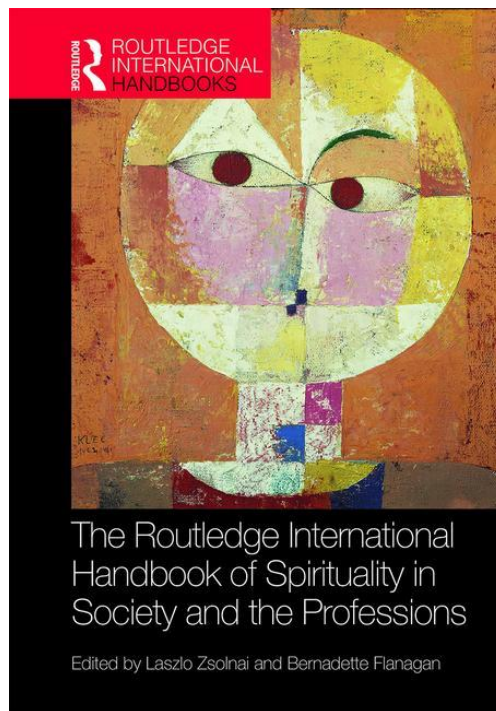


## Spiritualizing Social Practices

This compilation summarizes the most important messages of the **Routledge International Handbook of Spirituality and Society** (edited by Laszlo Zsolnai and Bernadette Flanagan, 2019, New York and London, Routledge).



The main point of the Handbook is that social activities and the human professions can gain a lot by employing a spiritual perspective. The essays of the Handbook show that spiritually grounded social practices can lead to better and more satisfying results than practices exercised on purely materialistic basis. Spirituality does not deny the importance of the material world and the material part of human existence but prioritizes the spiritual over the material. The primacy of the spiritual may catalyze substantial renewal of social practices which may bring more ecological, happier and peaceful being and functioning.

## Spirituality and Religion

[Ralph W. Hood, Jr.](#) (University of Tennessee at Chattanooga) argues that religion and spirituality are largely interdependent phenomena with persons identifying as “both religious and spiritual”, “neither religious nor spiritual”, “more religious than spiritual”, or “more spiritual than religious”.



Mystical experience is an experience of unity, of merging as one with a reality in which subject and object no longer exist as truly separate entities. Hood states that empirical study of mysticism clusters around three major findings. First, mystical experience is a common experience reported by many persons across a large variety of cultures. Second, mystical experiences can be directly cultivated. They can be seen as positive virtues and goals to be achieved. There are conditions that facilitate such experiences, including prayer, meditation, sensory isolation, and experiences in nature. Third, numerous drugs (many naturally occurring) can be used to facilitate mystical experience.

Hood emphasizes that psychology which accepts the reality of transcendent experience sees spirituality as inherent in human nature. Making spirituality integral to human psychology is possible and some psychologists have already begun to develop *psychology* as an inherently spiritual discipline.

See also **Transpersonalism, Emergent Research Methods**

Useful sources: [Society for the Psychology of Religion and Spirituality](#), [The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Spirituality](#), [William James](#)

## Philosophy

[David Rousseau](#) (Centre for Systems Philosophy) claims that contemporary philosophy is not only influenced by modern notions of spirituality but is also contributing to the development of spirituality. While spirituality is practice oriented, *philosophy* is reflection oriented. It is a discipline of inquiry that *questions* the *assumptions* behind worldview tenets and tries to work out objective reasons for advocating types of attitudes and kinds of practical action.



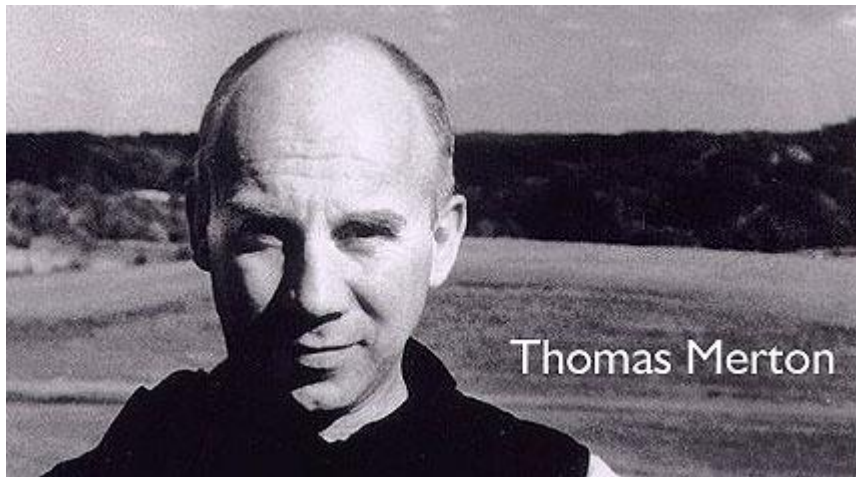
Rousseau suggests that philosophy, by seeking ways in which the truth, falsehood or likelihood of spiritual beliefs can be assessed, may make an important contribution to the evolution of spirituality in contemporary society. This is a break from the historical situation in which spiritual beliefs were grounded in religious teachings that are typically not open to question, and hence constrained in terms of their evolution. Rousseau asserts that we cannot be indifferent to philosophy's quest to clarify the authenticity of spirituality, nor the prospect of scientific research that reinforces, rather than demeans, spiritual worldviews.

See also **Spirituality and Religion**, and **Theology**

Useful sources: [Systems Philosophy](#), [Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#)

## Theology

[Thomas Dienberg](#), OFMCap (Philosophisch-Theologische Hochschule, Münster) warns that although spirituality is at the heart of theology, spirituality is not necessarily a theological discipline. He believes that a dialogue between spirituality and theology can be fruitful. One promising field for such a dialogue is *mysticism*. Theology analyzes mystical experiences especially in the human-God-relationship. Sometimes the analysis is a result of one's own mystical experiences.



Dominican Meister Eckhart, or in recent times Trappist monk Thomas Merton are good examples. Mystics often use the language of poetry for their unspeakable experiences of depths of life. The poetical language can touch people deeply and let them get into contact with themselves and the meaning of their lives.

Another important field of the dialogue between spirituality and theology is the so-called “*Post-Holocaust spirituality*”. American theologian Marie L. Baird suggests that spirituality must integrate the ethical responsibility for the other as the other. Auschwitz is a synonym for a place and an attitude where the other was completely denied. Characteristics of Post-Holocaust spirituality include witnessing, resistance, remembrance, responsibility and prayer. These aspects are also important for theological thinking in a postmodern world.

See also **Philosophy**, and **Spirituality and Religion**

Useful sources: [Meister Eckhart](#), [Thomas Merton](#), [Post-Holocaust Spirituality](#)

## **Culture**

[Imre Lazar](#) (Karoli University of the Reformed Church, Budapest) asserts that the desacralized culture of today fed a spiritual turn but often in distorted and dangerous forms. While the hegemonic power of the churches has been weakened, the charismatic, ecumenist, esoteric-occultist, syncretistic traditions have been growing and expanding.





Lazar warns that terms like "spiritual supermarket", „pick-and-mix” or „do-it-yourself” religion refer to the growing importance of the individualized social agency of the consumer self. The post-modernist and post-industrial transition brought a shift to an individualistic epoch of “second naiveté” spiritualism, radical relativism and eclecticism. On the other hand, religious fundamentalism rose up as a part of “resistance identities” in traditional societies undergoing rapid change. The new spiritual and religious practices of New Religious Movements include small churches with very diverse theological contents (charismatic Christian communities and reinvented gnostic, essenic religious practices sometimes mixed with esoteric or occult elements).

Lazar suggests that the opposition of modernity and postmodernity might be useful for understanding the cosmological shifts regarding personal agency in religiosity and spirituality. The postmodern turn around religious representations resulted in the end of big narratives and caused cultural fragmentation. This way „petit recits” of spirituality and their endless syncretistic recombinations exploded and conquered places left empty by former believers and atheists.

Lazar believes that individual, privatized spiritualities urges to integrate *anthropology of religion* into the general curriculum of coming generations. It is our task and responsibility to keep attention to the old rule: „nil nocere” („non hurting”). It involves to know the risks of the contemporary „occulture”, and the dangers of neglecting spirituality and forgetting our basic moral duties.

See also **Spirituality and Religion**, and **Transpersonalism**

Useful sources: [New Age](#)

## **Transpersonalism**

[B. Les Lancaster](#) and [Ellis H. Linders](#) (The Alef Trust and Liverpool John Moores University) suggest to make distinction between spirituality and transpersonalism. While the former refers to an individual’s personal search for meaning, the latter is more concerned with ways of knowing, especially when this involves scholarly approaches with their rigorous criteria.



Lancaster and Linders note that transpersonalism concerns an expanded perspective of human identity and potential which affects all areas of human endeavour and participation.

Additionally, transpersonalism holds an expanded vision of reality itself, which represents the ‘new frontier’ explored in the areas of quantum physics and consciousness studies. Transpersonalism seeks to create a synthesis between outer knowledge and inner experience which allows for an expanded vision and more holistic relationship with self, others and world.

Transpersonal theory holds that the human psyche operates on a continuum from pre-personal, to personal, to transpersonal; from superficiality to complexity; from immaturity to maturity; ignorance to wisdom. The transpersonal paradigm seeks to bring together the wisdom of spirituality with the understanding of transpersonal psychology, and apply this synthesised perspective to all areas of human endeavour to meet the complex problems of our times.

See also **Spirituality and Religion**, and **Emergent Research Methods**

Useful sources: [Transpersonal Psychology](#)

### **Emergent Research Methods**

[Rosemarie Anderson](#) (Sofia University, Palo Alto) and [Jacqueline Linder](#) (City University in Edmonton) refer to transformative approaches to the study of spiritual experience which feature research as a sacred encounter that involves the researchers’ understanding of the topic and themselves as human beings.

They believe that a *Sacred Science* is emerging as a new approach to research and scholarship that can integrate the natural and human sciences with knowledge gleaned in the world’s great spiritual traditions, including the epistemologies and methods known to the ancient world.



See also **Transpersonalism**

## Ecology

[Elizabeth Allison](#) (California Institute of Integral Studies) underlines that the spirituality of ecology describes the intuitions and sensations that bind people to the interconnected matrix of life on Earth, across time and space. Through experiences in nature, people may reconnect with other beings, Earth, and the cosmos.



Thomas Berry suggested that the “great spiritual mission of the present is to renew all the traditional religious-spiritual traditions in the context of the integral functioning of the biosystems of the planet”. Following Berry, numerous scholars and thinkers describe our ecological crisis as a spiritual crisis, noting that ecological destruction brings the loss of values of beauty, place, home, solace, and companionship.

The most recent significant statement on the intersections of religious faith and the environment came from Pope Francis with his encyclical letter *Laudato si'* (On Care for our Common Home). It brings attention to the interconnections of faith, spirituality, environmental degradation, politics, and justice. Francis calls for the acknowledgement of the intrinsic value of nature and urges developing frugal consumption and production praxis worldwide.

Allison notes that “*sacred ecology*” describes the holistic life-ways of Indigenous and Native peoples, in which the inter-being of plants, animals, minerals, and landscapes is woven throughout spirituality, ritual, and symbolism. Environmental conservation is increasingly attuned to the spirituality of sacred sites, mountains, and landscapes. Applied projects seek to draw out the spiritual values that inspire people to protect and care for natural places.

Allison also emphasizes the role spirituality in resisting the demands of the industrial growth that threatens the planet. As humanity faces the challenges of climate change, mass extinction, and ocean acidification, spiritual ecology becomes increasingly important for both appreciating the deep roots of human connection to living systems, and for identifying values and practices that can sustain life on Earth.

See also **Agriculture, Water, and Landscape Planning**



## Agriculture

[John Ikerd](#) (University of Missouri) argues that spirituality is an essential aspect of agriculture. However, since the mid-1900s, the spiritual connections of food and farming were sacrificed in bringing modern science and industrial technologies to agriculture. The industrial food system is not sustainable in any sense: it brings a large and growing number of unintended negative consequences – ecological, social, and economic.



Movement of organic and locally grown foods is reclaiming the sacred in food and farming. Ikerd warns that ecological integrity, social responsibility, and economic viability are essential conditions for sustainable agri-food systems. Based on *Aldo Leopold's* “land ethic” Ikerd suggests an ethic of sustainability: “A thing is right when it tends to enhance the quality and integrity of both human and non-human life on Earth. A thing is wrong when it tends otherwise”. He believes that caring for other people it is not a sacrifice because caring and sharing add quality and richness to our lives. Similarly, it is not a sacrifice to care for the Earth for the benefit of future generations because it also gives purpose and meaning to our lives.

See also **Ecology**

Useful sources: [organic agriculture](#), [community supported agriculture](#), [John Ikerd](#)

## Water

The water crisis is one of the most pressing global issues today. *Gary L. Chamberlain* (Seattle University) suggests that we can resolve the water crisis by recovering the spiritual dimensions of water in our personal lives as well as in the life of communities.





There exist spiritually-based water management systems both in ancient and contemporary forms. The indigenous Kogi of Columbia have protected their water sources as part of their understanding of *aluna*, primal water, which permeates all reality. Now they see their glaciers melting and are speaking out to the rest of the world, to us “younger brothers” who lack respect for the waters. Another ancient, spiritual tradition is the water temples of Bali and rituals surrounding them. For centuries, a complex system of water temples, watched over by Buddhist priests, governs a system separate from government efforts. Carefully using the 170 rivers and streams flowing down the slopes of sacred volcanoes, the system conserves water while also controlling pests. Such a complicated schedule and communal management demands a spiritual discipline of entire communities. The people consider the flow as sacred; its management is through the decisions of the priests. A regional hierarchy exists among the various “subaks” and local water temples which finally are under the direction of the high priest at the Temple of the Goddess of the Lake.

A contemporary initiative is the *World Water Contract* developed by Ricardo Petrella and his group. It acknowledges that water is the basis of life, indeed the source of life. It places the emphasis on access to water as an inalienable right and rejects the commoditization of water. Water belongs to the economy of common good and sharing, not to the economy of competition and private accumulation. Providing drinking water is a matter of solidarity. Inequalities in access to water should be removed. Water is a kind of ‘*respublica*’ which calls for participatory democracy where citizens, and not private economic interests must be at the centre. Local communities, cities, basins and regions need to get involved.

See also **Ecology**

Useful sources: [World Water Forum](#)

## **Landscape Planning**

[Cecil Konijnendijk van den Bosch](#) (University of British Columbia) emphasizes that landscape is the sum of actions that people and groups undertake to build and shape their environment. Thus landscapes are co-created by people and nature, and are shaped by a wide range of factors including economic and production purposes, cultural traditions, and spiritual values.



Landscape planning recognized the importance of close ties between people and nature also in the most urban centers. Van den Bosch refers to the movement of *Biophilic Cities*, stressing that any vision of a sustainable urban future must place its focus squarely on nature. A biophilic city is a place that learns from nature and emulates natural cities, but also designs and plans in conjunction with nature. An important role of nature in these cities is evoking wonder and awe in our lives, as well as create connections and connectedness to place.

Van den Bosch argues that we need to better integrate spirituality in design, planning and management, as well as in governance. We need to consider indigenous peoples and the long-standing spiritual links they have to their landscape, and the values newcomers have brought with them from the landscapes in their regions of origin. Taking such a comprehensive approach to spiritual values in landscape planning can contribute to better, more appreciated and vibrant landscapes, and to a better quality of life.

See also **Ecology, Urbanism**

Useful sources: [Biophilic Cities](#), [Urban Forestry](#)

## **Urbanism**

[Brian R. Sinclair](#) (University of Calgary) emphasizes that the world is now more urban than rural, with massive *migration* to *cities* by people dreaming of a better life, escaping from poverty and chasing the chance to thrive. While the advantages of cities are many, their problems are daunting. Diseases, pollution, congestion, and stress are daily obstacles confronting city dwellers.



Sinclair points out that strong design and planning accepts the *pragmatic* as a given while pursuing the inclusion of the *poetic*. In the intricate balance of the pragmatic and the poetic the spiritual is most likely to manifest. With basic needs realized, users of urban spaces and places can have the opportunity to experience beauty, encounter solitude, attain flow and achieve meaning in ways that enhance emotions, accentuate perception and heighten pleasure.

The depth of meaning of our spaces and places correlates with the richness of our spiritual experiences of the city. Places in many aspects influence our identities, inspire our activities, inform our lives and contribute to our rootedness, health and happiness. Sinclair suggests that a fuller understanding of place, and the related role of design and designers in bridging people and their environments, can improve our cities, buildings and interiors and heighten our wellness and fit therein.

See also **Landscape Planning, Architecture**

### **Tourism**

[Gregory Willson](#) (Edith Cowan University, Perth) and [Alison McIntosh](#) (AUT University, Auckland) note that the roots of modern tourism can be found in early pilgrimages and other religiously motivated journeys. They emphasize that the relatedness of *spirituality* and *tourism* has grown markedly in recent years, wherein travel has become an important element in individuals' search for spiritual growth. They argue that a wide range of contemporary travel experiences can be considered spiritual as they may facilitate experiences that contribute to an individual's quest for meaning, transcendence and connectedness.





Willson and McIntosh conclude that travel plays a role in facilitating life purpose, spiritual connection and meaning for individuals in contemporary society. There is a need to consider how tourism experiences and settings can offer moments for connection, reflection and contemplation; experiences that may not be explicitly labeled as ‘spiritual’ but offer opportunities for personal meaning, connection and transcendence.

See also **Ecology**

## **Birth**

[Susan Crowther](#) (Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen) states that birth is a fundamental part of who we are as human beings and our relationship to life. Birth provides purpose, possibility for transformation, is meaningful and overflows with spiritual significance. At each birth our humanness confronts us.



Spirituality as applied to childbirth involves transformational experiences, relationships with others near, far, seen and unseen, and a relationship with mystery that is transgenerational and in and beyond linear time. Birth is thus an uncanny event in our lives. Birth is sacred in quality due to its inherent ability to connect physical and transcendental realities. The mundane realms of births’ overwhelming physicality meet with the overwhelming intensity of spiritual feelings such as love, joy, generosity of life, and gratitude to deities, the universe and an unfathomable mystery.



The result of a pervasive mood of fear and subsequent need to avoid all risk has enabled an increasingly risk adverse birthing culture to grow with subsequent high medical intervention rates. In our times birth has led many women and families, as well as health care professionals to feeling safer when near modern medical facilities and fearful when distanced from the highly structured world of bio-medical assistance. Current approaches and practices of childbirth and how they address, deny or ignore spirituality continue to be a challenge.

The current, often fragmented models of maternity care, especially in the Western world, can deny and potentially prevent relational continuity with self, others and otherness and deny attunement to the sacred mood of birth. An expansion of current practice that appreciates a whole-person holistic approach that acknowledges the collective and individual spiritual experience of birth is required. A new paradigm of thinking and doing in/around childbirth is called upon in response to the gift that joy brings at births across the world. This new approach is not solely focused on vital physical skills and management to ensure safety but one that appreciates and engenders the holistic psycho-spiritual dimensions of childbirth to individual and society.

See also **Children, Couple and Parent-Child Relating**

Useful sources: [Susan Crowther](#), [Internation Confederation of Midwives](#), [The Practicing Midwife](#), [Spiritual Birth](#), [Frédéric Leboyer](#)

## Children

[Adrian-Mario Gellel](#) (University of Malta) notes that the concern for children's spiritual education and well-being is central in the work of Maria Montessori who at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was pivotal in shaping early childhood education. Beyond her idea of the centrality of Catholic religious education, she promoted the centrality of the spiritual development of the child, understood as connectedness to the environment (broadly defined) and meaning making.



In the newer conception the child is understood to be a human person in its own right. It therefore recognizes the child as a being who is competent and intelligent. Childhood is not considered as a preparatory stage that one needs to grow out of but as a significant moment in the life journey of the human person. As a human being the *child* is a *spiritual being* whose requirements have to be acknowledged, respected and nurtured. The interaction between education and psychology may open new ways to understand not only the relational abilities

of children, but also the contribution of their cognitive abilities in their spiritual lives, particularly through the use of metaphoric logic and analogies.

Gellel thinks that there is an urgent need for interdisciplinary exchange. Different professions such as education, chaplaincy, ministry, health, and social care may promote (i) the values of spiritual diversity and inclusivity, (ii) the right of children to be listened to and to be given of a spiritual voice, and (iii) a challenge to consumerism, marketization and performativity, including the recognition of the *child* as a *whole person*.

See also **Education, Couple and Parent-Child Relating**

Useful sources: [International Association for Children's Spirituality](#)

### **Couple and Parent-Child Relating**

[Peter Jankowski](#) (Bethel University, St. Paul) states that existing findings in psychology support the correspondence between couple and parent-child attachments and attachment to God. There is also some evidence that spiritual congruence among dyad members is protective, whereas incongruence can negatively influence sacred attachments. Future research should examine the level of spiritual congruence among dyad members and the differential effects for the gender of parents and children in the association between spirituality and parent-child relating.



Jankowski adds that research could continue to examine mediation and moderation effects between spirituality and couple and/or parent-child functioning, as very little is known about the mechanisms by which spirituality, and attachment to God in particular, influences couple and parent-child well-being, or the particular conditions under which associations between attachment to God and couple and/or parent-child well-being might vary. Longitudinal designs are especially needed to further clarify mediating and moderating effects.

See also **Children**

## Gender

[Anna Fedele](#) (Lisbon University Institute) notes that analyzing spirituality in terms of gender means to pay attention to the ways in which persons with different gender identities (male, female, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersexual etc.) describe and experience their spiritual beliefs and practices. In her view a gender approach to spirituality makes visible the power structures and inequalities of patriarchal discourses inherent in Western thinking, as well as in other cultural systems worldwide. Such approach also allows to deconstruct dichotomous ways of thinking based on the male/female divide. It helps develop gender equality, respect for sexual differences, and recognizing corporeality and sexuality as dimensions that are not opposed to or excluded from the spirituality.



Fedele suggests that we should go beyond the assumptions that religion and spirituality represent an obstacle in the empowerment process of women and LGBTQIA individuals, and try to understand the complexities of gendered agency in religious and spiritual contexts. Future research can contribute to assess the overlaps between feminism, LGBTQIA movements and contemporary forms of spirituality, which may question the supposed alliance between feminism and secularism.

See also **Couple and Parent-Child Relating**

## Aging

[Alexandria R. Ebert](#) and [Susan H. McFadden](#) (University of Wisconsin Oshkosh) suggest that there exists a dynamic relationship between spirituality and aging. They highlight the importance of spirituality as an active search for meaning in *later life* and acknowledge that for many older persons religiousness and spirituality are interlaced with one another.



Ebert and McFadden offer practice recommendations, suggesting that in order to promote more individualized treatment plans for older persons, clinicians must acknowledge the complexity of spirituality and pay particular attention to prayer, resilience, and religious coping. Researchers and clinicians should work to identify ways that spirituality can be cultivated (i.e., through engaging with the arts and/or nature) in later life, a time when many are coping with losses and are challenged by ageism. Ebert and McFadden think that old age can also be a time of growth when gains can be acknowledged and meaning can be garnered.

Viktor Frankl's work on the search for meaning is extremely relevant to the experiences of aging. This implies a new paradigm that "moves beyond the bio-medical model and introduces a holistic understanding of personhood which affirms one's capacity to find meaning in life, indeed, even in ageing, suffering, and dying" (Kimble 2002). Such a new paradigm should be applied to the millions of people around the world who are both living longer and dying longer. In addition, this new paradigm will be important for those just beginning to negotiate the challenges of aging.

See also **Medicine, Dementia**

## **Sport**

[Simon Robinson](#) (Leeds Beckett University) suggests that spirituality is an essential dimension of sport. Spirituality in sport involves both critical challenge of core purpose and practice, and consciousness of the social and physical environment.





Robinson believes that future developments around spirituality in sport will focus on the connection between spirituality and ethical values. Pre-moral values provide a sense of worth, in terms of self-esteem and public esteem. This demands a focus on a broader view of integrity in sport, which takes critical account of the holistic perspective of spiritual narratives.

See also **Medicine**

### **Disability**

[György Könczei](#) and Anikó Sándor (Loránd Eötvös University, Budapest) state that the changing frame of reference for disability has laid the foundations for a spirituality-driven attitude to be adopted by experts working in professions such as special education, social work, psychology and pastoral care. It has now become apparent that weakness can be turned into strength: disability is considered an opportunity for spiritual growth and character formation.



Könczei and Sándor advance a *social-spiritual model of disability*. While the social model exceeds the medical one, via challenging the faults of society, the social-spiritual model transcends the social model as well. It shows that activating autonomy related capabilities, empowerment, and self-advocacy can be combined with joint creative activities with persons with disabilities. In this way contemporary “disableism”-oriented practices can be replaced. Könczei and Sándor believe that a spiritual approach and practice can be a driving force for generating a higher level of creativity for psychology, social work, special education as well as pastoral care and other supportive professions dealing with disabled people.

See also **Medicine, Social Work**

### **Homelessness**

[Rev. Jill L. Snodgrass](#) (Loyola University Maryland) asserts that homelessness plagues both developed and developing nations and impacts millions of individuals and families throughout the globe. Homelessness is far more than the absence of proper shelter. The experience of homelessness deeply impacts one’s physical, psychological, and spiritual wellbeing. *Homelessness* can be a profoundly *spiritual experience* in which individuals awaken to the vulnerability of life, the limitations of one’s existence, and what it feels like to be marginalized and treated as less than a human.



Snodgrass proposes some spiritually-grounded practices for service providers. Though many helpers are taught to identify shortcomings and needs, spiritually-grounded assessment in the context of homelessness entails conducting a strengths-based assessment. As homelessness results from the interplay of both personal and systemic factors, an accurate assessment of those factors, including the strengths and growing edges that people bring to their own circumstances, is of utmost importance. The spiritually-grounded practice acknowledges that we do not wield absolute power and control over our fate, and our deficits in one context may be our strengths in another.

Snodgrass suggests that service providers need to feel comfortable asking people about their spiritual and religious beliefs. Also, they should encourage individuals and families to seek the support of spiritual and religious companions and leaders. After inquiring about spiritual lives of service recipients, providers can encourage participation in and reflection on the spiritual practices that recipients find most meaningful, especially those that promote positive coping, healthy behaviors, and self-care.

See also **Social Work**

### **Social Work**

Beth R. Crisp (Deakin University, Melbourne) also argues that *social work practice* needs to take account of the spiritual dimension of the lives of service users. A growing internationalization of interest in spirituality among social workers has not only broadened the scope of practice but also the methodological paradigms being used.



Crisp notes that social workers are only now discovering that individuals or groups who are socially excluded (those who identify as gay or lesbian, as survivors of sexual abuse or deaf or otherwise marginalized) might have spiritual needs or concerns. Recognition of individuals or groups who were not previously considered to have spiritual needs, is raising questions as to how social workers need to keep developing their understandings of spirituality and the relevance of it for their professional practice.

See also **Homelessness, Disability**

### **Interculturality**

*Daniel Hauge, David Paine, Elizabeth G. Ruffing and [Steven Sandage](#)* (Boston University) argue that the growing interconnectedness of our globalizing world demands skills and resources for developing intercultural relationships of mutual respect and benefit. Such relationships requires openness to learning about cultural values and behavioral patterns different from one's own, and willingness to recognize one's own cultural preferences as particular rather than universal. It also requires a commitment to examining the inequitable power dynamics that emerge from social structures historically grounded in the legacy of colonialism and Western white hegemony.



Hauge and his colleagues suggest that spirituality can be a great asset in pursuing intercultural development. A quality of spirituality that encourages appreciation of difference, connectedness and compassion towards others, and a humble receptivity to new information and experience will assist individuals and communities toward greater intercultural development, while spirituality characterized by dogmatism or a sense of narcissism and superiority may actually make intercultural encounters more difficult and lead toward insularity or conflict. The incorporation of personal and organizational spirituality into training in intercultural development has the potential to be of great benefit, so long as the relational spiritual orientations foster openness and compassion. Intercultural development is not just a process of learning about different cultural habits and traditions but is also about developing a robust sense of self—one that is not dependent upon group uniformity but can form mutually enriching relationships with those who see and move in the world differently.

See also **International Development**



## Medicine

[Athar Yawar](#) (University College London) asserts that medicine is the craft of healing a human being. Schools of medicine differ in their concepts of what a human being is, and how to heal. Many cultures have religious healing, which concentrates on the welfare of the soul; biological healing, in which a human being is seen as an organism with life forces, phases and relationships; and magical healing, in which the practitioner aims to work with or control souls, including those of usually unseen beings.



Yawar emphasizes that modern medicine is essentially mechanical, describing the patient as a broken machine that needs to be fixed. Its successes are considerable; but the definition of patient as machine omits or marginalizes many forms of suffering and healing. Modern medicine employs a limited view of human nature. Its physiological reductionism is very helpful in some instances but inappropriate in others.

Yawar argues that future approaches to medicine will be more successful if they have a more complete view of humanity: seeing people as biological, cultural, social, and spiritual beings. If spirituality consciously examined, it can allow questions of value and justice to be properly addressed, and provide healing that is deep and of lasting value to the patient and the clinician.

Yawar suggests that the avoidance of overmedication could lead to improvements in public health. For working doctors to be fully intellectually free and transparent, however, the current structures of medicine would need to change. Administrative and financial systems would be based on the needs of patients and clinicians. Trials would be designed with the patient's wellbeing in mind, and fully and honestly reported. The less avid use of profitable but largely useless medicine could free resources for genuine clinical care. If doctors, patients, and policymakers choose to see themselves, and each other, as human beings, with all their different dimensions and potentials, then a *truly humane medicine* can be established, with spirituality at its heart.

See also **Science**

## **Nursing**

*Sandhya Chandramohan* and *R. Bhagwan* (KwaZulu-Natal College of Nursing, South Africa) state that a consensus has been reached in nursing that the best care of patients is realized through focusing on the whole person. As nursing entered the 21<sup>st</sup> century, addressing the *spiritual needs of patients* became an important goal. The role of spirituality in promoting health and improving the patients' response to illness is receiving greater attention. Spirituality is considered as a part of nursing profession. By employing a spiritually based approach nurses can provide care for the whole person.



Chandramohan and Bhagwan argue that nursing education should focus on activities that enhance spirituality and spiritual care. In nursing the most common spiritual care interventions include praying for the patient, spending time with the patient, supporting and reassuring the patient, listening to the patient, showing respect for spiritual/religious beliefs, showing kindness, assisting with visits to spiritual/religious leaders and offering hope and finding meaning in illness. Although spiritual care takes extra time, it has the potential to make a real difference in a patients' healing, cooperation, and satisfaction.

See also **Medicine**

## **Mental Health**

*Rachel J. Cullinan* (Northumberland, Tyne & Wear NHS Trust) and [Christopher C.H. Cook](#) (Durham University) observe that spirituality has become a topic of increasing importance in the field of *mental health*. There is a growing interest in the relevance of spirituality to clinical

care and, above all, a strong lobby from mental health service users that the spiritual, as well as biopsychosocial, aspects of wellbeing be addressed during their treatment.



Cullinan and Cook suggest that spirituality may contribute to mental wellbeing, but may also – when misused or abused – contribute to harm. The relationship between spiritual and mental wellbeing is complicated, and it is not easy to disentangle the one from the other. Mental health professionals need to be aware of the importance of this relationship, and able to hold a sensitive and respectful conversation with their patients on the topic, where necessary. Similarly, clergy, chaplains and leaders of faith communities need to be more aware of the nature of mental disorder and its relationship to spiritual wellbeing.

See also **Medicine**

## **Dementia**

[Peter Kevern](#) (Staffordshire University) states that the experience of dementia poses unique challenges to our assumptions about spirituality and its role in human life. Dementia strikes at human capacities such as memory, communication, self-awareness and agency which we count as central to our consciousness and spirituality. For some, this means that a person with dementia has no access to spirituality, and cannot be counted as a “person” at all.



Kevern suggests that a *person with dementia* is, indeed, still a person until the end of life. This means that we have to think about spirituality in a different way: not as something that we ‘have’ or ‘do’ as individuals, through our personal intelligence, intuition and agency; but as something embedded in our history and our social network, the product of our past decisions and shared with the others who are close to us.

Kevern emphasizes that a spiritual life of people with dementia can be nurtured and sustained in three fundamental and lasting ways. First, it is fed not so much by discursive, rational speech as by metaphors and symbols. Spirituality is more like poetry than a set of statements organized in sentences. Second, a spirituality is not simply made up of the feelings and thoughts one possesses at this moment. It includes all the habits one has developed over years and decades, the ‘virtues’ one has cultivated and the attachments one has formed. Finally, for a person with dementia spirituality cannot be viewed as a ‘personal property’, existing in isolation from others. Spirituality is held and nurtured by communities of people (whether formally constituted or as loose networks).

See also **Mental Health**

### **Addiction**

[Paramabandhu Groves](#) (Islington Drug and Alcohol Specialist Service, London) argues that spirituality and addiction are intimately intertwined. Addiction may be understood as a spiritual problem, either as a misguided spiritual quest or a falling away from spirituality. Spirituality may be protective against the development of addiction, especially where there is active participation in spiritual practices.

Groves asserts that AA (Anonymous Alcoholics) and other 12-step approaches are well-established forms of *addiction treatment*, either on their own or in association with more



secular forms of treatment. There has been considerable diversification of the 12-step approach, including groups targeting different types of addiction, as well as adaptation to different spiritual traditions.



Groves emphasizes that mindfulness and other treatments drawn from Buddhism offer promising spiritual approaches to addiction recovery. The use of meditation in particular, may be helpful in promoting broader recovery beyond the initial treatment of addiction, by providing the basis for a fuller spiritual life. More work is needed to compare different approaches and draw out what are the key elements that assist successful recovery.

See also **Mental Health**

## **Economics and Business**

[Luk Bouckaert](#) (Catholic University of Leuven) and [Laszlo Zsolnai](#) (Corvinus University of Budapest) argue that economics and business need a more spiritual foundation to solve their ethical, social and ecological problems. In economics and business the instrumental and utilitarian rationality is still the dominant perspective, but they can be renewed and transformed into a progressive social institutions by taking spirituality at the core of economic and business activities.



The most important spiritual traditions of humanity have a continuous influence on economic thinking and practice. Judaism, Catholicism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Taoism represent different life-serving modes of economizing which may assure the livelihood of human communities and the sustainability of natural ecosystems. The [economic conceptions of world religions](#) are based on spiritual conception of man. Human actors are considered spiritual beings embodied in the physical world and having both materialistic and non-materialistic desires and motivations. Materialistic desires and outcomes are embedded in and evaluated against spiritual convictions and experiences.

Bouckaert and Zsolnai conclude that the interlinked ecological, social and economic crisis show the inadequacy of the materialistic management paradigm. Materialistic management is based on the belief that the primary motivation of economic activities is money-making and success should be measured in terms of profit generated. The emerging [post-materialistic management paradigm](#) is characterized by [frugality](#), [deep ecology](#), trust, reciprocity, [responsibility for future generations](#), and [authenticity](#). Within this framework profit and growth are no longer ultimate aims but elements of a wider set of values. In a similar way, cost-benefit calculations are no longer the essence of management but are part of a broader concept of wisdom in management.

See also International Development, Spirituality at the Workplace, Management Development, Law

Useful sources: [Jewish Economic Thought](#), [Catholic Social Teaching](#), [Mondragon](#), [Islamic Banking](#), [Buddhist Economics](#), [Gross National Happiness](#), [Gandhian Economics](#), [Sarvodaya Movement](#), [Confucian Economics](#)

## **International Development**

[Carlos Hoevel](#) (Catholic University of Argentina) argues that spirituality is an essential component of economic development strategies. He suggest that *reflexivity* and *relationality* are the two key factors to international development. The challenge for a spiritually oriented development strategies is to promote not only the creation and distribution of material wealth, the bettering of infrastructure and health conditions, the defense of human and civil rights and the increasing of capabilities of people but it should open reflexive and relational spaces among the different actors of the local, national and global economy in order to help them to have a more substantial and less instrumental approach to their activities.



Hoewel asserts that the spiritual approach offers international development an ultimate direction and orientation, threatened today by instrumentalist and short-term perspective. A spiritual approach looks also for achieving a free and harmonious interaction among the different individuals, communities and cultures that avoids the imposition of forced homogeneity.

See also **Economics and Business**

Useful sources: [Human Development and Capability Association](#)

### **Spirituality at the Workplace**

[Carole L. Jurkiewicz](#) (University of Massachusetts Boston) and [Robert A. Giacalone](#) (John Carroll University) note that over the past decades an increased focus on spirituality issues has extended into the world of organizations. As individuals experience social anomie, they are looking to their work environments to fulfill needs for belonging, social interaction, and feelings of significance.



Jurkiewicz and Giacalone state that dual factors motivate the development of *workplace spirituality*. One is focusing on respect for the individual, the other is concerned with the impact of workplace spirituality on an organization's financial success, reputation, and public relations. At the individual level there is a recognition that employees have an internal need to engage in a life of meaning and purpose, the belief that the work they do contributes in a positive way to others; such work results in feelings of wholeness and self-worth. At the organizational level workplace spirituality may be correlated with various organizational goals, such as reduction of turnover, absenteeism, negative health outcomes, and stress; and an increase in performance and productivity, loyalty and organizational identification, and job satisfaction.

Findings suggest that organizations which have a spiritual culture realize valuable employee benefits. By a significant degree, employees prefer organizations with workplace spirituality, even if they do not think of themselves as spiritual persons. Workplace spirituality has a significant impact on employee motivation, productivity, and retention. It has a strong positive effect on employee engagement and reduction of withdrawal behaviors. Organizations with workplace spirituality lead to employees' enhanced sense of empowerment.

See also **Economics and Business**

Useful sources [Management, Spirituality and Religion](#)

### **Management Development**

[Katalin Illes](#) (University of Westminster Business School) argues that if we want to change the ethicality of business, business leaders and managers need to be clear about their own personal values, understand the values across their organizations, identify potential conflicts between values, reflect, listen, engage in discussion and lead a lasting change of behavior towards more responsible and ethical conduct.





Business and management education have been criticized for focusing on technical skills that encourage individual and corporate greed and amoral behavior, while failing to pay attention to character development and the cultivation of responsibility. Developing one’s character and morality requires willingness and courage to embark on an individual journey of self-discovery. It requires a level of curiosity, open-mindedness, continuous questioning and regular reflection.

Introducing spirituality in management development requires long-term commitment from organizations. When managers find the time to discuss not only short-term, work-related issues but also personal and team values, meaning and purpose, they will raise the collective consciousness, enhance connectedness and boost morale. Development programs that enable managers to review and work with their own inner life and spirituality can have a long-term, positive impact on organizational cultures.

See also **Leadership**

## **Leadership**

[Margaret Benefiel](#) (Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation) and *Michelle Abbott* (Executive Soul Ltd.) observe that mainstream leadership models are concerned with external factors and outward outcomes such as return on investment, productivity, and the financial bottom line. It is to the great detriment of leaders that the internal experience has been largely neglected, leading to the neglect of inner growth and development.

Benefiel and Abbott suggest that in *spiritual leadership* two important themes emerge: the moral responsibility of the leaders to the world and a need for practices that bring the leaders

into their spiritual center so that they can act in alignment with their inner being. A unique, new approach to inner work comes in the form of a practice referred to as “*presencing*.” (Scharmer 2008) This approach helps leaders transcend the limitations of their past perceptions so that their current decisions are not informed by former patterns of thought and behavior. Instead, leaders tune into their best future potentiality, which allows them to invite change into their lives. As other contemplative traditions, presencing involves leaving behind ego-based thoughts and emotions to see, instead, with the heart.



Benefiel and Abbott conclude that the gift of spiritual leadership is desperately needed in our time. Ordinary citizens, organizational leaders, politicians can benefit from a deeper level of knowing and being in a place of discernment and compassion from which transformation can occur. Future studies need to be done on politicians, business leaders, health care leaders, and others, so that the impact of spiritual leadership in all sectors can be understood and measured.

See also **Economics and Business, Politics**

## **Law**

[Daniel Deak](#) (Corvinus University of Budapest) argues that legal practices can be spiritualized to transcend the liberal paradigm, under the auspices of which law is subordinated to the behavior of market-based opportunism and mere profit-seeking. A legal approach to non-human living beings can be suggested, according to which relationships to these creatures are enlivened by spiritual value orientation of individuals and their communities.



Deak emphasizes that bridging over gaps developed due to time-arrows between generations requires imagination. Reflexive reciprocity can be helpful with enhancing interrelatedness of succeeding generations. The substantiation of the rights of new generations requires the identification of more relaxed forms of morality and law.

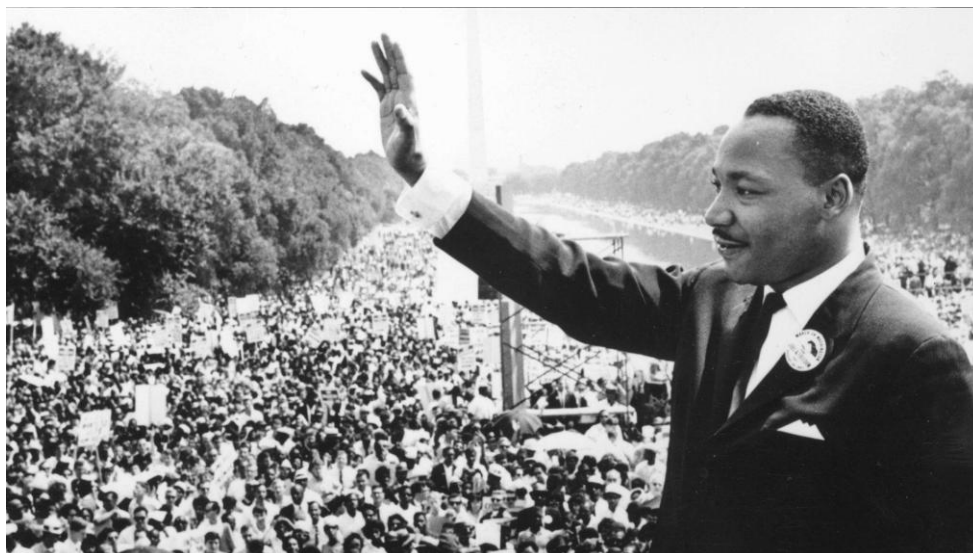
See also **Economics and Business, Ecology**

Useful sources: [PISLAP \(Project for Integrating Spirituality, Law and Politics\)](#)

## **Politics**

[Wolfgang Palaver](#) (University of Innsbruck) recalls that today's widely held Western attitude towards politics is that politics has to be free from religion or theology. Politics is considered as a completely secular matter and religion should stay out of politics. Palaver stresses that this is a simplistic approach which does not understand the complex relationship between religion, politics and spirituality.

Palaver believes that there is no way out of *political theology* broadly understood. By following Simone Weil's important distinction between true religion and idolatry Palaver refers to several examples of genuine political spirituality. Dag Hammarskjöld and Martin Luther King are two impressive examples from Protestant background. Hammarskjöld, the second Secretary-General of the United Nations again and again addressed the idolatry of the self with its negative social and political consequences. Martin Luther King also aimed for universal brotherhood in a spirit of humility. Jesus's Sermon on the Mount and Mahatma Gandhi's nonviolent struggles were important sources for his social actions to fight against racism.



Palaver notes that the most astonishing resemblance with Gandhi's spirituality is the "anti-political politics" of Vaclav Havel, the writer, former dissident and last president of Czechoslovakia. Havel demanded a "new spirit" that consists essentially in the rehabilitation of values like trust, openness, responsibility, solidarity, love.

See also **Law**

### **Policing**

*Jonathan Smith* (Salmon Personal Development Ltd.) and *Ginger Charles* (Saybrook University) observe that in many countries there is an increasing levels of dissonance, dis-ease, and distrust within both the police community and the communities they serve. Many of the *police organizations* are not reflective of healthy communities and instead mirror the conflict in the traumatized communities. Smith and Charles argue that police leaders have to make a shift towards a way of being in which the focus is on *servicing* as opposed to commanding and controlling. They suggest that this shift requires a more transcendental perspective which embraces the spiritual methods.





Smith and Charles believe that the central issue is *self-awareness*. It is about police leaders slowing down and taking time out to explore and question the pressures and influences on them, look at their own values and belief systems, and how they operate. It is about them searching for their higher purpose, reflecting on why they are a leader and a police officer, and looking at how they influence the world and those around them. This self-reflection activity may help re-invigorate the higher function of policing.

See also **Spirituality at the Workplace**

## **Social Activism**

[Alastair McIntosh](#) (University of Edinburgh and University of Glasgow) and British social activist *Matt Carmichael* suggest that the central issue of *spiritual activism* is that how can our work for social, environmental, religious and other life-affirming change be not just effective, but guided and sustained from the deepest levels of being that give life.



As long-time participant-observers McIntosh and Carmichael summarize the key principles of spiritual activism: (i) validity of spirituality; (ii) centrality of consciousness; (iii) totality of the psyche; (iv) nonviolent basis; (v) engaging the powers; (vi) prophetic vision and courage; (vii) charisma and authority; (viii) cults are the shadow side of charisma; and (ix) discernment as spiritual process. McIntosh and Carmichael believe in the age of rising authoritarian populism dark shadows can make new lights visible. Such is the hope, beyond mere optimism, of spiritual activism.

See also **Politics, Ecology**

## Peace

[Tilman Bauer](#) (Aalto University) emphasizes that spirituality is directly relevant to *peace making* because peace is much more than the mere absence of war or violence. Essentially, the broader the definition of peace, the stronger its link to spirituality. Bauer points out that peace has a multitude of definitions: weaker spheres that address the absence of war or violence (whether physical, structural, cultural, inner, or outer); stronger spheres that proclaim the presence of positive values and ideals in society (such as justice, wellbeing, and freedom); and holistic spheres that transcend rigid structures of reason to a higher purpose by amalgamating all aspects of peace.



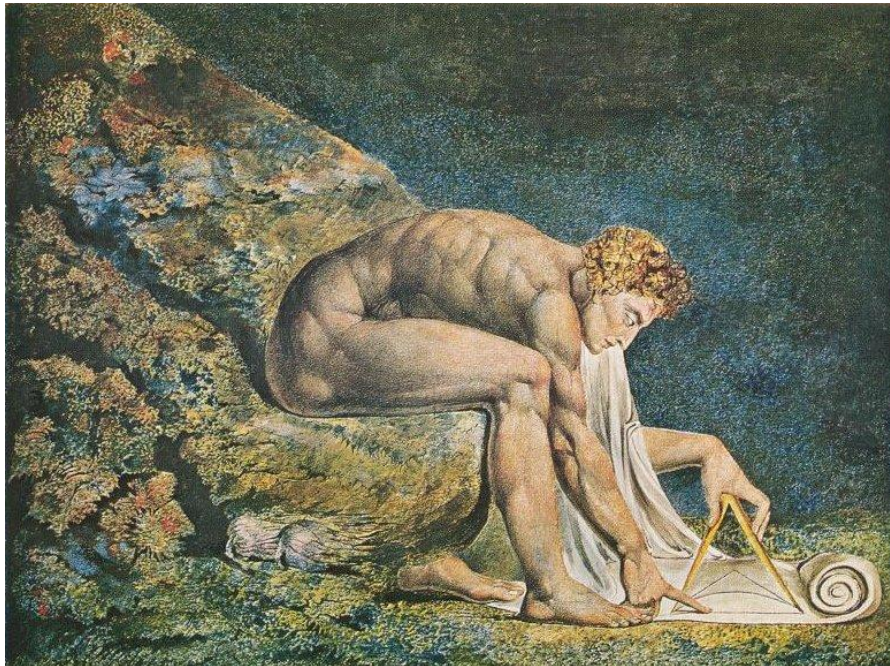
Bauer believes that the ultimate frame of peace is the peaceful coexistence of all human beings in a society where the true potential for humanity is realized. Holistic peace as an aim which puts us back in sustainable balance with ourselves, with nature, and with universe. The underlying insight is that, as we progress from weaker to stronger, and finally to holistic spheres of peace, we climb up a ladder of *spiritual development* by fostering peace in our lives, in society, and in the world.

See also **Politics, Economics and Business**

## Science

[Peter Pruzan](#) (Copenhagen Business School and Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning) recalls that *natural science* is concerned with the systematic acquisition of knowledge of an objective, independent, physical reality that is knowable and that can be described, explained and predicted using our senses and cognitive capabilities. So while the “truth” of science is an objective truth about an *external world* that exists independently of us, the “Truth” that spirituality searches for is *internal* yet universal. Spiritual masters/sages throughout the ages,

no matter what their spiritual traditions, have taught from their personal experience that this Truth is to be found within us as our essence and that it is the same essence that pervades the entire universe.



Pruzan asserts that spirituality has different aims and standards than sciences. Its aims are to realize/experience that we are all embodiments of a source that is both immanent (existing in all of what we refer to as reality) and transcendent (existing apart from and not subject to the limitations of the material universe). Science, with its reliance on technologies for observing, measuring and analyzing limited aspects of physical reality, is not capable of investigating that which is its very source. On the other hand investigation based on spiritual inquiry and direct intuition is considered as pseudo-science by materialist-based natural science.

Pruzan suggests that a possible way out of this conundrum is to consider the origin and nature of *consciousness*. If one considers human consciousness to be both a manifestation of Universal Consciousness (the Knower) and an instrument whereby individual consciousness (the knower) can investigate and know and be one with the Knower, then the methodology employed by practitioners of spiritual inquiry is rationally based. Instead of manipulating and observing external reality, the seeker of Truth employs a research design based on *self-reference*.

See also **Transpersonalism, Philosophy**

Useful sources: [Institute of Noetic Sciences](#)

## **Design**

[Stuart Walker](#) (Lancaster University) recalls that design is a discipline that seeks to synthesize practical needs with human values to improve an existing condition. A form of design that is truly capable of contributing to improvement and a better world requires a deeper consideration of ideas and values. Such considerations cannot be easily reconciled with

consumption-based economics nor adequately addressed via commonly used deductive and/or inductive methods but require interpretation and imagination.



Walker argues that self-transcendence values, which are closely tied to spiritual growth include: universalism – understanding and care of others and the natural environment; benevolence – concern and care for those we encounter; tradition – commitment to and respect for customs and cultural or religious ideas; security – safety, stability and harmony in society, relationships and self. The enactment of these values is crucial for tackling sustainability in design, and they can give our lives a renewed sense of purpose and significance.

Walker describes *progressive design praxis* as ways of designing that enable long-term improvements for individuals, communities and place. The aim is to change the situation for the better, where ‘better’ is understood in terms of culturally relevant values and virtues that take into account people, community and nature. An important element is the restoration of the values and virtues that emerge from a culture’s philosophical and spiritual traditions.

See also **Visual Art, Ecology**

## **Architecture**

[Thomas Barrie](#) (North Carolina State University – Raleigh) and [Julio Bermudez](#) (Catholic University of America) underline that during human history people have deliberately created sacred places to provide metaphysical and spiritual meaning, character, and significance. They argue that architecture has the capacity to provide settings that articulate the human condition, position it more meaningfully in the world, and offer propitious settings for understandings, transcendence, and ethical action.

In spiritual or *transcendent architecture* some general “conditions” can be identified. These are (i) aesthetic conditions which require that buildings offer sensual attributes and carefully calibrated formal-spatial configurations in terms of geometry, proportion, and scale; (ii) living conditions which suggest that architecture should deploy a “luminous program” of spirituality-enhancing functionality, support special types of approach and ritual movements, and amplify the manifestation of sound and time; (iii) connectedness conditions which refer to establishing architectural links with its immediate location, the cosmos, and ontological



concerns; and (iv) holistic conditions which consider the overall phenomenological effect of the building in terms of a sense of unity and the experience of the “hidden/manifest”.



Barrie and Julio Bermudez concludes that architecture meets spirituality in serving transcendent functions. It happens when the building “vanishes” or is “used up” in the acts of disclosing meaning, taking ethical positions, or inducing awareness, joy, and insight. In other words, architecture embodies spirituality when it surrenders to something larger than itself and *encompasses* the *whole* or the *holy*. In our increasingly globalized world where predominant technological and economic cultures threaten ethical, aesthetic, and compassionate aspects and imperatives, the built environment has important spiritual roles to play.

See also **Urbanism, Landscape Planning**

## **Fashion**

[Doirean Wilson](#) (Middlesex University Business School) suggests that spirituality does not only relate to one’s activities, but also to something that one wears; particularly across societies that now yields different religions, cultures and spiritual beliefs. Designers in the fashion world take note of the creative opportunity that interest in spirituality affords, hence an approach to incorporating different cultural and religious themes in their creations, worn by models of different hues strutting elegantly across many fashion catwalks around the globe.



Wilson recalls that fashion reflects and pushes cultural and social boundaries. From a negative perspective, this can create tensions or hostilities if the fashion of choice is in conflict with another or where it reflects what is perceived as a contradictory, salacious, disrespectful belief. A shift in thinking and practice is positive when fashion becomes a means for encouraging understanding, empathy, harmony, commitment and comradeship.

See also **Design**

## Literature

[Rita Ghesquière](#) (Catholic University of Leuven) states that *language* and *stories* belong to the most human characteristics of our species. Most literary genres have roots in religion, but a long process of emancipation and secularization has turned literature into an autonomous entity. Still the link with wisdom, spirituality and ethics, remained standing at least for those readers who accept that literature mirrors reality, that it raises questions and formulates answers.





Ghesquière observes that for many centuries literature and religion were closely interwoven. Secularization unraveled this knot. Religion is no longer the main source of literature, that shook off its submissive role. While materialism, technological changes and globalization brought about a growing spiritual need, literature filled in the void left by the fading of religion. Rid of religious prejudices quality literary confronts its readers with ultimate questions of life and existence by disentangling the tragedy of the human sort.

Ghesquière emphasizes that stories and poems enhance self-examination and connect readers with their inner self by offering existential questions, strange or shadowy feelings, and expressing wonder, truth or grief. Readers discern as in a mirror the spots and wrinkles that mar their face. Empathy with the hero or heroine might open the way to handle personal problems in a spiritual way, since stories in general reveal the impact of moral decisions and choices. Empathy with non-familiar characters offers the opportunity to overcome cultural and religious divergences, a big challenge in a multicultural society. Literature is especially of inspirational and spiritual when it touches the *mystery* of the transcendental world.

See also **Theatre, Movie**

### **Visual Arts**

*James McCullough* (Webster University in St. Louis) states that many people experience the visual arts as an alternative form of discourse or meaning-making. He suggests that the increased interest between spirituality and the visual arts lies in the cultural and intellectual dynamics of postmodernism. *Postmodern spirituality* may be more *visual* than textual, more affective and imaginative than doctrinaire and systematic.



A kind of “visual training” is recommended that includes (i) a heightened awareness of the explicit and implicit messaging involved in pictorial forms of communication along with (ii) the development of critical practices that interrogate images that are casually encountered and

consumed and (iii) a socially and spiritually responsible “visual training” which involves a selectivity of formative imagery grounded in an expanded repertoire of options.

McCullough asserts that art does not merely “report” on a given subject matter but presents it from some committed stance. Such a stance is pictorially communicated in many ways. Portrait subjects done in profile, full view or three-quarter view; persons made the object of gaze or returning the gaze back to the viewer; objects given depth or deprived of depth; objects viewed from above, horizontally, or from below; paintings rendered realistically, surrealistically, partially abstract, or fully abstract. Seeing things from the perspective of these stances is what it means for art to change the way we look at the world.

See also **Design, Architecture**

## Music

[Marcel Cobussen](#) (Leiden University) asserts that *music* not only presents spirituality and makes it possible for spirituality to materialize but at the same time it transforms, de-, and re-territorializes spirituality. He claims that spirituality should not be disengaged from the everyday; spiritual experience is also corporeal; and a more comprehensive theory is needed, moving from “spiritual music” to “spiritual soundscapes.”



Cobussen states that there is no ontological separation between “spiritual music” and “non-spiritual music”. He argues that “the spiritual” takes place in a space between music and listener. Specific experiences that take place during these encounters are sometimes called spiritual, and these spiritual encounters may arise quite independently of the type, style, or genre of music.

Cobussen advances a position that can be called “material spirituality” or “spiritual materialism”. This position contains three elements that are often neglected in current discourses. First, spirituality has a corporeal component as well – it is by triggering the body that sensations emerge which can be called “spiritual”. Second, the spiritual in relation to music can be taken out of its (pseudo-)religious context (e.g. by moving it from the church to



the concert hall), thus opening a possibility for thinking it in connection to “the everyday” instead of secluding it from daily experiences. Third, the move from music to (infra-)sound, from mere musical sounds to the broader realm of sounds “per se”, discloses a more inclusive thinking about spiritual soundscapes, that is, spiritual experiences often take place in broader sonic environments.

See also **Spirituality and Religion**

## Theatre

[Edmund B. Lingan](#) (University of Toledo, Ohio) recalls that theatre as an art form has been closely associated with religion. This relationship was already established when the Greek tragedies were originally performed at the City Dionysia in the fifth century B.C.E. as part of a festival honoring the god Dionysus. By the first century C.E., theatre was so valued in the Hindu tradition as an instructor of morality that it became the central subject of a “fifth Veda” titled “Nāṭyaśāstra”. The relationship between religion and theatre was equally important in the biblical plays that were staged throughout Europe during the medieval ages. In 15th-century Japan, the Nō drama depicted stories involving interactions between priests, ghosts, deities, and demons, and the spiritual aspects of these dramas seem to have links to both Buddhism and Shinto.



Lingan identifies two dominant theoretical models about spirituality in theatre. In one model, theatre is seen as a means of representing or making sense out of spiritual ideas. The other model recognizes that some forms of performance are not designed to represent spirituality, but, rather, to induce spiritual experiences and sensations within performers and audience members. Lingan believes that in the future the expansion and multiplication of spiritual practices and worldviews will only continue. As long as spiritual activity is flourishing in various parts of the world, new modes of spiritual performance and theatre will appear.

See also **Movie, Literature**

## Movie

[Kenneth R. Morefield](#) (Chapman University, Buies Creek) warns that movies are not a uniquely American art form, but through most of the twentieth century, the *American studio system* was the dominant creator and distributor of films. The issues and problems surrounding the depictions of spirituality in film and the integration of spirituality in the creation of it have been highly informed and influenced by American religious assumptions and practices.



Morefield suggests that individual artists continue work within a commercial studio system to produce films with religious or spiritual content. Recent examples include movies by Mel Gibson and Martin Scorsese. These kind of films suggest that individual artists make a greater impact in terms of integrating spirituality into narrative film than do new production companies.

Morefield concludes that film remains a particularly expensive art form to produce, not just to disseminate. Until film is an art form more frequently created and consumed by spiritual individuals outside of institutional control, the films our culture produces and consumes will most likely continue to reflect institutional concerns.

See also **Theatre, Literature**

Useful source: [Rotten Tomatoes](#)

## Dance

[Celeste Snowber](#) (Simon Fraser University) asserts that dance is an art form that is intrinsic to what it means to be human in many cultures. Expressivity of the human soul takes shape through the ages in dance and continues to find form in contemporary articulations of dance.



Snowber emphasizes that dance has connected to spirituality and has infused a variety of fields within the social sphere including education, therapy, performance, somatic studies, and well being. She urges for a deeper understanding of the body and physicality as a space for the connection and expression of humanity, spirituality and the relationships between living, being and creating. She suggests to consider what she calls the “bodysoul”: a way to connect body, dance, movement to the infinite, numinous both within and without. Future directions include befriending the body as a place to listen to our deep lives and bring dance to our living.

Wholeness encompasses an interconnection with body, mind, spirit, imagination, intuition and cognition. Snowber recalls that there is a long history of separating mind and body especially in the Western cultures, yet there are huge ramifications for being disconnected as human beings. There is a need to embrace the visceral and kinesthetic, the artistic and prophetic as part and parcel to the nature of being human. Snowber suggests that experience on Earth can be filled with both joy and suffering as beauty can be both dissonant and consonant. Dance can be the vehicle to live well and to live whole. Physicality and spirituality becomes partners and here is the dance.

See also **Theatre, Music**

Useful sources: [Celeste Snowber](#)

## **Martial Arts**

[Henk Oosterling](#) (Erasmus University Rotterdam) notes that the art of the warrior or ‘martial art’ has been a crucial practice in human civilization. Due to the ultimate consequence of killing, warriors touched upon the divine realm of the gods. This explains why martial arts always have been in close contact with religion.



Oosterling points out that due to their cultural embedding in the Buddhist tradition spirituality has always been a crucial aspect of martial arts. This spiritualized ‘fighting spirit’ is focused on active pacifism, i.e. on the compassionate practice of non-violence. Within the vast spectrum of contemporary articulations of martial spirituality one specific tradition is extremely important, the Japanese way of the warrior knights or *bushido* as the precursor of Japanese kendo.

Oosterling suggests that the modern individualism of the West does not match with the collective endeavor and sacrificial willingness of Japanese budo. Budo ideas can be applied pragmatically in different political and economic context, but they solely gain ethical meaning once issues of responsibility, loyalty, and respect are taken into account as well. Applying budo philosophical insights fruitfully to counter the thrifty economics of global capitalism demands an intercultural and ecological translation that touches upon the core of Western way of thinking and acting. Within this intercultural perspective mutual respect and compassion become components that are inherent in the bushido mentality and the practice of budo. As Thich Nath Hanh propagates, spirituality should be ‘engaged’ in order to enlighten society, i.e. diminish the suffering of all human beings.

See also **Spirituality and Religion, Dance**

### **Journalism**

[Mark Pearson](#) (Griffith University) asserts that journalism has lost its moral compass in recent decades. He suggests that alternative “journalisms” with a much stronger emphasis on ethics and considered, reflective practice can help to overcome the deficiency of mainstream journalism.





*Peace journalism* encourages an emphasis on reporting leaning towards peaceful solutions to international events as opposed to the often inflammatory, partisan and conflict-oriented approach to journalism seen in international news media coverage. *Inclusive journalism* takes a human rights and non-discriminatory approach to the news, calling upon journalists to consider the views of cultural minorities such as refugees and ethnic communities, again with a call to emphasize a journalism which includes those voices and also features stories portraying members of such communities in routine news stories, not just those involving terrorism, conflict and tragedy. *Solutions journalism* tends towards identifying community concerns and working upon campaigns for civic improvement led by news media organizations, often in partnership with other non-government organizations.

Pearson sees a great potential in '*mindful journalism*' which refers to the application of Buddhist ethical principles – most notably the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path – to the research, writing, publication and production of works of journalism in the digital era. He believes that mindful journalism can bolster press freedom by using reflection and transparency to nurture and implement a robust journalism of truth, wisdom and compassion.

See also **Science**

### **Cyberspace**

[Paola Di Maio](#) (Palpung Sherabling Institute, India) asserts that spirituality in cyberspace relates two contemporary issues: spirituality as a domain of inquiry ranging from introspection to religion and the meaning of life, and the leading edge of technological and scientific progress of *cyberspace*. The internet is brimming with information and knowledge of all sorts, and much of it can be identified with the domain of spirituality. From shamanism to yoga, from the hidden gospels to various conjectures speculations and hypotheses about new findings pertaining to religion, a plethora of manuscripts, journals, handbooks manuals and videos, all are easily accessible in cyberspace.



Di Maio believes that cyberspace can be used not only to disseminate and access knowledge about spirituality in whatever denomination and language, but also to help to cross reference, cross examine, validate, test various hypotheses related to spirituality, and to help the alignment and integration not only of the axioms and beliefs held by the different traditions, but also the internal consistency of the various sources of spiritual knowledge.

Di Maio suggests that the mindful adoption of cyberspace can support and facilitate the fulfillment of human and cognitive and creative potential, so that it can be used to inform, increase general awareness and stimulate responsible and virtuous behavior, encourage cooperation and last but not least to propagate knowledge about energy without mass. Technological design and implementation should be guided by ethical principles, in as much as they can be used to facilitate and increase knowledge, the crux of which corresponds to inherent virtue, mindfulness.

See also **Philosophy, Design**

## **Education**

[Bernadette Flanagan](#) and [Michael O'Sullivan](#) (Spirituality Institute for Research and Education, Waterford Institute of Technology) note that the connection between spirituality and education dates back to the Athenian schools of philosophy, arising from the fact that philosophy was a spiritual practice in some of these schools. The goal of the ancient philosophies was for students to learn to discern their passions and the illusory perceptions evoked by their habits, and routine. To educate a person without cultivating a transformed personal ethic and deep inner centeredness was to simply be a rhetorician or a sophist.



Flanagan and O’Sullivan suggest that the integration of the concept of *spiritual intelligence* into education takes place across a continuum. It begins with the individual teacher getting in touch with his or her true self through spiritual disciplines. The spiritually intelligent teacher then creates a classroom conducive to learning, which is characterized by deep recognition of the equal dignity, rights, and responsibilities of everyone. Finally, spiritually intelligent teaching is connected to the larger society by placing real world ethics and compassion at the heart of the curriculum.

Flanagan and O’Sullivan propose that *wisdom traditions* must be intentionally and systematically engaged within institutes of education. What is required in teacher education is a transition to a more integral view of human development, to more commitment to research practices embedded in human experience, and to dialogical modes of teacher training. This transition is a clarion call to administrators and policy makers to facilitate the paradigm shift towards more integral, compassionate and dialogical education.

See also **Children, Spirituality and Religion**