountains, cleaning house, going fishing, and visiting a well-known church building. The body was the main focus in five experiences described by participants. Occasions such as a consensual sexual experience resembled Hood and Hall's (1980) work in which they noted that similar language was used to describe both erotic and mystical experiences. One female participant said the experience "helped me to know Jesus better, it was a very incarnate experience of love" (#7), which corresponds to their findings of women's use of sexual imagery in mystical experiences. Another encounter by a male was described as changing his ideas about sex from inherently bad-- "[I was] going to feel rotten and dirty and terrible and sinful and it may condemn [me] to Hell for ever and ever"-- (#4) to one of wholeness-- "I felt cleansed, it was like I had just immersed myself in the cleanest water in the world. I felt right, and whole and clean and clear." Other experiences that focused on the body described in the current study were rape, falling through the floor, having babies, and delivering a calf.

Four descriptions involved time as their main focus. Smucker (1993) found time to be the ground for the experience of spiritual distress described by her participants. Current experiences involved being lost geographically and spiritually in what was described as the "dark night of the soul"; additional descriptions of time being suspended occurred in a relaxing bath, when contemplating the essence of bread, and during a premonition of a loved friend's death. Although a wide range of events was described by participants, each event was one that occurred suddenly or

unexpectedly, and participants reported feeling unable to describe the experience adequately with words.

The inadequacy of language to express spiritual experiences has also been noted by Laski (1961), Paffard (1973), and Hood (1973). Current participants communicated that any attempt to put their experiences into words was a reduction of the experience, "Even as I talk of all these things, it kind of reduces them to have to put them into words." (#4) The ineffability of the spiritual experiences were consistent across the studies. Participants explained their inability to express their experiences was due to the fact they were not intellectual endeavors saying, "the awareness came not by cognitive things. . ." (#9), and "It wasn't some thought about God. . ." (#7). Other descriptions were either bodily reactions "all of a sudden and my hand just went up [to touch the sky]" (#9), or an absorption (not union or loss of boundaries) in their surroundings "I had let go and was in and of the water" (#7). Participants did not describe a loss of self or union with God; however, their descriptions are rich with intensely present experiences in the moment. This is described as, "in that instant I understood. . ." (#2), "a spiritual moment" (#6).

One of the most interesting findings of this study is that many participants did not talk about transcendence as a major aspects of their described spiritual experiences. Laski (1961), Paffard (1973), Hood & Hall (1980), and Zinnabaur et al. (1997) all use either the word transcendence in their semi-structured interview or direct questions about God. The current study did not make any reference to transcendence, God, or a Higher Power. The question used by the interviewer simply

asked that participant's to describe times when they felt spiritual or were aware of being spiritual. This question was constructed so as not to guide participants toward the theological presuppositions of the interviewer. One conclusion is that transcendence is not as figural a concern for contemporary persons as for previous investigators. This assumption may indicate that psychology has adopted unnecessary theological presuppositions about spirituality. The questions we ask as investigators define the parameters for answers that respondents provide.

Implications for Philosophical Perspectives

Empiricism claims that consciousness is shaped by the world outside of human experience, which is codified in Descartes' split between subject (consciousness) and objects (things outside of consciousness) and the problem becomes how then can the subject come to know objects? Empiricism and phenomenology agree that objects are known through experience, but the assumption of truth as certainty becomes a problem. Empiricism holds that what is true in perception must be absolutely determined and unambiguous, which Gestalt psychologist argue is a faulty understanding of human perception. We discover objects in context, as a foreground that stands out against some ground.

The ground, which undercuts the Cartesian opposition of subject and object and reveals the error of Plato's correspondence theory of truth, is in a sense the most important aspect of human existence, for it is the very condition or possibility of anything at all appearing or being known. Moreover, it is *that* place where the being

of either "human" or "world" is disclosed. Dasein involves what might be called an implicitly sensed "ground," which is the context or totality within which all human experience takes place. Humans and the world co-constitute one another and one cannot be seen as causing the other, but together as constituting human existence. Spiritual experiences are no different from any other and take place in the course of everyday activities.

We cannot detach ourselves in an objectified view of "things" and derive any meaning of being. Scientific methodology, while appropriate and important for the advancement of knowledge in some areas, is less appropriate for the study of human experience. Heidegger proposed that such a (objectified) theoretical view of the world was far removed from the "everydayness" of human life which he labeled Dasein. Objects exist, and the world of which they are a part, but they cannot be known "objectively." There is nothing "behind" human experience to "uncover." The phenomenological method of dialogue allows the network of relationship that we are to emerge in the descriptions of spiritual experiences.

Rationalism makes the same claim of truth as certainty, but asserts that all knowledge is a priori; the mind organizes or constitutes the things in experience, and we never know the thing (in itself) outside of experience. Since Plato's metaphor of the cave, truth was identified as a matching between a physical state of affairs on the one hand and its mental representation (or verbal description) on the other. When we postulate hypotheses about what we will find in scientific methodology about human

experience, we are seeking to give certainty to truth by rationalist definition. If we examine phenomena with theories in mind, will find that which we seek.

James was primarily interested in showing how systems of morality, religion, and faith could be defended in a scientific civilization. He argued that sentiment, as well as logic, is crucial to rationality and that the great issues of life, morality and religious belief, all involve leaps of faith. As such, they depend upon what he called "the will to believe" and not merely on scientific evidence, which can never tell us what to do or what is worthwhile. James believed that the significance of religion lay within the experience of the individual and that the subconscious was the doorway through which the ultimately transforming experiences we call "mystical" appear to come--transient, passive, states from which the intellect itself may be derived. James did not overcome Cartesian dualism; however, he clearly pointed out that all of science is based on preconceived assumptions about how the physical world can be studied.

The participants' descriptions in the present study indicate that connection to other people was a central component to their experience. One participant explained: "I guess it is kind of an awakening to my connectedness to either other people or other things. . ." (#9). Interestingly, the idea of being connected to world, the body, and time was not represented in any of the previous studies of religion and spirituality, which provides a poignant example of James' "preconceived assumptions."

Human experience is lived experience, it occurs within history and is always contextualized. Merleau-Ponty begins by giving primacy to perception.

To return to things themselves is to return to that world which precedes knowledge, of which knowledge always *speaks*, and in relationship to which every scientific schematization is an abstract and derivative sign-language, as is geography in relation to the countryside in which we have learnt beforehand what a forest, a prairie or a river is (p. ix)

The phenomenologist begins by allowing things to present themselves in perception.

Merleau-Ponty notes that objects do not simply impose themselves on consciousness, nor do we construct things in our minds. Rather, objects as we experience them are discovered through a subject-object dialogue involving the lived body.

Consciousness is not just something that goes on in our heads. Rather, intentional consciousness is experienced in and through our bodies. As one participant noted:

And these are Holstein cows and calves that dad had. He couldn't get his arm in to turn that head his arm was too big. And he asked me to, I remember he had to prop me up 'cause the mom was standing up. And I was able to do that. And immediately thereafter the calf was born, and I can really still remember being really connected to that, so that was a real rush of awareness, I mean, it was, it was very profound. . I guess aware_of, of the wonder of life, the wonder of what had just happened and that I was connected to that, I had a part in that. (#9)

The current of a person's intentional existence is lived through his or her body. We are our bodies and consciousness is experienced in and through the body. Another participant described: "and I remember noticing how much I was shaking and I wasn't cold a bit, it had to do with the scariness of the experience. . . ." (#7)

The ground of an experience, out of which being is disclosed in descriptions of specific events, can be made known in the encounter between the investigator and the participant who is the authority on his or her own lived experience. Descriptions are not about past events, but through dialogue, participants experience the event in the here and now. As one participant put it: "I can feel the sun on my face when I talk about it" (#5).

For Merleau-Ponty, humans beings have a sense of history and are able to share perspectives on their "situatedness" in the world. Dialogue is the method of phenomenology. In this method, the researcher first engages in dialogue to make explicit her or his own assumptions in the bracketing interview. Next, participant and researcher enter into open-ended dialogue, which allows the meaning of experience to emerge. This study revealed that spiritual experience is contextualized and experienced in a lived body as Merleau-Ponty described.

Implications for Theological Approaches

Tillich attempts to correlate existential questions generated by the ontological situation of people and religious symbols born of encounter with the "new being" who is Christ. The starting point for Tillich's existential ontology is the self in relationship to the world. The self is primary, since it is primarily through the self that being discloses itself. Yet the self is never without a world, and the structural elements of being that come to light through the self are also found within the world. These elements are fundamentally polar: individuation and participation, freedom and

destiny. In addition, they are in tension with one another at all levels of existence and one way of conceiving the human predicament is in terms of disruption and disintegration of the essential balance between these elements. Salvation then consists in their reintegration and reunification through union with that which underlies the ground of all being, God.

Tillich consistently opposed traditional theistic understanding with its strongly personal characterization and the tendency to treat God as one being among others. Tillich, like Buber, regards God as outside all categories of understanding. But if there is one statement that can be made, it is that God is being-itself. All else we might say is symbolic, expressive of our relationship to the ultimate but not really descriptive of the ultimate itself. For example, one participant offered "And it was my sense of being 'one with' everything around me. And everything around me being 'one with' God" (#7).

Tillich feels that human nature is fundamentally driven by ontological anxiety and in God alone are ontological elements perfectly balanced whereas in individuals and nature they are polarized (divided along a subject-object continuum). Tillich argues for "a 'mystical a priori,' an awareness of something that transcends the cleavage between subject and object." Tillich's theology is constructed in the Cartesian model and he identifies God in the gap between subject and object--as the eternal tension between being and non-being.

For Tillich, religion is not an isolated affectation of the personality nor is it a limited set of beliefs, doctrines or codes about discrete phenomenon such as the

existence of God, the divinity of Jesus or the possibility of miracles. Religion may include these; but is not defined by them. Religion is, instead, that integral, comprehensive vision we have of ourselves in relation to that which we recognize as the basic condition, the fundamental bedrock, of our own existence. Tillich calls such a comprehensive vision "faith," and describes it as the state of being ultimately concerned; that is, our deepest response to what we most highly value and serve.

Culture, for Tillich, is the necessary matrix of religion. Religion is an integral basis of culture without which the culture would disintegrate. Therefore, it would appear that the co-constructive nature of religion and culture would be the only adequate way in which we can fully understand the significance of religion in human life. We cannot understand religion or ourselves until we begin to appreciate religion's relation to and influence upon the culture, which is its root. Tillich's concern over the alienation of the individual in contemporary society led him to understand that the anxiety of meaninglessness and the attempt to take this anxiety into the courage to be oneself was critical to Christian faith. The courage to be as oneself is more relevant to the character of the modern period, since it entails an affirmation of the individual as significantly distinct from the group or society to which the individual belongs. The Enlightenment through the proclamation of the universality of reason gave individualism its impetus. Tillich's answer is that we should seek to participate in the power of being, a sort of mystical union, to overcome our despair and loss of meaning. Tillich's idea is that God, the Ground of Being, provides the connection between the subject-object split.

Previous attempts to define spirituality have hinted at the presence of an "other," sometimes insisting the other is God, such as with Paloutzian and Ellison (1982). The National Institute for HealthCare Research broadened the term God to "divine being, Ultimate Reality, or Ultimate Truth." William James defined cultural expressions of religion as "the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men [sic] in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine." James, however, was a pragmatist who refused to affirm any absolutes regardless of concepts, beliefs, and actions and he applied his pragmatist ideas to truth as well as to meaning.

The descriptions of spiritual experience in this study correspond most closely to Buber's idea of being and relatedness; his I-Thou. "I feel a connection with other people and with other things and with animals and you, it's just there, there's a connection there that I did not understand before. . ." (#2). Participants' felt their descriptions, their words, could not capture the vividness of their experiences; their stories, grounded in "connection," were not about objects or attempts at objective description. One participant said: ". . .it's a kind of a knowing on a kind of a non-verbal level. . . ."

Participants described their experiences as grounded in the here and now, in history and particular contexts, and risked security by being open. Participants were not overtaken or diminished by their experiences but expressed feeling open to new ways of looking at things, changed in their outlooks, and different in their ability to deal with everyday life: "and after that time I had an awareness that I was integrated

in a way I had never been" (#8). Another participant explained: "And it seemed like other doors and other opportunities opened up and there were other things that we were meant to do" (#11).

These experiences inspired awe and wonder in the participants, which for some were powerful and disturbing or comforting, and/or peaceful and comforting. Participants described being awakened to new perspectives about their situations or about themselves. They also described being able to know in a way that was not cognitive, but revealed mystery. Possibilities that hither-to-fore did not exist for them became known and imaginable. Some persons felt that they were different after the experience. For some individuals, the difference was profound and effected long-term change; for others the difference was short lived but provided an inkling of what could be. Others described being open to other perspectives, beliefs or ideas about themselves providing them with the vision and courage to make changes never before contemplated.

Implications for Clinical Psychology

Psychoanalytic theories have historically worked from a view of religion as pathological. Freud saw religion as a neurosis, which derived from fixations at a very early stage of development. For him, religion is an illusion that tries to master the "real world" with fantasized wish fulfillment. Contemporary psychoanalysis has moved away from Freud's positivistic and reductionistic closed system to a more relational model, which has opened the way for examining human experience in non-

pathological ways. Some theorists have even begun to examine psychoanalytic assumptions in light of the more contemporary ideas that science is not value free. Contemporary philosophical movements, such as deconstruction, have also played a role in an unwillingness to accept assumptions as specific to humans without regard to context. The British object relations school of psychoanalysis began the move away from Freud's closed system of human motivation and has replaced it with a relational vision of human life (Jones, 1996), and these models of human nature permit a more open attitude toward religion.

Connection (therapeutic alliance) between a therapist and patient may be one of the most important factor effecting therapeutic outcome (Horvath, A., 2000; Strupp, H. H., 1976; Grinker, R. R. 1976). The idea that being connected can give rise to possibility in people's lives is very significant for therapy. Therapists have avoided religion and spiritual themes as irrelevant material owing to the historical problems psychology has had with religion. Even though James, Maslow, and others presented a more positive view of religion's role in the lives of persons, psychologist continue to shy away from spirituality in research and therapy practice. This study suggests, however, that important ideas about a person's sense of who they are, are made transparent in spiritual experiences. The results of the present study also indicate that the spiritual experiences reveal a person's feelings of connection/disconnection, his or her relatedness/unrelatedness to other people, things, animals, and God or other deity. Spiritual experience, being related as an aspect of

human experience, can lead to significant changes in behavior and in self-understandings.

Foremost among psychoanalytic theorists who have articulated this relational change is D.W. Winnicott (1971). According to him, the child's experience with transitional objects is neither objective nor subjective, which is similar to intentionality. Transitional experience is interactional, and begins to form in the space between mother and infant. For Winnicott, neither the objective environment nor the isolated individual defines this third domain, for it "is a product of the experiences of the individual person (baby, child, adolescent, adult) in the environment" (1971, p. 107). Winnicott's famous dictum that "there is no such thing as a baby" outside of the parent-child dyad makes relational issues explicit (Greenberg and Mitchell, 1983).

In play, the child invests physical things with private meanings and does so in a psychological space that resonates with the earliest experiences of intimacy. Even when the baby plays alone, she is still operating interpersonally since the very experience of play carries echoes of those first interactions: "the playground is a potential space between the mother and the baby" (Winnicott, 1971, p. 47). The transitional process from which symbols arise is clearly an interpersonal one--first in relation to the mother and later in relation to the "cultural field" (1971, p. 99). Play closes the gap between subjectivity and objectivity that Cartesian empiricism opened; "In playing, the child manipulates external phenomena in the service of the dream and invests chosen external phenomena with dream meaning and feeling" (1971, p. 51).

In her research into the origin and transformations of the individual's "god representation," Ana-Maria Rizzuto (1979) explicitly locates the reality of God in the "transitional space," halfway between mere hallucination and physical existence. In this realm of imagination, the child creates a private but real world of transitional objects--imaginary friends, security blankets, personal games, and magical beliefs. Rizzuto is quite consciously attempting to validate the importance of fantasy and imaginativeness for mental health, as opposed to Freud's rigidity (1979, pp. 46-53). For Rizzuto, God is a creation of human imagination, which she feels is precisely the source of God's power and reality. Unlike Freud, Rizzuto understands imagination as a fundamental human capacity. Such entities as "muses, guardian angels, heroes, the Devil, God, unseen atoms, imaginary chemical formulas" (1979, p. 37.) can have a perceptible impact on human lives, and their psychological power constitutes their reality.

Winnicott speaks about transitional objects as a capacity for experience, and transitional phenomena point to "an intermediate area of experiencing" (1971, p. 2) to which a person's reality contributes. He appears to be suggesting an "intentional" relationship between a person and the world that begins with mother and child interactions. Teddy bears and security blankets are left behind, but the capacity to transcend the dichotomies of inner and outer, subjective and objective, continues to grow and becomes the basis for human creativity in the arts and sciences. For Winnicott, the transitional object "is not forgotten and it is not mourned." The idea of God would become disseminated and meaning found in the interactional space of

relationships, which is exactly the contemporary description of spiritual experiences in the current study.

Whether or not God exists is an issue for religious discourse and theological debate. Theological assumptions are unnecessary for psychologist to understand the impact that spiritual experiences have in the lives of individuals, and the importance of their utilization in the course of therapy. Contemporary spiritual experience is profoundly relational, and as such, can be viewed as a healthy affirmation of the human capacity for constructive growth. Connection to other people and the world evokes a sense of awe and wonder that is powerful and peaceful, engenders awareness that brings about knowing that is not arrived at by cognitive means and cannot be adequately described by language. These experiences provide possibilities for persons to be open to new ideas and ways of behavior, and permits them to make significant changes in their lives.

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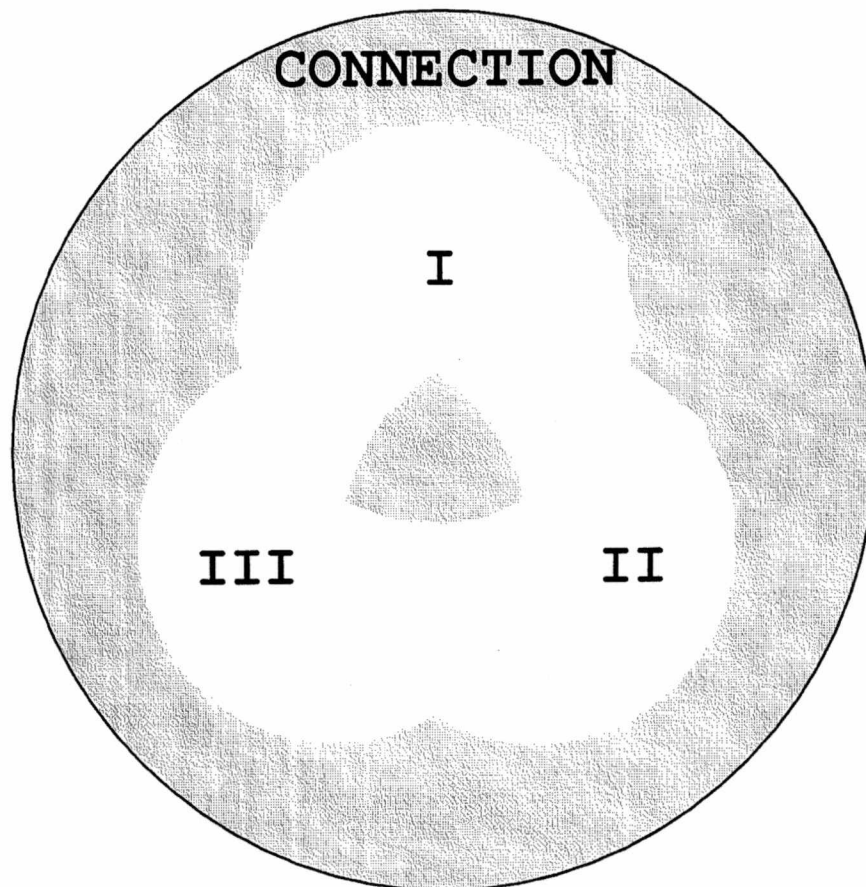
APPENDICES

Appendix A

TABLE A-1. Demographics

Age	Gender	Education	Race
15	Female	10	White
35	Female	17	White
40	Female	18	White
47	Male	21	White
48	Female	18	White
48	Male	18	White
49	Female	20	White
49	Male	16	White
51	Female	21	White
55	Female	16	White
55	Male	21	White
62	Female	21	White

Appendix B

**I. Awe/Wonder**

- A. Powerful/Disturbing or Comforting
- B. Peaceful/Comforting

II. Knowing

- A. Awakening
- B. Mystery/Ineffable

III. Possibility

- A. Different/Change
- B. Open

Figure A-1. Themes of Contemporary Spiritual Experience

APPENDIX C

Spiritual Experience Contexts

Others 38/67

- being part of (Jewish) community
- being served/serving communion
- feeling enveloped in the worship community
- special religious contexts
 - bar mitzvah
 - festivals and holidays
 - studying with a Rabbi
 - Native American sweat lodge
 - Native American drumming
 - Wicca circle dance
- God made known
 - being given a special book
 - a special message in church
 - being in the right place to help someone
 - marrying your soul mate
 - on the outside looking in-religious service
 - a pre-vision of father's death
 - connecting with someone from another culture
- men's and women's groups
 - guided imagery
 - retreat
 - conferences
 - consciousness raising groups
- Children's International Summer Village
- pressure to speak in religious groups
- prayer
 - arguing with God
 - having beliefs confirmed
- unusual sensory experiences

auditory

 - an old woman's voice - comforting
 - God's voice during prayer

visual

- at father's death - dancing into eternity
- eternity
 - fingers/penises
 - animals in the kitchen
 - other's "true" essences

World 18/67

- hiking and backpacking
- floating on the ocean
- being in a stream
- sitting by a pond
- being in the mountains
- cleaning house
- visiting a well-known church building
- going fishing

Body 5/67

- consensual sex
- facing death
 - rape
 - falling through the floor
- facing life
 - having babies
 - delivering a calf

Time 4/67

- being lost on tour—dark night of the soul
- time suspended
 - relaxing in the bath
 - the mystery of bread
 - a premonition of a friend's death

APPENDIX D**INFORMATION AND INFORMED CONSENT**

This is a study on social attitudes, religiosity, and psychology. Participants are not required to be religious or have any religious background in order to participate.

All material will be confidential. Participants' names or numbers will not be attached to any documents related to this research. No one will be able to identify you by the results. Only the Principal Investigator and Advisor will have access to your consent forms and they will be kept in a locked cabinet at the University of Tennessee. Your participation is completely voluntary.

Some participants will be contacted to participate in another part of this study. In addition, it is possible that results from this study will be published or presented at conferences. By signing this form, you acknowledge and agree that your information can be used and to agree to be contacted about further participation.

If you have any questions, please contact:

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Department of Psychology
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or

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Name: _____ Date _____

Telephone number: _____ Student ID#: _____

APPENDIX E**Kim A. Cornish
Bracketing Interview**

I: Can you tell me some times when you have felt spiritual?

P: Yeah (laugh). I am really kind of nervous, I don't know, um, (pause) hum. I: Can you perhaps think of one time and just tell me about that?

P: Yeah, nerves are kind of things that block my (pause) that's what this it is about. But, um. Actually, it is kind of interesting, yesterday, I got out in the yard for about an hour and started digging up my flower beds. I finally received my shipment of bulbs for summer and fall that I can plant now. And uh, it was warm and the sun and the smells of the dirt and the neighbor's dog. Uh, and I remember kind of really feeling connected. And it was, uh, it was kind of a spiritual feeling that turning of the, of the dirt and the, the feeling connected to the earth and uh, and uh, it was not a feeling of something beyond (uh, hum) but of something very present. Uh, that uh, my mind then kind of went to like the planting of bulbs and the growing in life and in general some things that felt very spiritual to me. I felt very connected to something beyond me and to the earth.

I: You said connected to something beyond you and to the earth?

P: Uh, yeah, it's uh, it's a kind of being, it's a connectedness to now and beyond and behind. A connection to everything that was, and is, and will be (laugh). And that's, uh, I don't know how else to kind of talk about it other than just kind of a, an across time kind of thing. It's like with the dirt and I was looking at the earthworms and I was turning it up and thinking how rich the soil is, and to, how long the soil had been here, and to, you know, how needed, kind of, the worms are, and just kind of the whole, the enormity of the way things work (hum) and that to me feels, uh, spiritual. It's like, you know, I am in awe, it's an awe feeling. Of, you know, the dogwoods in my yard are just beginning to get buds, um, you know, and that whole sense of like, you know, the awe of like how do they know. I mean, just the enormity of the way things work in nature. Um. It's awesome to watch the cycle and this part of spring where things begin to awaken and the buds start and the earthworms are getting fat (laugh), in there, like, you know, you can turn the soil up and it's rich and dark and, it smells musty and earthy, and, um and life is beginning in the midst of all this and it's from being dull and dead, and kind of, you know, there is no real signs of life, the grass isn't green and, and all of that, to the beginnings of seeing that, of life. The grass is beginning to turn green, and the buds are starting on the trees, and the earthworms are fat, and, you know, it's time to plant and things can grow, and live, you know.

I: It almost sounds like, um, there is something in that contrast between the stillness, the grayness, the senses of winter, and then you talk about the very sensual aspect of spring where you notice that things are growing and the way you notice is. .

P: You see it, and you smell it, and you feel it. (okay) I mean it's in the dirt itself, it's not as cold as it was, (uh huh) you know, it's beginning to warm. You feel the warmth of the sun on you and the air is different. Uh, the smells are different. The animals act differently. The birds are just singing their little hearts out in the morning now, you know, and driving my kitty absolutely bonkers. My cat has moved out of this kind of real, kind of a lazy, lethargic, kind of mood to just running from room to room around the house, you know, and just sits in any window that I open. Will sit and listens to the birds and smells the smells. And I feel some of what I think that she's feeling and it feels different to me. (uh huh). But it is visual, it's smell, and it is, it's sensual. It's very sensual. And that to me is, um, somehow ties me in a huge continuum of the memory of things that were that's somehow present in the now that will live on, as well. It's the cycle of life that is bigger than me that movement from dead-winter to spring and, and the beginnings of life.

I: I was wondering as you talked if you had specific; you talked about being connected to things that were and things that will be and I guess I was wondering if you had specific memories that came to you as you were working?

P: Well, yeah. Some of them were childhood things and, of how I liked to go and play in the woods, watch the snails and the bugs and climb trees and just that connection with the world around me. I can remember one time. We lived out where I could go back into this area behind the house where there were a lot of oil, uh, fields back in there that pumpers drove so there were these really little bad roads back in there, but it was wooded. A very wooded area for Oklahoma and um, you could go and ride your bike on the road back there or you could go and walk. But there was also this little creek' and all these little kind of, um, grottos of life, if you will, kind of stuck back in there, that, um, somehow grew up around the roads and the oil fields, and the people, that managed to survive in there. And there were rabbits, and foxes, and squirrels, and all kinds of things. And I can remember I, I would just go and sit for hours by this one little creek, and it was just, you know, a little trickle of water, it was not a stream, even. It wasn't really a creek (laugh), real tiny. And just listen to the water and smell the smells and Spring, you know. The squirrels would be running and doing all kinds of really funny things, and the rabbits would be coming out and, and, um, it was just really sensual and I remembered back. That was kind of this one place down by this little creek that I used to like to go. But it was even more. It's like connected somehow to history; back before me and maybe even before my grandparents, but, and to things that I know about history. I think about, you know, the (laugh) like, the Civil War and, um, even back to, you know, like before anybody except Native Americans were here. (laugh) This is really strange. But, it's like all

these kind of thoughts are things that have to do with the earth and how people have lived off the earth and how much, you know, the connectedness to people who have died because that enriches the earth, you know, and the things that die that are living that give rise to new life in that sense.

I: So some of the connection is the contrast between living and dying, and birth and death? (um hum). Um, it's not just the new things that are coming up now that you were talking about or the fat earthworms doing their job. That's a pretty powerful image. But also, something about all those who have gone before you who've also worked in the earth and those, um, those who are now part of the earth.

P: Yeah, it's not even so much that they worked the earth. I mean, it's like, if you think about just kind of the things that just by living go into the earth. I mean, some of them are not necessarily all positive, in the polluting and the things that we do. But it's simply, people who are murdered and their blood goes into the earth, is a very powerful image of death, but that is also something that feeds what's there that allows richness to continue. It's an interconnectedness with the earth whether or not we work with it or not. It was the working with it that made, made it present to me. (um hum) And that's something that seems to be beyond just the here and now that connects throughout ages. That, uh, somehow at that time, I am both the only one here, but I'm not. I am connected to things that are much greater than me.

I: It almost reminds me, when your talking, of the omphalos, the navel of the earth. (Yeah) Where you get sort of connected up with everything that's contained therein.

P: Nature has always been a very powerful things and I think senses have been a very powerful thing for me. It's been kind of interesting, kind of, and I think it was really interesting to do that. Because some of what I thought about were, uh, kind of the connection to things, like earthy, that you know around. But is also connected me not to, kind of, my church experience that has been like what I grew up in, and all of that. But to a specific church service. I remember the first time I ever went to a Roman Catholic worship service, it was a Christmas Mass. And how taken I was with the smells and how so many of my senses were elicited and visually it was just gorgeous. And I had no frigging idea what was going on. (laugh) But it was beautiful and the people were dressed beautifully and I could follow the story that was being told. But I didn't know anything about liturgy I, was still in High School at that point. And had been raised in the Church of Christ and where, we didn't even have a cross in the church. And there was incense and , uh, wine and, you know, the smells of, and the lilies, and the, not lilies, it was flowers, poinsettias, I guess. (Unintelligible). The smells, and the visual and there was even, there was a feel to the singing and the ritual, you know, a physical kind of feeling that I; I mean it was like; it was the same to me as the working in the earth.

I: Can you say some more about that physical feeling?

P: Um. (1: Where was it?) (Laugh) I don't.. it was all over. But it was sensual. It was very sensual. It was like all of my senses had been awakened. Uh, and I remember feeling goose bumps and the hair standing up, and feeling kind of expansive in my chest, you know, that, where you could just breathe it in and it's something that, you know, just, it's like all of your senses, everything wakes up. And it's a lot of like working in the earth was for me. Yeah. So, it's, kind of, it's a very striking thing to me, um, that when I was thinking about that yesterday the things I thought about were worship services where all these senses were again livened and I remembered that one from High School when I went with some friends from school. And, um, then when I began to go to the monastery, um, in the early 80's, this monastery that I'm associated with. And uh, that was an incredible, that was kind of a different thing in some ways, it was Roman Catholic, but it was an Ashram. And there were all kinds of things around; most of the sisters had gone and studied in, uh, India and Japan, with, in different forms, the Catholic Church has a kind of more openness with that than a lot of other folks do. But these women had spent a lot of time, um, involved in, kind of, different spiritual disciplines, if you will, beyond Christian. I remember the first time I went there, and the worship service reminded me, cause I had not been back to another Catholic worship service, until I went there, it was 1984, and it was Thanksgiving. And, um, I can remember, um, the first time I went to Mass, it was very, very different from anything else that I've experienced anywhere, in the sense that, the chapel is very small and it's round. And there is a place cut out in the floor where everyone sits, um, on their knees, or you can sit on the ledge. And the altar is made of wood and a rock, and, it's very earthy. The chapel is very earthy, it's wood it's things from outside. The flowers came from right outside in the yard and, uh, they bake the communion bread, it was not the crispy wafers things, it's baked, you know, unleavened bread. And the smell of the wine and the smell of the incense and everything, and the smell of the turkey in the background. That was just, it was kind of this pushing together of so many things that all of a sudden kind of broke open into an awareness, it was an awe, kind of thing of beyond. It was not just being in the here. I was like, um, I was aware of the smells and the sounds and the ritual and the smell of the turkey. And all of a sudden, it just, it was like everything opened, to, uh, gawd, it's not away, it was open to more here, that was uh, presence, awareness of, gawd, I don't know how to explain this. But of somehow being in the midst of, uh, ~ than what could be seen, and felt, and touched, and smelled at that point.

I: So somehow in the midst of all these smells and feelings and sights, you also became aware of something that was present, but more than (p: any of those things) any of those things.

P: Yes, it was, it's, it's an, it's there. It's not like far away and you get some idea of it, IT IS THERE. It is, um, it is in the midst, it is more than the sum of the parts.(laugh) It is more than the smells, and the people, um, you know, and being there in community. But it's like, it's an important thing. Um, (laugh), and I don't know how to talk about it in a real way. I mean, it's, it's there, and it's, it's. I don't think it ever

goes away. I think it is something that's always available and present, but it's not always accessible. Uh, I don't live in the midst, I don't live in the knowledge of it being there all the time.

I: So you suspect that it may always be there, but you aren't always open to it?

P: Well, I don't think. (or aware of it?) It's such an overwhelming and awesome experience, I don't think I could live with the awareness and open, you know, be aware of it in that kind of impact all the time and get anything else done. It's like it washes over you in a way that (laugh) goose bumps and all the senses are going. It's incredibly sensual.

I: So it washes over you in a way that would prevent you getting anything else done.

P: Yes. It almost. It renders me, um, it's such an enjoyable experience, and it's a such an overwhelming and powerful experience, that to be aware of that is to almost lose what's going on here. It's kind of a. It's kind of like when you're jettisoned in your mind. Oh, when there's something so powerful in the smell and stuff, that, all of a sudden, you realize that you're not thinking about what's going on at the present and you lose, kind of, the awareness of that and you're kind of into something else. It's very like that, except that, I have no idea of what I am aware of at that time, other than I remember that beginning kind of opening feeling and stuff and then it's like, um, (laugh) gollie, uh, I'm aware of being connected.

I: So, in this opening. So, let me see if I understand this. (laugh) You become very. Um. You're aware of a heightened sense of things going on around you, the smells, the tastes, the sense of being with other people. Um. And then suddenly, it's as if that opens up into this other presence, this other something, that is more than the sum of all those sensual things. It is almost as if they are necessary but not sufficient. (Yes) And then there is this opening to something else, an unidentified something else, in which you talked about it (pause)

P: You see, I don't know if it is a level of consciousness, I don't know if it's a level of awareness, I don't know if it's insanity, I don't know what it is.

I: You talked about feeling in that time of opening all of a sudden losing some awareness of your present surrounding, in a way that just previously you were very aware of them. Then all of a sudden you sort of lose awareness of them and you become very aware of this presence, whatever it is, and are feeling very connected.

P: To everything. (1: connected to everything.) Everything. It's a connectedness that transcends time and space. It's, it's kind, it's an awareness of an inner connection with

everything. With, um, with the stars, with the cosmos, with the ground, with people, with trees, and stones, uh, and flowers, and animals and birds, and, uh, the turkey cooking. I mean, It's like, it's like a connection. It's a connection to all that has been and all that will be. It's a. (pause) and it's very present. It's not like leaving. It's like that it expands beyond, that includes everything and every-yeah, (laugh)-it's not so much-it's an opening, but, it's a this. It's a movement, uh, it encompasses everything.

I: Okay, I just want to note that you are using your arms to show me and you're opening them very wide. Um, I think. It seems like what you're saying is this isn't something that takes you Q.Y1 of your present. It something that encompasses your present. (Yes). It doesn't take you away from your present, the present is there, it is just infinitely expanded.

P: Yes. That's much better. It's not like I go away, I become less aware of like the, everything is still there and it's still, but it goes way beyond that. It expands beyond it.

I: The present moment suddenly gets much bigger that it had been.

P: Yes. It kind of. Yes. I mean, time and space seem to, somehow, (laugh) I don't know how, but they seem to somehow collapse in on itself and not be, you know, it's like, (pause).

I: I know when you said this transcends time and space, I wasn't sure exactly what you were talking about. I have an idea of that, but I don't have, I don't understand your experience of that. So, I was wondering if you could tell me some of that.

P: (sigh). I know that I am not aware of time and that is time of day as well as year. And it is as if, uh, I know this is going to sound corny, but, it's like, it's almost as if as in the middle of that expansion that people from my past and people that lived long before me are, enter into that expansion. Um, it's not like there are really there, but it's, it's very fluid. Very fluid. Um. Categories seem to lose any real usefulness in that space.

I: Um. Can we talk some more, you said people from the past, and by that you say that you mean both your personal past and otherwise. (Yeah). You say that you have an awareness of them as there.

P: Yes, Um. It's almost as if that the designation of time that we make just do not apply. And it's not like I can see them or could sit and have a conversation with them, but I'm aware that somehow they are in this space, or in this expansion. It's not really a space. It's in this expansion. Um. Connection.

I: So, some of the connection is not just to, um, all of the things that you've mentioned, it's also a connection with other lives.

P: Mmmm. Very much. Connection with other lives. It's the sense that their lives (laugh) are kind of part of mine in that sense. Um. It is not their, it was their life and they lived and died and then there's my life and I live and die and they are not connected. In this space, in this expansion theirs is just this powerful awareness, this awesome awareness that there is connection between all of that.

I: Um. You've mentioned connection a lot of times in a lot of different ways (yeah) and my sense of it is that it's a powerful awareness of connection. And I was wondering if you were saying the thing that is different is the connection or I the awareness of connection.

P: I think it is the awareness of the profound interrelatedness. Um. The connection can remain after that, the knowledge of that, um, and the awareness even but in this expansion, it is more than just knowledge, it's embodied, somehow, in the moment.

I: It sounds like you're having an' experience of the connectedness in that expanded, that, we're calling it now the expansion, that you actually have an experience of the connectedness, it's not just that you know it or suspect it or take it as a philosophical position. You actually have an experience of connectedness.

P: It's a knowing in a different way. Yes. It is experiencing, somehow, and it is more than mind, it is, it is a physical experience.

I: Yes, you said that is was embodied. I was wondering if you could say more a little bit more about that.

P: (laugh). It's embodied in the expansion. Uh, and I don't know exactly what I mean by that, that's about the closest I can get. It's not like I feel like they're in me, although there is some sense that the connections run through me. (um hum) Um, and maybe it's embodied because of the sensual nature. (pause) I don't know.

I: Yeah, I guess I'm wondering what makes you say, what makes you say the word embodied? What makes that the right word?

P: Well, somehow, because it is in this expansion, um, (pause) I'm not sure why it feels that embodied is the right word. But it's not like, I know that I have some experience, but it's as if I become part of the ground, and I'm not the figural. And

that's the experience, and then somehow, when I'm part of the ground I'm somehow embodied in something that's bigger than me.

I: Okay. So you become part of the something that's bigger than you? I notice that as you're talking about this, um, your body has changed, you've suddenly sat up very close on the edge of your chair and you've used your arms a lot, and, and you've actually used more space to express yourself. Um, and I wonder if that's part of this feeling that, this embodiedness, that you actually, you say that you feel part of something bigger, as if (pause) .

P: It's like the interconnections run through me. It's not that they, you know, that I realize that I'm connected to or part of something. It's like, actually feeling them running through me. The physical connection, somehow, that I have no language to tell you about. I really don't. Um. But I can feel it, it's a physical, kind of embodied experience; of whatever the expansion is and the interconnectedness with everything is about, I feel that running through me, it's very fluid.

I: Yes, before when you talked things being fluid, you talked about normal boundaries change. (Yes) The normal categories don't apply and the boundaries of those categories have changed. And I'm wondering that is part of this.

P: Very much. It's, it's like finding yourself somewhere where the way you've talked about things (laugh) just doesn't exist. They, to try to, to tell about this (pause). It's like every time I say a sentence to try to describe something, I know that I've not captured it.

I: It's something that's somewhat beyond words, words just don't do it justice.

P: And it's um, I mean, fluid probably gets as close as anything in the sense that, I don't know how something can be so fluid and feel so present.

I: Hum. Fluid and present can't go together?

P: Well, it doesn't seem to, but yeah I guess it can, it does. I mean, it's very present, it's not like a remembering, and it's not like a being gone, somehow. It's very present and it's very fluid.

I: And this was what you experienced at the monastery and um (pause).

P: It was my first time there, and um, was the thing that kept me coming back (laugh). Um, it was an incredible experience (sounds very ??) Yeah, and I began to read at that point too, which was kind of helpful because I wasn't sure, I mean the sister seemed to know what I was talking about when I tried to explain, um. and she didn't seem to have words to talk about it either, other than that I kept talking about

feeling like, you know, this being part of everything and interconnected. And she said, " Ah, Thomas Merton wrote about that, and I thought, "who's Thomas Merton?" (laugh). Because I didn't have any idea at that point. Um, then I began to read, kind of, some of his stuff on contemplative prayer, and uh, but uh, those times have come very rarely since. I've had other times when I've had a sense of connection that have been, um, times at the monastery and they've had to more to do with, um, being in the community. That awareness. It's almost as if it's a, a memory, somehow, uh, that remembers the expansion and the experience of all that. And working in the dirt does that, kind of remembers.

I: It calls something to mind in this, see if I understand what your saying, the expansion experience that you had at the monastery , uh, was kind of a one time thing in it's, in it's fullness. And that you've had other experiences that remember it, call it to mind, are reminiscent of it-but don't quiet

P: It's like a living remembering, you knowing, it's like in the doing somehow memories are called forth, but it's not like just thinking about. It like living memory.

I: Okay. You have some experience of that without the fullness of the total experience?

p; Um hum. It's not in it's totality, I guess. I: But they are related and of the same kind.

P: Yes. They are connected somehow, they are part of the same thing.

I: I wonder if you could say what the, what the similarities are, what the connections are.

P: (sigh). It's the sensual nature of it. It's very similar, in the sense of feeling, I mean, it's a very sensual thing though; heightened awareness of sense of smell and the sense of awe, um. And it's like being very present to something and things are a little fluid, you know, that happen like that connection in the dirt with things that became very fluid. Um. It's just not the expansion, in that particular kind of wide- open fluid present thing doesn't, but it's like the memory of that is evoked somehow in the smells, and in um, things. And I think that (pause).

I: So there's a similar sort of heightened sensuality, um, heightened fluidity, or sense of fluidity and connectedness, um, (P: and awe) and awe. That is similar to, a part of, of the same essence as the original experience, if not the complete original experience.

P: Right, it is. Um, it's kind of like, and, and it's, and it feels, really it's very nice, it's a very nice feeling. It's a very comfortable thing. It's not frightening, by any means.

And it's almost as if those things bring about with it, kind of this really pleasant memory, um, it's an embodied memory because it's more than just me thinking. You know, how you can live memory, somehow, in the feelings, in the body, in the smells. And it's more of that kind of thing, and it's very pleasant and it's very um awesome in the sense of feeling connected. And I think that, um, that's the thing that keeps pushing me back to community, to church, somehow. Um. I'm trying to find, I'm hopefully going to find other places that experience (laugh) that I experience that, 'cause that was so much apart of the beginning of the journey, um, to seminary and, and all. It was, I think, a kind of a search for places in which that was more present, more often. Um.

I: You wanted to find that expansion experience um, more regularly or (pause).

P: Yeah, I wanted to, um, I think, in some senses, probably trying to recreate, um, opportunities for that to happen, to find places. And for other people to experience, because it was very, um, it was very life changing, it was very affirming.

I: Sounds like it. You said that this was part of, this was the beginning of your journey (Yeah) that took you to seminary among other places. (uh huh)

P: The next year I went to back to school and finished my undergraduate degree. Went on and got accepted to Vandy and started seminary.

I: Can you think of another time you want to talk about.

P: No, I think that is it.

I: Thank you for talking to me about your spiritual experiences.

P: Thank you for being willing to do the interview.

APPENDIX F

SAMPLE INTERVIEW

#004 48 yr. old, Caucasian male

I: Can you think about some times when you've been aware of being spiritual or felt spiritual and tell me about those in as much detail as you can?

P: And you're not going to define that term spiritual for me are you? (laugh)

I: No.

P: When I started thinking about this previously, the first thing that came to mind was a time I thought I had died. It was in 1983 or 84, so I would have been in my mid-30s [I: um hum]. And um, it's kind of a funny story now, but what happened was um it was winter time and my car was in the garage and so I had to walk several blocks, I was living in Pennsylvania, had to walk several blocks to go pick it up. [I: uh huh] And it had snowed during the night, so I'm walking along in this snow, but the sun is out, so it's very, very bright. I didn't have sunglasses, [I: um] and I was having to squint to be able to see where I was going, it was so bright, because it was brand new snow. There were no cars anywhere, it was pretty deep snow. And I got to the garage and I went inside, it was an old crummy building, I had only been there once before and I walked in the office and uh, suddenly everything was dark because I had been outside in the bright light. And the far wall of the office was a glass wall that looked out into the garage where the people were working, there was nobody in the office. So, I walked over to the glass wall to see if there were anybody out there in the garage. And, what I didn't notice because I couldn't see was that there was a big opening in the floor going down to the basement that did not have a railing around it! [I: oh my gosh!] 'Cause the whole floor to me was just black. [I: yeah.] So, one minute I walking across the room and the next minute I'm falling and everything is black, is completely black! [I: Oh my God.] So, I just thought that I died. And in a manner of speaking my life flashed before my eyes [I: um hum]. I'd been raised with a lot of, I grew up here with a lot of...even though the Presbyterian Church...very fundamentalists kind of background, there are Southern Baptist in my family and a lot of guilt and shame and the idea of original sin, and I felt I had not anything to overcome any of that [I: um hum]. Um, I had not, I had been involved in Baptist church as a teenager and all my peers were telling stories of being saved, 'cause that was kind of required [I: um hum] as part of attending a Baptist church, you had to go down front in church once in a while and cry and bare your soul. Even though I knew some people were making stuff up, it still was like something I'm supposed to do, and I, even in my 30s I was, at that time I had been, well I hadn't actually been out of the church that long, 'cause I grew up going to church all the

time then I majored in music in college, became a choir director, a church choir director before I even got out of college. [I: hum] So, even though I didn't go along with most of what I was hearing every Sunday, I was in church every Sunday all though my 20s and 30s, and so at this point, I'd only been, I'd only stopped attending church for maybe 3 or 4 years. And I was still with all this idea that I was a failure and that I was guilty and that I was sinful, and blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. So when I thought I was dying and my life just went (snaps fingers) through me in a millisecond, I *knew* that I was okay. [I: hum] I knew that I wasn't going to hell. I knew that I had done the best I could, it may not be good enough to suit other people but there was just a real deep knowing [I: hum] that, um, that I wasn't bad and wasn't hopeless and I had not screwed everything up. You know, that even though I had not done what I wanted to, that I had done the best I could with the equipment that I had. [I: um hum] So, that was a really, um, that was only the second time I can remember knowing something that I didn't study to learn or somebody else didn't teach me or whatever, it was just something that came to me from some higher place. [I: um hum] The first time I had that experience, which doesn't seem as powerful, but it was the same experience, was the first time I had what most people would consider illicit sex. Um, and I had, I had, and even though it was something I wanted to do and this was a particular person I'd been pursuing for some time [I: um hum] um, when I finally got into bed with this person, something in me, my, I guess, to use a transactional analysis term, that the parent within me, which was a *real* powerful part of my mind, was telling me all along when you finally do this, even though you know you going to do it, you know you are going to feel rotten and dirty and terrible and sinful [I: hum] and it may condemn you to Hell for ever and ever. And when I finally went to bed with this person I just suddenly knew, I felt, as a matter of fact I felt cleansed, it was like I had just immersed myself in the cleanest water in the world. [I: um hum, this can't be wrong?] I felt right, and whole [I: hum] and clean and clear [I: hum] um, and I don't know what that came from. (laugh) That was just...there it was! [I: huh. Kind of just the opposite of what you expected.] Um hum. And this had happened way before the first experience I told you about. [I: um hum] I probably had forgotten about it even. (PAUSE) I guess a less specific idea, and this is one I hadn't really thought about before, just now it pops into my mind. Um, just the whole thing surrounding meeting and falling in love with my 2nd wife and the years that we spent together and a lot of stuff that we went through. She was more spiritually oriented, what I would call spiritually as opposed to religiously involved. [I: um hum] Well actually, I think they are, you know, if you drew a diagram they would be 2 circles that intersect to some degree, but, um, I don't know that I can go into detail, it's just again, it's kind of a lot of knowing on a kind of a non-verbal level [I: um hum], you know. Even as I talk of all of these things it kind of reduces them to have to put them into words. About a year and ½ ago, when I was in the Rocky Mountains, that was just, being there was a spiritual experience. [I: um hum] And I have subsequently had several, what I would call at least transcendent kind of experiences, *here* in the Smoky Mountains, which I had, I don't think I ever

really had had before growing up here and being in the mountains a lot and enjoying them [I: um hum] but I never, and I guess it's because I am more open to the possibility now. But, in the past, you know, I was here temporarily a year, but I didn't really move back permanently till just a few months ago. But in the past, about 15 months, I've had several really transcendent kind of experiences of seeing things in or near the Smoky Mountains that I've either never seen before or never seen in the way that I saw them. [I um hum]

I: Can you tell me um a specific time to kind of help me understand what you're talking about?

P: Well, last February I was visiting, I went up, drove up to Newfound Gap, and just happened to be there on a day that there was hoarfrost. [I: hum] I had heard that term, but I didn't know what it was. [I: hum] It was the more magical because I was with someone who was very special and had never been here and had never been in the Smoky Mountains and was visiting me at the time. And so it was, both of us, we drove up toward Newfound Gap and we got up a certain elevation and just suddenly everything changed. [I: hum] there was this white stuff on the trees that I'd never seen before [I: hum], she'd never seen before, we didn't know what it was, we just stopped and got out of the car and were kind of looking...it was, it was like the opposite of the Twilight Zone, it kinda, suddenly we had just driven into another dimension, [I: hum] I had never even see pictures that this before [I: um hum] and kind of, you know, rendered us speechless, and other people were stopping too. And so finally there was a photographer there with rather elaborate camera, and so we said "what is this?" (laugh) "it's not snow, it's not frost, it's not ice." And he told us what it was, and, uh, it wasn't supposed to be happening. Hoarfrost generally is something that happens very early in the morning and then melts. This was like 11:00/11:30 [I: wow] should have been gone hours ago [I: um hum] so that just kind of added to the magical experience of it all. [I: um hum] So, that was the most dramatic one

I: um hum..So, it's like, uh, it comes to mind because it's something that, uh, that shouldn't have been happening but it kind of, it surprises you [P: um hum] in it's naturalness, [P: um hum] but at an unexpected time. Is that...?

P: Yeah, it's like a revelation. It's like something, again, it's something that is given to you, that you are not seeking. [I: um hum] And even that horrible experience of falling in the whole, 'cause I also tore the hell out of my knee in the process. [I: I bet] But it was a wonderful experience (laugh), [I: um hum]

I: Even if you did have to fall to the basement (laugh), I mean, there was something about what happened in that intervening time of free falling that, uh, was something

you didn't seek, and you wouldn't have even known to ask for, it sounds like. [P: Yeah!] That your life flashed before your eyes....

P: In that respect, what allowed me to go to Colorado was an extended spiritual experience and I haven't really defined it as such before, but it really was. I had ended up in New York, living in New York, which I had always wanted to do. [I: um hum] Once I got there I hated it! I couldn't, I said, I can't live like this. Spent a year in New York City after several months, I said, I don't know what I am going to do, but this has to end, I can't endure this anymore. I was married and my wife loves it in New York City [I: hum], so that complicated matters. So I just started....I had gotten into praying a few years before that, being very careful not to ask for anything specific (laugh) [laugh], but just sort of help me be open, help me be ready. And a lot of prayers of gratitude but I began praying and meditating and telling everybody I knew I'm unhappy, this isn't working, I've got to out. I don't know what to do [I: uh huh]. After a year, nothing came, no answers. [I: hum] I said I have just got to get out of the city and think, so I took a little trip. About the 2nd day into the trip, I got a phone call, I was in DC, got a phone call from my wife and she said, "somebody wants you to be keyboard player for the National Tour for Jesus Christ Superstar." [chuckle] Not a job that I had applied for. [I: um hum] that got my name. "And they want you to start tomorrow." [laugh] I said well, this is certainly not any solution I would have made up [I: um hum] and it's not permanent, it's only a short-term thing, [I: um hum] but it's all I've got so I'm gonna do it! [I: um hum.. was this when Ted Neely and ...] um hum. So I did it and for 5 months I traveled over most of the country. I was with a bunch of 20 something's who were not normal theater people, which was what I was used to, [I: um hum] they were mostly people who would only do "Jesus Christ Superstar" and "Hair" [I: yeah] and I didn't get along with them. I was in Hell, it was absolute hell. [I: hum] We were on busses [I: oh] one or two nights in a city most of the time and sleeping on the busses. It was the worst experience of my life, and in someways, the best experience of my life. [I: hum] 'Cause I got real clear, I had a lot of time to myself, and I saw amazing things, we were in all parts of the country except the Southeast, so, I had spent very little time in the Mid-West, and I had only flown to Los Angeles once, so we were on a bus going through almost every state. And, uh, so that, that was a kind of 5 month spiritual experience. (laugh) [I: What made that...?] in that, in that it was also not sought. And once I got into it, I did deliberately start doing what I call my own spiritual work, homework, digging and so forth, but I never knew that was where I was going to be doing it. [I: uh huh] And I didn't know, well I guess I did too, I'm bipolar manic-depressive, and I had only known that for a couple of years or so before going on that trip [I: um hum]. And, um, so I had already been through several dark nights of the soul, as they say, and I had survived and I knew that no matter how painful this was, I was going to survive it. Not through any great indomitable spirit that I have, because I am not a fighter necessarily, but I just knew that it was okay that it wasn't going to kill me. [I: hum] And for me that's a great spiritual lesson that you don't,

sometimes you do have to fight, and I can fight, but it's not my nature to be a real buck-o. But I knew that if I stayed true to my path as best I could, that the pain was necessary to get me to go where I needed to go. [I: um hum] And, so, it became very clear that I could not, under *any* circumstances, go back to New York for anything other than a few days visit. So then I had to decide what to do, [I: um hum] where to do it, etc. [I: hum]

I: Tell me, um, you talk about the time, kind of this, that 5 months that you toured with the company as kind of a "dark night of the soul." [P: um hum] Uh, can you tell me a little more about what made it, how you understand that as a "dark night of the soul" or what you mean by that?

P: Well, at least one component of it is, most of the time when you're, it's...it's like, I was talking to someone about this the other day, it's like being in a long tunnel with no light, and you're not even sure that there is another end to the tunnel. [I: mmm] You're groping and everything seems dark and everything seems hopeless and everything seems to be against you. [I: mmm] The only light is somewhere in the back of mind or the back of the heart, or somewhere, you know. But, it's just, for me, a dark night of the soul means that there may be no point to life, and there may be nobody that cares whether I come out of the tunnel or not and it's rather self-centered, at least for me, interactions I do have with people I tend to take them very personally like people are deliberately trying to do harm to me. Um, by that time, I had benefitted somewhat from experience, so that even, even when I was surrounded by those fears I was able to also see little acts of kindness here and there. [I: um hum] But my heart was always in that darkest place. Um, wondering how could I be so incompetent to get myself to this un-evolved place [I: hum—un-evolved being the company you were with or the feelings you were having?] No, un-evolved in terms of being able to be any kind of enlightened or useful human being. [I: hum...hummm] And also a functioning human being, I just felt like everything I did, everything I tried to do in the world up to that point didn't work. [I: hum]

I: Were you aware at the time that this was going on, or was it after, about this being a dark night of the soul and you're kind of understanding it spiritually?

P: Oh, I was aware at the time.

I: That, how did you understand it as spiritual? What made it, what made you feel....?

P: Well, I felt like I was wrestling with the Devil! [I: hum] Not literally, but wrestling with my own devil or the devil part of me, which includes the devils of my internal parent, you know. I was in the first, the first really good therapist I ever had, I've had many therapist in my life (laugh) [I: uh huh] the first good one I had was an

Episcopalian priest [I: hum] who used Transactional Analysis model. And I just found that so helpful to see that the parts of me that were painful or shaming, guilt-producing uncomfortable in any way even though they were part of me as an adult, they were, I didn't create them. [I: um hum] And so, in a way I could kind of sometimes set them up on a shelf and look at them and decide what I want to do with them. And, of course, in the beginning, I couldn't manage to do anything with them, but as time has gone by, [I: uh huh] you know, I have gotten a little better at that. [I: um hum] Or at least able to leave them up on the shelf for longer periods of time so they are out of the way. [I: hum... um hum]

I: So, a lot of what that particular experience has, was about, was this kind of being aware that you were wrestling with something important. [P: um hum] And, uh, it felt very dark, and like there was no where to go and there might not be any way out, but yet there was some part that you, uh, you'd had experience with this before so there was some sense that something would happen, even if there was not really an end to the tunnel, but somehow something would be different. [P: um hum] And, uh, this kind of deep wrestling with parts of yourself that you felt had to this point been, kind of produced the product of you that was not functioning that was, that you really hadn't gotten anywhere yet, you hadn't accomplished anything, that, what was the purpose of things for *you*. And up to this point in your life these were the things that were coming out and kind of had the fore that you were really wrestling with.

P: Yeah. And part of that too is that I think one of my mixed blessings is, uh, I've always had a high degree of ability for sympathy and empathy and to see things that are not right with the world and so part of my pain about myself was a seeming inability to deal with those outside forces as well as my own inside forces. [I: uh huh]

I: To...?

P: To affect any change. [I: mmm] By that time, I had had enough experience in recovery through therapy and through involvement in 12-Step programs to know that it's really not my job to change the world. Um, not that I can't make a difference, but it's not my job to go out there and fix everything. And I also, I don't have a very good memory for details of the past but a few things just pop up. And one of the things that I had heard that still means a lot to me...several years ago, I heard an interview on the radio with, I think it was Tony Morrison, [I: hum] no, it wasn't Tony Morrison, the woman who wrote the poem for Clinton inauguration [I: Maya Angelou] Maya Angelou. Who had come up through such a horrible, horrible life [I: yes]. Who was at that time a successful writer, a teacher, etc., her life was going pretty well, and she was asked, you know, are you beyond all that other stuff and do you feel like your life is good, you say you've let go of a lot of the anger and rage and so on...And she said, something along the lines of if a day goes by (tearing up) and I

don't cry at least as much as I have laughed then I feel like I have really lived that day, or life is not right or not complete. [I: mmm] And uh, I have never gotten to that place, but to be able to have that sensitivity and deal with it and cry about it but *not let it get ya down*, I guess, you know, that, for a long time that's why I couldn't be sensitive because I have this tendency of depression, which is congenital apparently. And if I let too much outside darkness come to me I just get *overwhelmed* and I can't permit it. [I: um hum] I can't function at all. So, it was great to hear somebody say that they you can have a great life and you can be happy but you better not leave the bad stuff behind and pretend like it doesn't exist, it is still there with us all the time and every day. And it's okay to live with both and when you look at the greatest plays of Shakespeare and other writers and novices, well, and there are the tragedies of Shakespeare are full of comedy. [I: um hum] And any great writer who writes tragedies, except maybe for the Greeks (laugh), there is a lot of funny stuff! [I: uh huh] It all goes together.

I: It is like the flip side with comedy there is a lot of tragedy.

P: Well it's inspired by tragedy, yeah.

I: Can you think of any other things that you haven't talked about that might be important for me to know in understanding your experience?

P: I'm sure there are a lot! (laugh) [I: laugh]

I: There doesn't really have to be, I just wanted to make sure that [P: yeah] that you have said everything [P: well, I've kind of been doing stream of consciousness] uh huh, [so far] that's fine [nothing else is waiting in the wings right now, but if you have any other questions, I'm sure you will stimulate something. Well, no actually, I was just going to try to see if I could sum up and make sure that I haven't missed understanding any of your experience. (PAUSE)

Uh, you kind of touched on, you talked about first, your experience in Philadelphia, or in Pennsylvania, I don't know if it was in Philadelphia, but in Pennsylvania, of the snow and walking and being blinded and falling through and thinking you were dying and your life flashing before you as kind of the place you started. And kind of an experience, something that happened to you that kind of brought you face to face with yourself, if you will. And that even though it was quite painful, in the sense of the physical pain and the trouble with your knee and falling though the floor there was something that came out of it that you have felt has been a very powerful part of a continuing journey that you're on, in the sense of looking at yourself and kind of overall what you would call spiritual experience, spiritual journey, I'm not sure what word you would..what you would do with that. Then you kind of touched on an earlier time, where something, the same thing here, is that you had insight into

yourself with that experience and you remembered an earlier time that was involved in something that given your religious experience of the time and kind of where you were and what you had been taught you expected to have feelings to have feelings of guilt and shame and for this not to be good and everything. But yet there was someone you were very interested in and had a sexual experience with them and at the same time in the midst of that something that seemed to be beyond you some revelatory kind of knowledge coming that said, that was much different that what you expected. It was about being whole, about being clean. Uh, that seems to be at the center of you and that somehow, uh, and was beyond you, it was not something because the messages that you had had kind of consciously with yourself had been almost the total opposite of that. Uh, the other kind of journey things you've talked about had uh, like here with the hoar frost experience, then the being called about playing keyboard, uh, for "Jesus Christ Superstar" the National Travel Company, was about unexpected things coming up, that seemed to at least in the traveling that you did was more about, uh, even though this was a very painful dark experience, that had been born after a year of living in a place where you were not happy and things didn't feel like they were working and you wanted out, was a time of wrestling with yourself, not necessarily the revelatory aspect that you had falling through the floor, and with the sexual experience, but of something coming that hadn't been asked for, the job, that in some senses brings you to yourself again. Kind of a battling with yourself you talked about with this of the devils within you and kind of wrestling to get some sense of yourself and some things to make peace with or to make sense of the feelings of not having made a difference or not having been in the places that you wanted to be or thought you might be by this time. And then the experience in the Smokies, of being with someone very special and then happening upon in the midst of a time when it shouldn't be happening, but the hoar frost experience, a natural kind of phenomenon that seemed to be, uh, as well, a gift as you had talked about these other things being. And that in the mist of that there was some sense of being connected or being apart of something that was much bigger. [P: I didn't say that, but that's true. Yes, thank you.] I heard that in what you said. That kind of coming from that part of falling through the floor, of there's something beyond because there was, it was given to you, that there was something more, whatever that is. And your sense of that and, and, uh, that kind of at least...did I leave anything out, or did I miss anything, or did I something that you wouldn't have said, or....?

P: No, that's really good! I can't listen and regurgitate like that...that's wonderful! (laugh) [laugh] I admire it! Um...there was a little thought that slide by, but I can't remember what it was, it wasn't very important. It was just something else I thought of while you were talking. It's been very helpful for me to speak of these things in this way. It's really brought into sharper focus the idea of revelation in what you just said about the sense of being part of something larger. These are things that I know but, you know, now I really get how profound that is. [I: mmm] Oh I know what it was that I thought of that...being on that trip there were lots of little surprises. I

haven't thought about this before as them being kind of mini-spiritual experiences. But one of the things that was so painful about the trip is that I was on a bus with these other people, and yet I was alone most of the time. 'Cause they would stay up all night. I would go to bed at 11 or 12:00. They would stay up 'till 3, 4, 5:00 in the morning, and then sleep most of the day, 'cause we just basically worked at night. [I: um hum] And, so I would wake up at 6, 7, 8:00 in the morning and everybody else would be asleep. And so if we had arrived at our destination, I would get up and go exploring: alone. And I hated that I was always doing it alone, but on the other hand, the up side of that was I was completely free to go exactly where I wanted and spend as much time there as I wanted to. [I: um hum] And, since most of the places we were, I had never been before, there was a lot of amazing experiences, which were things that I didn't know I was going to have. And I knew we were going to be near the Grand Canyon, but I didn't know I was actually going to get to see it. [I: mmm] I rented a car and drove out there by myself. [I: uh huh] And spent an afternoon at the Grand Canyon and because I was by myself, I actually managed to see a lot more of the Grand Canyon than if I had been with somebody else. I actually spent some time hiking down into the Grand Canyon. [I: um hum] And I remember one of the things that, one of my strong memories that was a painful, in some ways, experience in Eerie, Pennsylvania in December. It was blizzard. I mean I got up, I woke up in the morning and got off the bus and the snow was blowing sideways. [I: hummm] There was hardly any traffic, it was even cold for people who live there. [I: hum] But I said, I cannot stay on this bus, it's ...by that time we were several months into the tour and matter of fact I think it was January. Um, I stayed on the bus for an hour or 2 and I couldn't stand it anymore. And I wrapped up as warmly as I could and I went for a walk. And it was physically, *extremely* painful (laugh) [I: um, I bet!]. Because I did not have adequate clothing. [I: mm]

I: Can you really have adequate clothing for...?

P: Well probably not (laugh), but I really didn't. I mean I had on a jacket, a waist length jacket [I: on my god] and not very heavy head gear. And I was looking for something to do and there wasn't much going on. So I wandered around and got lost and uh, finally found the museum, the art museum, and went in and I was the only one person there. [I: wow] And so they let me see it for free, (laugh) [laugh] which was a little blessing [I: uh huh] and it wasn't much of a museum, but anyway, just the kind of combination of misery but, but yet experiencing a blizzard like I have...and I've been in bad weather before, but that was *the* coldest that I've ever been. And just to be able to have that extreme and experience [I: uh huh] um and top is off by having a whole museum to myself, [I: hum] was just kind of, you know, a completely unexpected gift. [I: uh huh] And I had a lot of those on that trip. [I: mmm] So I think maybe as a...I'm hoping as a result of this conversation, I'll be even more open to that kind of experience as life goes on. [I: uh huh]

I: Well I hope so too.

P: 'Cause I also didn't expect anything, you know, today, so...[I: um hum] I learned a lot...thank you.

I: Thank you. I really enjoyed hearing about your experiences.

APPENDIX G**FOLLOW UP LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS**

To: Research Participants
From: Kim A. Cornish
RE: Thematic Structuring of Spiritual Experiences

First of all, I want to thank you for talking with me about some very important and personal times in your life. I was very honored to hear your stories and to be allowed into such a private and personal place in your experience. Based on what you have told me, I hope that other psychologist, marriage and family therapist, and even pastoral counselors can benefit from being able to understand the importance of spiritual experiences in the lives of those with whom they speak.

The enclosed diagram illustrates the thematic structure of spiritual experiences derived from an analysis of your words. The experiences you related were in the contexts of your daily lives, even though some of you had one-time experiences, they occurred in the course of your daily living. Your experiences were described within the foundation of connection. Connection is the ground and the central focus around which the experiences revolve. There were three main themes: 1) Awe and Wonder, 2) Knowing, and 3) Possibility. All three main themes have sub-themes: Awe and Wonder included experiences that were powerful and disturbing or peaceful and comforting; Knowing involves an awareness of things not by cognitive means, and involved mystery and were ineffable; Possibility included feelings of being changed or different after having your experiences and feeling open to new perspectives or directions in your lives.

I have found evidence of all themes in all twelve interviews. What I need is your input to conclude my study. What I am interested in knowing at this point is whether or not the structure of the experience is truly representative of your experiences, the ones about which you told me. You do not have to agree with me! The structures can be changed. I have been able to find in every transcript examples of all the themes and the research group that has been helping me interpret your experiences is satisfied with the structure. However, you are the ones who had the experiences, and you must be satisfied too!

I look forward to talking briefly with all of you about my results. Thanks again for all your help. Interviewing all of you has been a growing experience for me and I hope for you too.

Sincerely,

Kim A. Cornish

APPENDIX H

DEMOGRAPHIC SHEET

Age _____ Level of Education _____ Occupation _____
 Gender _____ Race/Ethnicity _____
 Classification in College _____

PLEASE CHECK THE APPROPRIATE CATEGORY; INDICATE YOUR ANSWERS DIRECTLY ON THIS SHEET.

CHECK YOUR CURRENT RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION: Please be as specific as possible.

- (1) _____ Catholic (please specify Roman or Orthodox) _____
 (2) _____ Protestant (please specify church) _____
 (3) _____ Jewish (please specify) _____
 (4) _____ Islamic (please specify) _____
 (5) _____ Other (please specify) _____
 (6) _____ Non-affiliated but consider yourself religious
 (7) _____ Do not consider yourself religious AND are unaffiliated

IF YOU SELECTED 1-6 ABOVE, which word best characterizes the tradition you listed above? (check only one)

- (1) _____ Conservative
 (2) _____ Moderate
 (3) _____ Liberal

Has your religious affiliation changed since childhood?

- (1) _____ Yes
 (2) _____ No

IF YES, please identify the religious affiliation of your childhood.

- (1) _____ Catholic (please specify Roman or Orthodox) _____
 (2) _____ Protestant (please specify church) _____
 (3) _____ Jewish (please specify) _____
 (4) _____ Islamic (please specify) _____
 (5) _____ Other (please specify) _____

Do you attend worship? How often do you attend worship Monthly?

- | | | |
|---------------|----------------|-----------------|
| (1) _____ Yes | (1) _____ 1-5 | (4) _____ 16-20 |
| (2) _____ No | (2) _____ 6-10 | (5) _____ >20 |
| | (3) _____ 7-15 | |

Do you do devotional/discipline practices?

- (1) Yes
(2) No

IF YES, which of the following best describes this practice?

- (1) scripture reading
(2) meditation
(3) time in nature
(4) prayer
(5) self-improvement
(6) Habitat for Humanity,
hunger project, etc.
(7) Other (please explain) _____

VITA

Kim Ann Cornish was born in Ardmore, Oklahoma on December 8, 1953. She grew up in rural Oklahoma, graduating from Ames High School in 1972 in a class of seventeen seniors. The Fall of that year, she entered Phillips University in Enid, Oklahoma. She dropped out of university and worked in a variety of jobs as a welder, car parts sales person, in catering, as a bartender, and various jobs in the oil industry of Oklahoma before returning to Texas Christian University in 1985. She graduated *magna cum laude* in 1987 in Religion-Studies and entered Vanderbilt University the Fall of that year. Graduating from Vanderbilt in 1990 with a Master of Divinity degree, she was ordained to Christian ministry in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) January 6, 1991.

After working in parish ministry for a few years, Kim returned to university being accepted into the doctoral program in Clinical Psychology at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville in 1995. Her psychology internship at the James H. Quillen Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Mountain Home, Tennessee was completed in August of 2000. Her mother passed away in October 1999. In August 2001, she was awarded the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Psychology from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. In September 2001, she began a postdoctoral position in Clinical Psychology at the University of California Davis Medical Center, in Sacramento, California.