Kinga BAKK-MIKLÓSI[1] :

(Re)interpreting Spirituality in Everyday Life
– A Pastoral-Psychological Approach –

Abstract.

The term "spirituality" is rendered in some of the new Bible translations as "life" for good reason. Spirituality is about *enlivening existence*, *life*, *the very essence of life*, *that which makes life into life* and manifests itself in our life conduct. Spirituality goes beyond ecclesiastical religiosity, as it is in fact the "longing for a fulfilled life". This paper aims to outline an interdisciplinary approach to the definition of spirituality while providing guidance on how to "grasp" the phenomenon in everyday life.

The spiritual need of the human being is an anthropological constant, and therefore it can be suppressed but cannot be eliminated. Since the 1990s, there has been a significant[2] "religious climate change" in Europe: religiosity is currently experiencing its renaissance, with the Institute for Pastoral Sociology in Vienna noting a *mega-trend in spirituality*, a term that has since become widely used.[3] The subjective need for spirituality is strong in the face of, and in spite of, secularization and atheism, which has become less of a conviction and more of a habit.

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[2] HOUTMAN, Dick – AUPERS, Stef (2007): The Spiritual Turn and the Decline of Tradition: The Spread of Post-Christian Spirituality in 14 Western Countries, 1981–2000. In: *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*. 46, 305–320.

[3] A detailed analysis of the current situation: ZULEHNER, Paul M. (ed.) (2004): *Spiritualität – mehr als ein Megatrend.* Ostfildern.

Thus, spirituality is the archetypal need that is present all around the world, that gives meaning to life, provides security, and helps navigating our everyday lives. In contrast to dogmatic religiosity, which is tied to denominational norms, this form is both individual and plural in its expression, in its rites, and in its morality. Its relationship to health is being studied intensively by medicine and psychology[4] and is becoming an increasingly important topic in theology.[5] At the same time, it has become part of the highest levels of economic and financial systems.[6] The church, welfare work, social work, psychotherapy, and organizational counselling[7] are *forced* by this revived interest to address the issue of spirituality and to draw conclusions for their own practice.

In this article, we are not going to talk about this "mega-trend" but about individual, personal spirituality. We will attempt to trace the factors that shape the so-called *spiritual competence.* The path leads through several questions: first, why did the renaissance of spirituality happen when it did, how should we imagine

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[4] They can be divided into three categories: 1) works exploring the concept of spirituality (religion), 2) research on the relationship between spirituality and health (health, patient care), and 3) comprehensive manuals and user guides to the practice of spirituality. An excellent summary of the literature: STÄDLER, Kathrin (n. y.): *Spiritualität in ihrer Bedeutung für das Gesundheits- und Sozialwesen. Eine Literaturrecherche.* https://www.fh-diakonie.de/obj/Bilder_ und_Dokumente/DiakonieCare/FH-D_DiakonieCare_Staedler-K_Spiritualitaet-und-Gesundheitswiss.pdf (last accessed on: 31.10.2019).

[5] While the religious studies still question whether spirituality is a relevant topic for them at all, theology has already begun to address it. E.g.: PENG-KELLER, Simon (2010): *Einführung in die Theologie der Spiritualität.* Darmstadt; PENG-KELLER, Simon (2012): *Geistbestimmtes Leben: Spiritualität* (Studiengang Theologie Bd. XI). Zürich; Stegemann, Wolfgang (2012): Der Heilige Geist und die Sorge um sich. Zur Einordnung der paulinischen Spiritualität. In: Schoenauer, Hermann (ed.): *Spiritualität und innovative Unternehmensführung* (Dynamisch Leben gestalten 3). Stuttgart. 90–107; STÄDLER n. y.; GROM, Bernhard (2009): Spiritualität – die Karriere eines Begriffs: Eine religionspsychologische Perspektive. In: Frick, Eckhard – Roser, Traugott (eds.): *Spiritualität und Medizin. Gemeinsame Sorge für den kranken Menschen.* Stuttgart. 12–17.

[6] Städler quotes: BAIER, Karl (2006): Spiritualitätsforschung heute. In: Baier, Karl (ed.): *Handbuch der Spiritualität. Zugänge, Traditionen, interreligiöse Prozesse.* Darmstadt; SCHOENAUER, Hermann (ed.) (2012): *Spiritualität und innovative Unternehmensführung* (Dynamisch Leben gestalten 3). Stuttgart; ZIMMERLING, Peter (2010): *Evangelische Spiritualität. Wurzeln und Zugänge.* Göttingen; DAHLGRÜN, C. (2009): *Christliche Spiritualität. Formen und Traditionen der Suche nach Gott. M. e. Nachwort v. L. Mödl.* Berlin – New York, De Gruyter.

[7] Management theory currently uses the category of "the soul of the organization".

spirituality, and what does it refer to? Another question is as follows: what is it that shapes our spirituality, and to what extent is it possible to find it behind the socialization that which is in us by nature? And, finally, what do the concepts of *spiritual competence* and *spiritual care* mean?

Keywords: spirituality, spiritual competence, spiritual support

Introduction. The Renaissance of Spirituality – Why Now?

A process was set in motion in which individuals sought less and less to satisfy their natural need for spirituality in the confessionally bound historical religions.[8] The reasons behind this trend can be traced back to the following:

In the postmodern age, individuality took central stage, with the over-institutionalized historical religions losing their former plausibility: their message became hardly or not at all comprehensible or receptible. The positive effects of spirituality, in particular on well-being and health, are also very convincing. Leading psychologists adopt a holistic and spiritual view of the world rather than a strictly dualistic and positivistic one. There is increasing evidence of the importance of spirituality in brain research as well.

Spirituality – Easier to Outline than to Define

Just as the concept of religion cannot be satisfactorily defined, the situation is similar for spirituality.[9] We can find statements such as "the term spirituality lacks precision of content...", "a clear definition is lacking".[10]

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[8] A detailed presentation can be found in e.g.: BARTH, H. M. (2013): *Konfessionslos glücklich. Auf dem Weg zu einem religionstranszendenten Christsein.* Gütersloher Verlagshaus.

[9] FEIL, E. (2000): Zur Bestimmungs- und Abgrenzungsproblematik von Religion. In: Feil, E. (ed.): *Streitfall Religion.* Münster; FEIL, E. (2007): *Religio: Vierter Band: Die Geschichte eines neuzeitlichen Grundbegriffs im XVIII. und XIX. Jahrhundert.* Göttingen. quoted by: STÄDLER n. y.

[10] ZIMMERLING 2010, 15; [missing author] (1969): *Evangelisches Kirchenlexikon.* Göttingen, V&R. 402ff.

The term spirituality appears in several disciplines, each of which tries to define it according to its own needs. The term refers to everything that has to do with the soul, with the subjective attitude that defines life, with religion (for which it is also a synonym), with non-matter, with the higher order.

Some examples from different disciplines:

Anthropology – Spirituality Is the Deep Dimension of Existence

Anthropological studies are based on the assumption that being human involves a deep dimension related to some ultimate reality. It is what makes life complete, what gives identity, and it can be linked to rare and intense experiences. It has an impact on people's attitude to life as a whole, but also on the way they live their lives.[11]

Health Sciences – Attitudes to Crises

In the *health sciences*, spirituality belongs to the category of medical anthropology[12] and refers to the existential attitude that prevails in life-threatening conditions, a kind of "subjective intellectual horizon".[13] Human beings are at the mercy of the processes of life. They need relationships, are vulnerable and finite. In this sense, the United Nations World Health Organization (WHO) declares that all human beings are spiritual, because confronting death raises existential questions in everyone.[14]

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[11] BAIER, Karl (2009): Was ist Spiritualität? In: HELLER, Birgit – HELLER, Andreas (eds.): *Jahresheft Spiritualität und Spiritual Care* (Reihe Palliative Care und Organisationsethik Bd. 22). 65; BAIER 2006, 11–48. – discussed by STÄDLER n. y. 5ff.

[12] Medical anthropology studies the cultural aspects of health, illness, and healthcare.

[13] MÖLLER, A. – REIMANN, S. (2003): Spiritualität und Befindlichkeit – subjektive Kontingenz als medizin-psychologischer und psychiatrischer Forschungsgegenstand. In: *Fortschr. Neurol. Psychiatrie.* 2003/71. 609–616.

[14] ROSER, Traugott (2009): Vierte Säule des Gesundheitswesens. Dienstleistungen der Seelsorge im Kontext des Sterbens. In: Thomas, Günter – Karle, Isolde (eds.): *Krankheitsdeutung in der postsäkularen Gesellschaft. Theologische Ansätze im interdisziplinären Gespräch.* Stuttgart. 580–592.

Sociological, Psychological Interpretation –
Autonomy, Holism, Integration

Religion and religiosity mean conformity to the doctrines and liturgies institutionally defined by the churches, accepting the legitimacy of religious experts and practitioners (theologians, priests, etc.). To this extent, it is *socially* oriented towards community attachment.

Spirituality[15] does not focus on the social, on the communal but on autonomy, informality, the individual, the subject, on what is most essential to the late-modern view of life and the world. Religion is based on one's own inner "self" – thus, it can be linked to the earlier, intrinsic religiosity.[16] The essence of spirituality, therefore, will not be the pursuit of autonomy but the personal religious experience, which is the criterion of religiosity. With its openness, it is welcoming, seeking contact and community, as evidenced by the popularity of the pope's visits, the youth meetings, and Taizé.

The *sociological mark* of spirituality is wholeness, holism, the rejection of all forms of fragmentation of the individual, the pursuit of integration. As a tool to navigate one's life-worlds, it extends to all areas of the individual's life, linking body and soul with relationships, politics, economics, and ecology.

Theological Interpretation – "Being of the Spirit" and
"Being in the Spirit"

The theoretical theological interpretation must first be informed by the concept of the soul in order to arrive at the study of spirituality.

The soul does not belong to the category of reason, of rationality. The mysticism of the root concept of spirituality can hardly be described by the rationalizing tools of the sciences, for it is expressed rather through perception. And this can be achieved more

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[15] For further details, see: KNOBLAUCH, Hubert (2005): Soziologie der Spiritualität. In: *Zeitschrift für Religionswissenschaft*. 2005/13. 123.

[16] G. Allport distinguished two categories of religiosity: the extrinsic is the "immature" form of religion motivated by fear of suffering, disease, etc. and blindly following dogmatic, unquestioning beliefs; the intrinsic one is the "mature" form of religion, capable of accepting doubt and influencing the individual's overall attitude and conduct. See: ALLPORT, G. W. – ROSS, J. M. (1967): Personal Religious Orientation and Prejudice. In: *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. 5, 4. 432–443.

by the arts than by scientific studies. It is no coincidence that the Bible also uses a rather symbolic language: the terms *ruah* (Hebrew) and *pneuma* (Greek) for the spirit of life emanating from the Creator, meaning wind, breath, power, spirit of life. The terms *nephesh* (Hebrew for 'throat', 'breath', 'life', 'person') and *psyché* (Greek for 'breath', 'soul') are used in reference to man. The new Bible translations translate *psyché* not as *soul* but as 'life' or 'man'.[17] This is an important aspect of understanding spirituality.

In general, understood as "man's basic practical or existential attitude", the word covers a wide spectrum of conduct and life choices; in different religions, it can refer to man's relationship to God, the gods, transcendent realities, and sometimes it can also replace the term "religion".[18]

Summa summarum, "we are spiritually homeless, we cannot find our place, and we cannot connect".[19]

Pastoral Psychological Interpretation – Longing for Life

Pastoral psychology prefers to describe rather than briefly define. A typical example is the following:[20]

Spirituality is embedded in the life process. People in a transformative crisis are confronted, consciously or unconsciously, with the mysteries of life: the mysteries of sickness and death, the mysteries of finitude and infinity, the mysteries of beauty and suffering, of justice and evil. Encounters with forces outside of ourselves, which protect us or threaten us, trigger diffuse feelings. The desire for a true, complete, reconciled life is awakened:[21] the need to connect with the fullness of life, with the "ultimate", the "sacred" beyond man, with nature, with others, to overcome finitude, to transcend the ego. The

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[17] [missing author] (2007): *Bibel in gerechter Sprache. Glossar.* Gütersloh, Gütersloher Verlagshaus; ZUMSTEIN, J. (⁴2004): Seele, III. Christentum. 1. Neues Testament. In: *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart.* Vol. 7. Tübingen. 1100f.

[18] So die lapidare Feststellung im *Evangelisches Kirchenlexikon* 1969, 402ff (hereinafter referred to as EKL).

[19] SEITZ, Manfred (1978): *Praxis des Glaubens.* Göttingen. 225.

[20] KROEGER, Matthias (2005): *Im religiösen Umbruch der Welt: Der fällige Ruck in den Köpfen der Kirche.* Stuttgart. 35ff.

[21] A detailed analysis of these desires can be found in: MARTIN, Ariane (2005): *Sehnsucht – der Anfang von allem. Dimensionen zeitgenössischer Spiritualität.* Ostfildern.

deepest meaning of spirituality could perhaps be expressed in a sigh: "longing... for life".[22]

Paradigm Change – From Piety to Spirituality

Piety is dominated by the vertical relational dimension, while spirituality is dominated by the horizontal dimension engendered by the vertical relation.

In the classical sense of piety, an overemphasis on individuality before God can easily lead to a rigid distancing from "those who have different religions", becoming monologic rather than dialogic. Spirituality connects man with the world, with the *cosmos*,[23] and with all those who have "the desire for wholeness". The ability to connect can mean both the revival and enrichment of an individual spiritual tradition ("religion") and the danger of syncretism.

It is worth reviewing how previous ages attempted to define this interconnectedness, and what the manifestations of traditional spirituality have been.

General characteristics of the spirituality that evolved from the Christian tradition: Spirituality is the archaic need that is present all around the world, that gives meaning to life, provides security, and helps navigating our everyday lives. In contrast to dogmatic religiosity, which is tied to denominational norms, this form is both individual and plural in its expression, in its rites, and in its morality.

If we try to summarize how the literature characterizes this spirituality, we can list the following aspects:[24]

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[22] RIESS, Richard (1987): *Sehnsucht nach Leben: Spannungsfelder, Sinnbilder u. Spiritualität d. Seelsorge.* Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

[23] UTSCH, M. (n. y.): *Spiritualität – Chance oder Risiko?* Available at: www.ezw-berlin.de. Evangelische Zentröinstitut für Weltanschauunsfrgen, Dokumente.

[24] For further details, see: BUCHER, Anton A. (2014): *Psychologie der Spiritualität.* Weinheim – Basel, Beltz Verlag. 15ff; KLESSMANN, M. (2007): Spiritualität: Eine neue Ressource für die *evangelische Beratung Vortrag aus Anlass der Einführung von Pfr. Dieter Wentzek als Leiter des* EZI am 9.5.2007 in Berlin. In: *ezi Korrespondenz.* 23, Herbst. 10–18; STOLLBERG, D. (n. y.): *Evangelische Spiritualität heute Zum sechzigjährigen Jubiläum der Michaelsbruderschaft in Marburg.* Available at: http://www.kommunitaeten.de/quat/J1992/q920081.htm (last accessed on: 06.11.2019).

- *Individuality*: the postmodern demand for freedom is critical of ideological, dogmatic, religious constraints, rejecting the "dominant church" (the corrective criticism of institutionalized religion). But this individuality also strives for complementary plurality.

- Inclusive tendency: it does not segregate (discriminate) people with different beliefs, but it looks for constructive connections for a full life.

- *Experience-centeredness*: it includes thinking, emotions, and behaviour in equal measure. In contrast to "intellect-only" religion, outlook on life, and practices, it focuses on the equality and interaction of experience, of physical and spiritual perception, and it is a corrective to the rationalizing intellect. It goes against the tendencies of our time to functionalize the human being and to compartmentalize it.

- *Striving for ritualization*: It rediscovers the *rites* and ritual expressions that facilitate the integration of thought, emotion, physical and spiritual perception.

- *It interprets the love*[25] *dimension of life as a source of energy.* Discrimination against the flesh is one of the great temptations defined by traditional Christian piety and a major cause of the crisis of Western Christianity.[26] It is therefore in line with the biblical view of man, which proclaims the inseparable relationship between body and soul. The relationship between the sexes is the energy source of creativity, of "being worth living", of life as created.[27] Without the erotic dimension, one's relationship with oneself and with others remains incomplete.

- *The ability to accept "activity only".* Acceptance and activity are an equal and genuine part of life. Meditation practices support the ability to let go and to accept life as it is. One of the characteristics of human existence is "receiving": receiving life, receiving love, and relying on others to shape one's identity.

- *Spirituality also has an impact on health and well-being.*

After the general characteristics, it is worth looking at their individual manifestations, that is, the personality traits of the spiritual person:

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[25] Eroticism in the scientific literature refers to the socio-cultural representation and impact of sexuality.

[26] Cf. THILO, H. J. (1991): *Frömmigkeit*. Munich; Stachel, qtd by WINKLER, K. (1997): *Seelsorge*. Berlin, De Gruyter. 392.

[27] HARTMANN, G.: *Lebensdeutung*. 81ff, qtd by WINKLER 1997, 392.

· They *self-critically confront* whatever that "inevitably affects us"[28] instead of complacently turning inwards.

· *They take responsibility for the community* and aspire to a full life. Instead of uncritically accepting the established order, they constructively confront their environment, the world, the church with faith. The will to change also means that doubt, scepticism and criticism, and the search for alternatives are all among the basic building blocks of a spiritual way of life.

· *They are prepared to take risks and to engage in a dialogue that tolerates conflict* with all its problems.

· *They stand up for freedom:* they foster traditions and the community that provides a spiritual home; they keep the exodus-impulse alive, the "travelling home" towards the unknown.

· They respect and accept the *mystery of creation*, the "inexplicable", and do not want to moralize and misinterpret what is incomprehensible to them.

· They can *rejoice* in the fruits of creation and seek forms to express these ("liturgy").

The Dimensions of Spirituality

Since the second half of the past century, ecumenical theology has sought to summarize the individual and social contexts in which spirituality is relevant today:

· *The political dimension* – spirituality is characterized by "standing up for human freedom, human dignity, and humanity".[29] In the Gospel (*Old Testament*), hearing the voice of "those crying out for help in Egyptian slavery" ("If you hurt them, they will cry out to me, and I will hear their cry" – *Exodus* 22, 23) is natural. This is the approach taken by D. Sölle when she speaks about the "mysticism of resistance and 'open eyes'"[30] as an inalienable part of spirituality.

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[28] Tillich, P's definition of religion (Ergriffensein von dem, was uns unbedingt angeht) in: TILLICH, P. (2020): *Gesammelte Werke*. Bd. VIII. Stuttgart. 142: "Ergriffensein von dem, was uns unbedingt angeht."

[29] Documents of the General Assembly of the World Council of Churches, Nairobi 1975. in: *Evangelisches Kirchenlexikon*, loc. cit.; this is where the "spirituality for combat", the *Befreiungstheologie* was outlined.

[30] SÖLLE, Dorothee (²1997): *Mystik und Widerstand*. 239.

· *The ecological dimension* – care for the survival of the living space and the integrity of the material world. It is a constant search that can marvel at the beauty of creation (Bateson), feel the joy that comes from its preservation, and think in terms of categories of life worth living.

· *The economic dimension* – the awareness of man's inseparable connection with nature as the source of life: "the disposition to hear the urgent knock of humanity and the willingness to respond".[31]

· *The dimension of institutional culture and management*: the work community is always a *spiritual community* as well. A good working climate in which individual skills and abilities are valued and utilized rather than destructive competition is a prerequisite for productivity and also in the interest of the institution. This is now generally accepted. The study of management is currently intensively exploring the constructive relationship between spirituality and management.

· *The dimension of caring for ourselves* (self-care, psycho-hygiene) – for the above spiritual community to form and function, one must love oneself as one loves "one's neighbour". In the helping professions, this is a lifesaver.

Spiritual Care

We started from the definition that spirituality is an archetypal spiritual need that gives meaning to life, provides orientation to existential questions, and, in this sense, offers security of existence.

When one moves away from traditional confessionalism – in its spiritual malnutrition –, one turns towards spirituality in general. In times of crisis, illness, trauma, catastrophe, not having the support to dare and deal with the spiritual issues that are inevitable in such situations, increases suffering, hopelessness and weakens psycho-somatic-spiritual resilience.[32] This applies not only to those who suffer but also to those around them who come into contact with them as helpers or relatives.

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[31] BRENDLE, F. – LEFRINGHAUSEN, K. (1997): *Ökonomie und Spriritualität: Verantwortliches Wirtschaften im Spiegel der Religionen*. Hamburg. Die Weltkonferenz der Religionen für den Frieden (D, 1997). [formulated in "Brief an die Jugend" p. 156f].

[32] Resilience – a phenomenon known from nature and ecological systems: the ability to withstand external disturbances, adverse influences. HOLLING, C. S. (1973): Resilience and Stability of Ecological Systems. In: *Annual Review of Ecology and Systematics*. 4. 1–23. Resilienz – Ein

For the past two decades, most pastoral psychologists have considered spiritual care to be the "fourth pillar" of healthcare (alongside nursing, healing, and social care). They also draw attention to the need for a differentiated basic concept of pastoral care that ensures its professional, functional, and positional identity. Without this, there is a risk of loss of identity, position, function, or even chaos in the institutions and in spiritual care.

After all this, the question rightly arises: how can this be taken into account and put into practice in patient care, in medical care, in hospitals, in the attitudes and supportive practices that accompany incurable patients and their families? This was the question that Cicely Saunders (1918–2005) – a nurse who became a social worker and then a doctor – began to answer in the 1940s England. From her experience with terminally ill and dying patients, she knew that pain was not confined to the body, but it was what she called "total pain", a total agony, a physical, mental-psychic, social, and spiritual torment. In such cases, both they and their loved ones seek answers to the "ultimate questions" about the meaning and purpose of life, about forgiveness and God's justice, about the meaning of suffering, about theodicy. These include topics and issues of "destiny", home, identity, self-worth, and self-satisfaction, as well as questions of faith, religion, and rites. These aspects of spirituality occur not only in the final stages of life but in all so-called transformative, temporary crises, when irreversible events occur in life. It is the task of palliative care to meet this complex, existential need alongside medical treatment to relieve pain.

Today, the term no longer refers only to the care of the terminally ill, but it has a broader meaning: Today, it is also used to care for the spiritual needs of people who do not belong to the Church, of those who declare themselves to be non-religious, in their crises and borderline experiences. *Pastoral care* here means *spiritual care*. Spiritual care is therefore a natural task for health and social workers.

Spiritual Competence

"What kind of people", asked Cecily Saunders, "give their lives to nursing and caring for the dying? Where do they get the strength to do this? A test for choosing

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Phänomen der Natur / Ökosystemen, "Abfederungsvermögen" von Systemen gegen äußere Störungen in: C. S. Holling (1973) Resilience and Stability of Ecological Systems. Annual Review of Ecology and Systematics Vol. 4: 1–23.

helpers is that those who have quick answers to everything are just as unsuitable as those who avoid all questions about death."[33]

Professional *spiritual care* training aims to develop the following competencies:

Personal competences: reflecting on one's own spiritual biography and articulating its main aspects; becoming aware of one's own spiritual practices; personal processing of spiritual topics (e.g. image of God, image of man, image of death, life after death); awareness of one's own capacity and limitations in spiritual work; ritual and ethical competence.

Professional competence: being aware makes the difference between extrinsic and intrinsic religion and spirituality; basic knowledge of the theory and practices of other religions; basic knowledge of other spiritual forms.

Methodological competence: hermeneutic competence: recognizing religious and spiritual (hidden) topics and being able to verbalize them; interpretive competence (spirituality of the modern age, relationship between spirituality and pastoral care), place and function of spirituality in institutions (health, welfare, charity); use of existential communication.

Spiritual Care – A Chance or the Demise of Pastoral Care?

All those caring for the terminally ill and dying are called to meet the spiritual needs of the patients. This requires interdisciplinary preparation, cooperation, and understanding. Experience has shown that the person who is suffering is most likely to talk about these "ultimate questions" with someone they feel they can trust, not necessarily the designated super-specialist. It is about the individual spirituality of the patients, their personal search for answers to the "ultimate questions", not the application of the dogmas of a denomination. It is not usually associated with theistic beliefs.

This approach to spirituality has, of course, also been the subject of criticism by some representatives of academic theology. For example, "Modern spirituality is a syncretic phenomenon, composed of elements of esotericism, new age, Christianity and Buddhism. One cannot help but notice that religion loses its concreteness here."[34]

The criticism is partly justified: "spirituality" can take the form of labelling any life experience as "spiritual".

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[33] Ibid.

[34] KARLE, Isolde (2010): Perspektiven der Krankenhausseelsorge. In: *WzM.* 62, 6. 545.

According to M. Klessmann, however, elements that have largely disappeared from Protestantism[35] (re)appear in the spiritual: for example, the *indispensability of spiritual experience*, the dimension of indivisible wholeness, the inseparability of life and faith. Spirituality is related to mysticism in a positive, theological sense, and as such, it is an enriching value of life. The purely verbal expression of the Word of God is a Protestant tradition, but it does not correspond to the reality of contemporary existence.

Others (e.g. Roser) see great potential in spiritual care: because it is adapted to the needs of patients, their specific, multi-religious needs. Spiritual care is a "broad concept in which many things flow at the same time – that is why it corresponds to the cultural context of today's society".[36]

Roser suggests that spiritual care should be understood as an umbrella term that encompasses a wide range of professions and approaches, including churches and pastoral care. The role and function of pastoral care can be to ensure that each patient receives the spiritual support they desire and need, given their background, outlook on life, and cultural roots. Pastoral care – also outside the hospital, in everyday environments – is seen in this approach as caring for the basic spiritual needs of the semper religious person.

This is possible if the process of counselling and the counsellor revisit the familiar *proprium* question: what is the essence of counselling? Only when one's own understanding of *proprium* is clear can one be open to the task of spiritual care.

To sum up, spirituality today goes beyond religiosity and denominational identity. Spirituality is a way of being. It is tangible but difficult to put into words. Our need for spirituality is coded into our human existence, each of us in our own way finding a path, a bridge towards transcendence. The spiritual needs of the terminally ill are particularly acute, and the spiritual competence of the caregiver is key; spiritual care becomes a necessity in addition to medical, psychological, etc. support. Although we may think of the 21st-century Western person as having an agnostic or atheistic worldview, their spiritual need to belong, to "fit in" is there. Expecting stigma-free support from religious denominations in such cases is a challenge, but it is in fact a great opportunity to exercise true faith and humanity. This study revises the principles and attitudes towards personal spirituality, something that cannot be ignored in the 21st century.

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[35] Cf. KLESSMANN, Michael (2009): Kirche und neue Spiritualitäten. In: Zschoch, Helmut (ed.): *Kirche – dem Evangelium Strukturen geben*. Neukirchen. 106–119.

[36] ROSER, Traugott (n. y.): Seelsorge und spiritual care. In: Klessmann, Handbuch. 58–76.

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(2009): Was ist Spiritualität? In: HELLER, Birgit – HELLER, Andreas (eds.): *Jahresheft Spiritualität und Spiritual Care* (Reihe Palliative Care und Organisationsethik Bd. 22).

BARTH, H. M. (2013): *Konfessionslos glücklich. Auf dem Weg zu einem religionstranszendenten Christsein.* Gütersloher Verlagshaus.

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