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Spiritually-Informed Management Theory

Toward Profound Possibilities for Inquiry and Transformation

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The burgeoning line of inquiry and integration of spirituality and management may very well be inspiring managers and scholars to embrace new "metaphysical foundations." An infusion of spirituality into management necessitates inquiry into new ontological, epistemological, and teleological dimensions of research and practice. This article proposes a preliminary model of a theory of spiritually-informed management that integrates traditional and spiritual approaches to management. The model has three dimensions: (a) awareness: unconsciousness and consciousness; (b) change: translation and transformation; and (c) manifestation: temporal and perennial. The article concludes with an invitation to dialogue and some questions about future research issues: empirical testing of spiritual knowledge systems; unbounded world consciousness; enlightened stakeholder management, spiritually responsible business, and the spiritual transformation of management.

Keywords: *spirituality; work environment; organizational behavior; management theory; business education; business ethics*

Burt pointed out that behind the methodology of science, underpinning all its findings and theories, were a number of assumptions about the nature of the world and the way in which human beings can understand it—ontological and epistemological assumptions—which were neither articulated nor brought into question during the course of normal research. These he called the "metaphysical foundations" (not to be confused with the kind of metaphysics found within the spiritual traditions) because they do not reside within the material world as such, nor can they be proven by

empirical experiments, but they form the ground out of which all our conceptual ideas about the physical world arise.

Harman and Clark (1994, p. x)

The burgeoning line of inquiry into spirituality and management¹ may very well be inspiring us to embrace new "metaphysical foundations" for our field. Spirituality, as a holistic infusion of experience and wisdom into the management disciplines, necessitates inquiry into new ontological, epistemological,

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and teleological dimensions of research and practice. As Ashmos and Duchon (2000) observed, "We still know very little about this spiritual phenomenon" (p. 134). This article offers a preliminary *spiritually informed management theory* specifically intended to describe what these "new metaphysical foundations" (Harman & Clark, 1994) of management science might resemble. Initial conclusions and questions are offered about how spiritually-informed management theory may inspire profound new models of management inquiry and education, ones that are efficacious in affecting the positive evolution of person and planet.

An underlying assumption of this article is that spirituality and religion are categorically distinct. Religion is form (structure) and spirituality is essence (experience) (Guillory, 2000, p. 218). Of course, one can utilize a religious form and produce experience; however, this causality is not guaranteed. Moreover, excluding religion from the workplace may indeed be problematic. Mitroff (2003) explains:

But isn't the exclusion of religion from the workplace itself a fundamental distinction that divides people from one another? . . . It may be the case that in the realm of "higher states of spirituality" one is beyond all distinctions that govern everyday life. . . . If any religion is to be tolerated in the workplace, it is a "universal religion," one that we are far from realizing. (Fowler, 1995, pp. 378-379)

Essentially, Mitroff suggested that we concentrate on the essence—higher states of spirituality (essence)—rather than religion (form) because we are far from realizing any consensual religion in the so-called everyday life of the workplace. Part of the difficulty in learning to engage spirituality collectively is our linguistic, scientific (Benefiel, 2003), cultural, and religious antecedents.

For example, Sandelands (2003) suggested boldly that the positive evolution of organizational studies is contingent on God: "A universal truth on which to build a universal organization studies" (p. 9). Sandelands posits God as the foundation of organizational studies: "as the (too-often) neglected first term in organization studies" (p. 2). However, Sandelands informed his universal formulation with the particular lens of his own religion: "I must concede that certain ideas of Christianity—the religion to which I subscribe—almost certainly project and reflect key points in what follows" (p. 2).

At root, Sandelands' God qualifies as monotheistic (there is only one God), a theological characterization not subscribed to by huge segments of humanity (e.g., some forms of Hinduism are more monistic, believing not in a single God, but a sacred binding force of ultimate consciousness that sustains life called Brahma). Sandelands also framed God as a masculine He (p. 1)—clearly a difficult association for feminists, proponents of matriarchal order and religions, and more liberal constituents of organized religions who talk about God as gender neutral or even She. He then equates father figures with heads of corporations (p. 4), including a defeminized Mary Kay of Mary Kay Cosmetics alongside other corporate fathers such as Herb Kelleher (Southwest Airlines), Harry Quadrachi (Quadgraphics), and Jack Welch (General Electric).

Furthermore, he submitted that in light of the father at the apex of social order, "Human hierarchies [are] different from animal hierarchies and takes them out of any possible story of biological evolution" (p. 4)—a Creationist viewpoint and one that might be uninviting to those who believe in nature-based religions and do not believe in Creationism (e.g., pantheism).

These points regarding Sandelands' application of a universal spiritual principle prove to some extent Mitroff's (2003) point that finding one way of doing spirituality at work—via religion—is challenging. Perhaps it is the quality of spiritual experience (essence) rather than religion (form) that should be considered? Mitroff (2003) articulated this fundamental paradox for our field to contemplate: "I have come to appreciate the positive role that religion has to play. . . . I still believe that formal, organized religion has very little, if any, role to play in the workplace" (pp. 377-378). Daniels, Franz, and Wong (2000) also offered a "Christian Approach to Management" (p. 552).

Differing some from Sandelands, they do not universalize Christianity. Rather, they acknowledged their "particular theistic tradition" (p. 552) and utilized it to deepen their approach to management education. I think we face many weighty questions concerning how to formulate, experientially and intellectually, a truly universal form of spirituality—if indeed this is even a worthwhile pursuit. We can look to the work of Huxley (1944), Shuon (1975), Smith (1994), and the United Religions Initiative (www.uri.org/) to help us on this journey.

Although the bifurcation between religion and spirituality may seem artificial, it has a specific analytical intent for this article—to avoid a category error. Conflating the two concepts is problematic. The origin of this conflation can be traced back to the origins of religion:

The point is that Buddhism and Christianity and other genuine religions contained, at their summit, ultimate insights into ultimate reality, but these transversal insights were invariably all mixed up with rational truths and empirical facts. Humanity had not, as it were, yet learned to differentiate and separate the eyes of flesh, reason, and contemplation. (Wilber, 1990, p. 11)

Wilber's (1990) descriptions of the "eye of flesh" (sensory-empirical), "eye of reason" (mental-rationalistic), and "eye of spirit" (transcendental-mystical) help distinguish what is the appropriate level of consciousness to consider the phenomena of spirituality and religion.

Applying his system to a couple of examples from management, Forray and Stork (2002), substituted "the language of spirit" for "religion" (p. 533). They performed a wonderful textual analysis on the "subtext of the discourse of spirituality and organizations" (p. 534)—they talk about spirituality with the "eye of the mind," yet do not invoke the domain of spirituality with the eye of spirit. It seems that most of the article deals with religious beliefs, organizations, mores, cultural capital, and values—not the direct experience of spirit. Similarly, Weaver and Agle's (2002) extensive review of religiosity and ethical behavior focuses on empiricism and rationalism with constructs such as "religious role expectations," "religious identity salience," and "religious motivational orientation" (p. 77). Clearly, discussion about mental constructs (i.e., beliefs) related to religion originate in the eye of the mind—one does not have to have a spiritual epiphany communing with God or the universe to believe a particular religious doctrine. It is ironic to note, it is this self-same dichotomization that is paradoxical.

There needs to be an interrelationship between spirituality and religion that is meaningful and practical. Whereas Forray and Stork (2002) reduced spirituality to textual analysis, Weaver and Agle (2002) made no attempt to delve into the phenomenology of spiritual experience (e.g., James, 1902), remaining in a symbolic interactionist methodological modality.

There are some examples of promising integration between spirituality and religion in management. Wheaton and Baird (2002) described an "epistemological shift" from "religion to spirituality" (p. 1). Delbecq (2000) operationalized Catholic and/or Ignatian spirituality as "'lived experience' (rather than theology or religion)" (p. 118). I have also participated in a few of his professional workshops where Christian centering prayer, contemplation, and guided meditation and/or visualization that were spiritually transformative and not merely translatable (Wilber, 1999b, p. 133).

TRANSCENDING DIFFERENCES IN SPIRITUALLY-AND NONSPIRITUALLY-INFORMED MANAGEMENT THEORY

What is the difference between traditional management theory and spiritually-informed management theory?² Perhaps a better and more spiritually commensurate line of questioning might comprise the following: What is the nature of the relationship between traditional and spiritual management? How are they complementary, paradoxical, integrative, synergistic, mutually coconstructive, and so on? Although the ultimate resolution to this dichotomy may be an illusive one, the basic question is fairly simple to articulate: What truly differentiates spiritual management from nonspiritual management?

Surely, before the spiritual turn in management there were elements of spirituality endemic to management thinking. "Meaning, purpose, and a sense of community" (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000, p. 134)—foundations of the new spiritual management—have always been recognized aspects of management thinking and practice.

Ethicists, moral philosophers, and theologians have, of course, engaged these issues vigorously longer than management itself has been a discipline. Mitroff and Denton (1999) derived this succinct yet robust definition of spirituality from participants in their study: "The basic feeling of being connected with one's complete self, others, and the entire universe" (p. 83). Again, such transpersonal experiences of higher states of consciousness and interconnected being are not strangers to management thought (Bailey, Héon, & Steingard, 1993; Follett & Graham, 1995; King & Herriot, 1997; Maslow, Heil, & Stephens, 1998).

Table 1
Complementary Relationship Between Traditional and Spiritually-Informed Management Theory

Management Knowledge	Traditional Management Theory Worldly Knowledge	Spiritually-Informed Management Theory Spiritual Wisdom
Ontological	Reality is primarily material: physical, Newtonian billiard-ball world of things; immaterial phenomenon are not "real"	Reality is primarily spiritual: God, consciousness; the realm of spirit is the ground of being for material and spiritual
Epistemological	Reality is reductionistically and objectively perceived by the five senses; separateness of knower from reality	Reality is holistically (subjectively and objectively) knowable; sacred interconnectedness of knower with reality
Teleological	Prediction, control, rationalization, material progress, ego development of self	Enlightenment, ego transcendence to self, peace, sustainability, positive evolution

The point here is to offer insights as to how existing work in the management field can be complemented with the emerging knowledge of spirituality in management. Intolerance to methodologies in the social sciences is replaced with a desire for reconciliation and cocreation across entrenched epistemological positions. Transcendence—moving beyond one's own sense of self into the awareness of a larger and more meaningful universe—is a pivotal experience in just about all spiritual and wisdom traditions. It may be an operating principle that can help foster a complementary relationship between what we have already done in management theory and where we might go next. This makes sense because a considerable contingent of management scholars and practitioners in the spirituality-in-business movement are themselves active participants in some spiritual practice where transcendence is figural.

Gustavsson (2001) proffered a "transcendent epistemology of organizations" that offers a way to transcend the logical-positivist paradigm of traditional management theory, invoking greater spiritual reality of consciousness: "[An] understanding of organization should be founded on an understanding of the origin of the organizational construct, namely of human consciousness, and in that pursuit go beyond, or transcend, the concepts of organization held in consciousness" (p. 352). By transcending the "concepts of organization" one begins to touch the ontological roots of thinking and practice, the space of unbounded reality, spirit, *prima causa*, or the metaphysical ground out of which all our conceptual ideas about the physical world arise (Harman & Clark, 1994, p. x discussing Burt, 1924).

Subtly, yet palpably, herein lies the spiritual difference behind spiritual management thinking and practice. Employing these spiritual ideas of complementarity and transcendence, we can envision how spiritually-informed management theory "*transcends* but *includes*" (Wilber, 1998, p. 9) traditional management theory. Table 1 highlights some of the key interrelationships between these bodies of knowledge.³ Traditional management theory is a well-established foundation that spiritually-informed management theory can incorporate and integrate (see Steingard & Fitzgibbons, 2001).

TOWARD A MODEL OF SPIRITUALLY-INFORMED MANAGEMENT THEORY

Based on Table 1's overview, let us imagine an incipient model of spiritually-informed management theory honoring and synergizing traditional and spiritual management theories—Figure 1. Overall, this model depicts the spiritual cycle of learning and action at the psycho-spiritual level of analysis of the individual manager. It differs from traditional learning and developmental models because it incorporates metaphysically transcendent dimensions of the human experience—"transpersonal" dimensions: "The word *transpersonal* has its etymological roots in two Latin words, *trans*, meaning beyond or through, and *personal*, meaning mask or façade—in other words, beyond or through the personally identified aspects of self" (Braud & Anderson, 1998, p. xxi).

Spiritually informed management theory attempts to elucidate both the theoretical conceptualization and

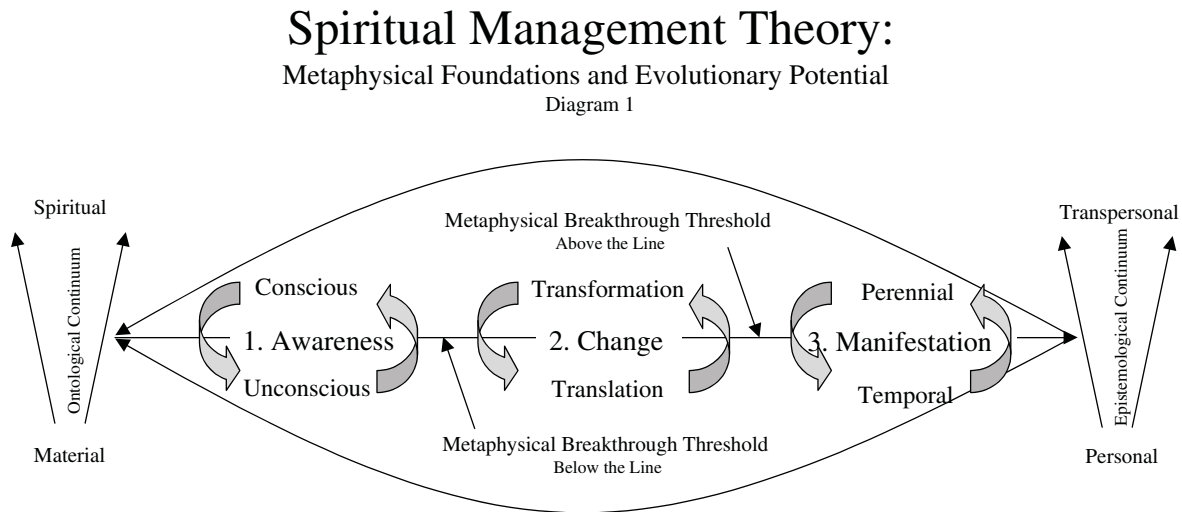


Figure 1: Spiritual Management Theory: Metaphysical Foundations and Evolutionary Potential

practical dynamics of management activity imbued and operationalized at this transpersonal level. Spirituality is the transpersonal aspect of management—moving beyond the self into wider realities, into more “interconnectedness” (Mitroff & Denton, 1999, p. 83). Spiritually-informed management theory also necessitates a framework capable of capturing and explicating “the most profound aspects of human experience, such as mystical and unitive experiences, personal transformation, meditative awareness, experiences of wonder and ecstasy, and alternative and expansive states of consciousness” (Braud & Anderson, 1998, p. xxi). Of course, these dimensions of management are integrated with conventional intellectual, psychological, and cognitive dimensions.

The model is intentionally not translated into managerial language—there is a minimal *planning*, *motivating*, *organizing*, and *controlling* application of the model to managerial and organizational practices. In a sense, the model is intended to serve as basic research, praxis on which our collective managerial imagination can reinvent the very foundations of management. From a critical perspective (Alvesson & Wilmott, 2003; Parker, 2002), these foundations of management—similar to “planning, motivating, organizing, and controlling” and resultant disciplines—are inherently ideological and foment inequality. Management is not a neutral or universal discipline and practice but a system of power and privilege, dominating and exploiting humans and the natural environment.

I think it premature to integrate deeper foundations of spiritual wisdom and practice into management discourse and practices. There exists a powerful, almost ineluctable force in management to reduce all new ideas and issues into a narrowly defined managerial paradigm concerned with instrumentality, efficiency, material gain, domination, individual power, resource exploitation, globalization, control, and so on—“form is content” (Mander, 1992).

We already see this distillation of the spirit into a managerial instrumentality. Management scholars turn to the “quantitative and qualitative research methods with which their training has equipped them” (Benefiel, 2003, p. 384). By utilizing an epistemological frame firmly rooted in a sensory-empirical, unidimensional eye of the flesh (Wilber, 1983), these management scholars miss the deeper phenomenology of the eye of the spirit (Wilber, 1983).

Thus, current attempts to situate spirituality within management transmogrify the freshness, depth, and transformative potential of spirituality into yet another vehicle to more efficiently produce the materialistic ends business demands. Mitroff’s (2003) findings reveal “spirituality was perceived as the only true and lasting competitive advantage” (p. 377).

What are the benefits and liabilities for such a performative translation of spirituality into the managerialist agenda? I advocate that management scholars and practitioners inhabit the mysteries and complexities of the spiritual dimension before reconsidering management, otherwise spirituality may

Table 2
Dialogical Reflections About Spiritually-Informed Management Theory

Toward a Spiritually-Informed Learning and Development Cycle

How is the learning and development cycle different in courses informed by spiritually-informed management theory?

- Do participants grow into higher levels of transpersonal awareness above the MBT? Is it reasonable to think a single course (or even degree programs) can stimulate growth of a metaphysical shift of consciousness?
- What are the specific characteristics of moving beyond the MBT (e.g., higher states of consciousness, peak experiences, flow, unitive consciousness, ecstatic experiences, etc.)? How does this compare or not compare with what we already know about the intellectual expansion of the mind? How is transpersonal awareness qualitatively dissimilar to mental awareness? Can this be measured and evaluated?
- Are shifts above the MBT permanent? What is the nature of the cycle of learning and development for students and/or managers on a spiritual path (those seeking to transcend the MBT)?
- Do those above the line and those below communicate well with one another? Does a spiritual pursuit in management paradoxically create elitism, loneliness, and even evangelical imperialism and oppression?
- Does a church-on-Sunday model of spiritual development "trickle down" into the behavior and outcomes of a manager? Is purposefully pursuing a spiritual path in management the only way to become an "above the line manager"? Are people born spiritual or do they have to be trained? Can they be trained? Should they be trained?
- Do religions provide "above-the-line" experiences that promote higher states of spirituality of management? Why or why not?
- How does the cycle actually work? After completing iterations of awareness-change-transformation is a manager that much wiser? Are the effects of attuning to spiritual management cumulative?

The Pedagogy of Spiritual Transformation

What type of pedagogy (e.g., experiential exercises, assignments, readings, etc.) fosters such a transformation?

- How can you tell if transformative as opposed to translative learning and skill application is occurring?
- Do participants have to begin with a requisite degree of awareness for transformation to happen?
- Is this statement valid?: Managers functioning primarily above the MBT will be more effective and satisfied than those below the MBT at generating financial results in balance with a broad range of short- and long-term stakeholder needs.
- What contribution can spiritual management make to existing knowledge about adult learning and development, management education, and the practice of management?

Manifesting Spiritually-Informed Management Theory

How can the manifestation phase be evaluated?

- What characterizes an action in accord with a spiritual ontology and epistemology? How does one know the difference? Are the results readily apprehensible or is there a subtlety present that is only perceptible to those above the MBT?
- Is there evidence that managers taking these courses, or other managers sourcing their work from a spiritual paradigm, actually make a demonstrable difference in the positive evolution of themselves, humanity, and the planet? How are these impacts to be understood?
- Can managers effective at generating temporal changes accomplish similar objectives to those of the spiritual manager pursuing perennial goals? Why or why not? Can a nonspiritual (that is, one not actively pursuing an above the line spiritual path) achieve perennial impact?
- Is an eschatological point of enlightenment the underlying goal of spiritually-informed management education? If not, what is the ultimate teleology of management education?

Implications for the Management Educator Teaching Spiritually-Informed Management

What are the implications for the management educator and management education?

- Can a spiritual approach to management education be effectively taught by an instructor who is not himself or herself engaged in the approach itself?
 - What is the ideal characterization of the management educator's role in guiding higher states of spirituality in management education?
 - Is it a violation of church and/or state, secular and/or nonsecular, and so on to offer spiritually-informed management theory? Is teaching from a spiritual paradigm really any different than teaching from any other worldview?
-

NOTE: MBT = metaphysical breakthrough threshold.

become just another trivial fad in management (Porth et al., 2003)—i.e., we need to do our "deeper work" (Benefiel, 2003, p. 389). The model offered in this article offers an opportunity for immersion in so-called pure spirituality, a necessary and healthy prerequisite before crafting an applied spirituality of management (Schmidt-Wilk, Heaton, & Steingard, 2000).

The process exhibits a linear-cyclical progression from left to right across the diagram, there is also a feedback loop that suggests a perpetually iterative ascension–decension cycle to spiritual management. From top to bottom, there is a teleological and evolutionary unidirectionality toward greater understanding, power, and efficacy for the manager. The lower

portion of the diagram is rooted in the material dimension of reality while the upper portion of the diagram transcends materiality and comprises reality's spiritual dimension. Wilber (1998) explains that the realm of spirit encapsulates the entire "Great Nest of Being." Harman (1998) suggests, the spiritual foundation of reality, or consciousness, is primordial and causal of material reality.

The two continua on either side of the diagram provide a metaphysical foundation and orientation for the entire model. On the far left, the *ontological continuum* ranges from material to spiritual, opening to infinity as the mind, spirit, and behavior of the manager ascends toward spirit (Wilber, 1999a, 1999b), Brahmin consciousness (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, 1967), ultimate reality (Thompson, 2000), beyond the postmodern mind (Smith, 1982), and other characterizations of transcendent realms of being.

The supposition here is that functioning with a broader knowledge base (epistemological) and expanded view of reality (ontological) will foster decision making that is more sustainable financially and environmentally, more ethically balanced and fruitful for all stakeholders, and more spiritually meaningful and fulfilling. On the far right, the manager's attitudes and actions can emanate from an epistemological continuum ranging from a personal or transpersonal mode of being. It would appear there is parallelism between the ontological and epistemological continuums because they are so highly codetermining—knowledge about reality is simultaneously descriptive and generative.⁴

Dividing, yet paradoxically connecting, the upper and lower modes (spiritual-transpersonal and material-personal) is the *metaphysical breakthrough threshold* (MBT). Here we find one of the hallmarks of spiritual management—an ability of the manager to function at extraordinarily high levels of spiritual evolution as operationalized by being and doing "above the line." Many wisdom traditions, religions, and psychological paradigms describe a supersensory realm of consciousness. For example, Maslow (1971) referred to this nonordinary state of consciousness—"above the line"—as the "farther reaches of human nature," where complete peace, connection, awareness, flow, and grounded presence manifest. Huxley (1944), in surveying religions and philosophies, offered "perennial philosophy" which "teaches that it is desirable and indeed necessary to know the spiritual Ground of things" (p. 2).

In a sense, then, the MBT represents the transformational process where the so-called spiritual ground of things comes into focus; one's materialistic-personal view of life is transformationally interrupted with a glimmer of a spiritual-transpersonal worldview. Daniels et al. (2000) well expressed this above-the-line phenomenon by citing the transformation of Neo (Keanu Reeves) in their description of the film *The Matrix* (Wachowski & Wachowski, 1999):

Neo eventually contacts the leader of the movement, Morpheus, who shows him that there is indeed a reality that exists apart from the world of his senses. After Neo encounters this dimension firsthand, his sense of reality is forever altered. (p. 540)

Theoretically, operating above the line should produce more beneficial results for the manager—this is one of three ultimate empirical areas of investigation for spiritually-informed management theory:

1. Does spirituality (operating above the MBT) really make a difference in the life of a manager and her or his outcomes in the world?
2. Can managers working below the MBT produce similar, perhaps even better, outcomes than the more spiritually minded manager?
3. Are the outcomes similar between above and below managers—is the spiritual manager capable of generating a more holistic and evolutionary impact from her or his work?

There's an important caveat here is to temper outcome-oriented, instrumental zealotry with sensitivity to the subtleties of how spiritual processes work. Although there are objective manifestations of spiritually sourced managerial action, it is important to be mindful that spirituality is primarily a subjective phenomenon.⁵ Attention on understanding and experiencing the subjective dimensions of spirituality first will lead to new objective metrics for evaluating the effectiveness of spiritual modalities of management. Unlike conventional science where the nature of the process is subaltern to results, spiritually-informed management theory must consider the process before the outcome. Otherwise, the true nature of the spiritually sourced phenomenon will be overshadowed by results that could have been achieved via traditional, nonspiritual methods. Neal (1997) nicely summarized this admonition: "[We] . . . are trying to objectify and categorize an experience and way of being [spiritual-

ity] that is, at the core very subjective and beyond categorizing" (p. 123).

Continuing on with the flow of Diagram 1, managers move through a progressive cycle of awareness, change, and transformation while performing at varying levels of the continuums. At each moment of existence in the lives of each manager, they possess to some degree or another an awareness of reality (ontology) and her or his ability to understand and generate knowledge about that reality (epistemology). This awareness may be expansive or conscious it may be limited or unconscious. It would be interesting to speculate on all of the variables possibly influencing awareness (e.g., education, age, gender and diversity, culture, business experience, religious and/or spiritual practice, etc.).

Awareness: Unconsciousness and Consciousness

The assessment of a manager's state of awareness begins with the analysis of their spiritual functioning—"one begins where one is" as the familiar saying goes. An essential component of spiritually-informed management theory is authentic and catalytic self-inquiry. Traditional management theory espouses few parameters about the necessity of self-knowledge⁶ or "essential self" (Ackers & Preston, 1997, p. 678) largely because management knowledge is externally learned and applied, not a function of the "inner life as spiritual identity" (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000, p. 135).

Spiritual management, however, finds a sophisticated degree of deep self-awareness indispensable. In a sense, it is practically impossible to enter the spiritual management paradigm completely disconnected from one's understanding of being in the world. Self-knowledge is a key principle of spiritual management. Those managers and scholars attempting to become spiritual without opening their own lives to vigorous and sobering self-examination will inevitably fail in their pursuits. Realization (Panikkar, 1993) and enlightenment (Angel, 1994) should be the ultimate goals for managerial development. Spirituality is an "inside and outside job."

One does not have to be already fully conscious to be a spiritual manager but simply open to change. The ability to change, e.g., as well as the wisdom sometimes to not change (Collins & Porras, 1997; Fry & Srivastva, 1992) is one of the most fundamental skills of the manager. Most managerial work can be seen through a lens of change: e.g., changing strategic

plans, developing others, redesigning work, and addressing shifting stakeholder needs. Quinn (1996) distinguished between superficial and "deep" change. Spiritually informed management theory suggests that managers on a spiritual path in business engage change at a significantly deep level (see also Barnett, Krell, & Sendry, 2000). They are capable of reconfiguring their entire mind-body-spirit self to grow as managers and as human beings to serve outside of themselves—from self to Self. Traditional management theory does not make similar demands for managers to "work on themselves" and "to help the world":

If we want to help the world, we have to make a personal journey—we can't simply theorize or speculate about our destination. So it is up to each of us individually to find the meaning of enlightened society and how it can be realized. (Trungpa, 1984, p. 13)

Change: Translation and Transformation

Wilber (1999b) made a crucial distinction between *transformation* and *translation*, the two terms used in the change phase of the model. Transformative practices are markedly different from translative practices that "focus on new ideas or new-paradigms about reality" (Wilber, 1999b, p. 133). These intellectually sourced practices "simply offer new ways to translate the world, not ways to *transform* consciousness into subtle, causal, and nondual domains" (p. 133). Essentially, without "genuine contemplative practice—maybe Zen, maybe Shambhala Training, maybe contemplative prayer, or any number of authentic transformative practices"—all intellectual pursuits of Spirit are reduced to "linguistic chitchat and book junk" (Wilber, 1999b, p. 350).

Although "translation itself is an absolutely necessary and crucial function for the greater part of our lives" (Wilber, 1999b, pp. 28-29), there is a point where only transformation can provide the MBT necessary to move management toward the spiritual:

But at some point in our maturation process, translation itself, no matter how adequate or confident, simply ceases to console. No new beliefs, no new paradigm, no new myths, no new ideas, will staunch the encroaching anguish. Not a new belief for the self, but the transcendence of the self altogether, is the only path that avails. (p. 29)

We already see many well-intentioned managers and researchers on the spiritual path in business. While they are utilizing a so-called new paradigm, perhaps they are falling short of actual spiritual transformation—"not living the experience of the transcendence of the self altogether." Traditional managers oftentimes utilize their purely personal skills of reason and the intellect to become more spiritual. In Vedanta philosophy this misapplication of the rational mind is called *pragya paradha*, "the mistake of the intellect." Here one misconstrues the illusion or *maya* (Mahayana Buddhism) of material reality for the entirety of reality. Dualizing the material and spiritual then privileging the material leads to disastrous consequences or, from the Native American Hopi language, *Koyaanisqatsi*—"Life out of balance, life out of control" (Reggio, 1983).

Endeavoring to access the spiritual realm through the representational, objectified, and logocentric world of ideas and language is essentially a category error, since trying to get more spiritual through a nonspiritual method of change is attempting to transform while merely translating. Spiritual misappropriation and misapplication is of serious concern to some observers of the spirituality in management movement (Porth et al., 2003).

Likewise, whose authority determines what is "real" spirituality from that which may be a below-the-line variety is a complex and hotly debated issue. As Gandhi said, "You must be the change you want to see in the world." Traditional managers are seriously limited in their ability to affect change because they themselves will not change on the inside, but expect outer dimensions to evolve dramatically (Quinn, 2000).

Here again we see the theoretical importance of the MBT—it draws a useful dividing line between conventional and spiritually informed management theory and practice. Moreover, because this differentiation takes places within a whole-system perspective, integration of the conventional and spiritual is not abandoned—"unity-in-diversity," a fundamental spiritual principle, is in fact always foundational.

Manifestation: Temporal and Perennial

Before discussing manifestation, let's review the major points of the two foregoing phases of spiritually informed management theory. Awareness answers

the question: How expansive or limited is the manager's view of reality? Change answers the question: Given what I understand to be my reality, what am I doing to change my reality? Thus, manifestation, as the culmination of the spiritual management model, answers the question: What is the outcome of my changed reality on myself and my world? A spiritually informed theory of management must be subjected to the same results-oriented, bottom-line evaluation endemic to traditional theories of management. Spirituality and the pragmatism to better the world are ultimately synonymous:

No spirituality is legitimate that does not incorporate social justice in some form, for otherwise spirituality becomes individualistic navel-gazing or piety that does not address the context in which the spiritual is practiced. This is even more true, I believe, if we are trying to practice a spirituality based on our daily work. (Pierce, 2001, p. 134)

Thus, because it engages a broader base of human consciousness and reality, spiritual management is not only more effective at achieving the practical objectives of management: it also works toward improving the context of management. Spiritual management will radically transform the dysfunctional precepts and actualities of modern, bureaucratic organizations. The forms, processes, and goals of organizations will metamorphose to be more consonant with the internal spiritual awakenings of the managers that enact (Weick, 1979) these organizations.

Therefore, we can speculate that a spiritually awakening and transforming manager will actually produce more positive results than one who is functioning below the MBT line. Of course, the nature of results achieved is a key point of inquiry.

Clearly, the success of today's global economy is predicated on purely economic metrics—a purely financial bottom-line orientation. However, the process by which this wealth is accumulated, the system by which it is distributed, or its environmental sustainability are other bottom-line and stakeholder interests that are completely ignored in these econometrics. In other words, managers informed by the traditional management paradigm may indeed be producing profits; however, at what cost?—alienated and exploited labor, environmental decimation, cultural racism and eradication, greed, competitiveness, selfishness, unjust concentration of wealth, global amplification of the military-industrial complex, and

so on. The spiritual manager has a double burden, or more positively, an opportunity to be an uplifting "spiritual warrior" (Trungpa, 1984). It is imperative she or he produce viable financial results while simultaneously addressing and affecting demonstrably some of these wider concerns of social justice, environmental sustainability, spiritual renewal, positive human evolution, and peace.

Certainly, resurrecting such a revolutionary social change agenda submerged beneath the tidal wave of global capitalist domination is no easy task "when corporations rule the world" (Korten, 1995). For example, does Microsoft's Bill Gates's recent charitable donations to AIDS research justify his monopolistic strategies of doing business? Does Wal-Mart's uprooting of community businesses justify lower priced consumer goods to the masses? These are indeed complex ethical means-ends conundrums. Yet in the spiritually-informed management paradigm, such questions are obviated. Spiritual managers produce maximum goodness to all stakeholders simultaneously. One stakeholder is not sacrificed as the resource for another. What it means to be profitable and so-called good in business are totally overhauled in the spiritually-informed management paradigm.

Here again we see another distinguishing feature of spiritually-informed management theory: spiritually responsible behavior—managing that makes an appreciable difference to the holistic well-being of oneself, humanity, and the planet.⁷

Returning to the model, such substantial and long-lasting contributions to the evolution of life are manifestations that are perennial. The perennial philosophy (Huxley, 1944) distills the most enduring truths and wisdom produced throughout the history of humanity. In essence, it is time-tested, practical knowledge largely lost during modernization. Spiritually-informed management theory utilizes this knowledge as a foundation for generating managerial action above the line. A perennial type of manifestation is aligned with the aspirations of spiritually responsible management. Temporal manifestation, in contrast, deals with the ego-gratifying, superficial, unsustainable, and nonevolutionary outcomes of management action disconnected from higher purpose available above the MBT.

Wilber (1998) offered some good insight about the core implications of the perennial philosophy:

But the entire point of "the perennial philosophy" or the great wisdom traditions—from Plato to Asanga to

Plotinus to Padmasambhava and Lady Tsogyal—is that there are *higher modes of development* beyond rationality [and the eye of the mind] that are disclosed in contemplation [and the eye of the spirit]. (brackets his) (p. 80)

Analogously, "higher modes of development" (above the MBT) in the perennial philosophy are necessarily correlated with spirituality, the eye of the spirit. It is ironic to note, and maybe even controversial, mental machinations and the mind itself are located below the MBT line. The mind and its rationalizing, abstracting, and representational processes function at the level of concrete things of the world. In a sense, ideas are material things one observes and catalogues with one's five senses. The world is known through the intellect but not through other ways of knowing available from more experiential and spiritual ways of knowing—the eye of the spirit.

As useful as it is, the intellect obfuscates a whole spectrum of consciousness and wisdom and produces what Schumacher (1973/1993) called "metaphysical blindness" (p. 38). It is precisely this blindness to the eye of the spirit that causes traditional management theory and practice to produce manifestations that are temporal. Conversely, with the eye of the spirit fully engaged, spiritually-informed management theory promises more sweeping manifestations of managerial activity that perennially affects the world in a sustainable manner. When aligned with the enduring wisdom of the perennial philosophy, spiritual managers can truly engender consequential and evolutionary transformations to themselves, humanity, and the planet.

A DIALOGICAL CONCLUSION: PROFOUND POSSIBILITIES FOR INQUIRY AND TRANSFORMATION

The meaning of my existence is that life has addressed a question to me. (Jung & Jaff  , 1989, p. 318)

As a discovery piece, spiritually-informed management theory probably generates more questions than answers. Table 2 outlines several realms of inquiry about spiritually-informed management theory. Thus, the conclusion of this article serves to convey some future questions about the viability of spiritually-informed management theory (in whatever form it takes during the next several years) and stimulate dialogue about inquiry and education in this fledgling

field. My objective is to invite the reader into a dialogue of discovery; it is here that productive experimentation occurs (Delbecq, 2000; Neal & Dehler, 2000).

There may be much to learn from thinking about how a spiritually-informed management model plays out in the behavioral domain of management education and practice before abstracting observations and findings into formal research theories. Likewise, this dialogue could also be beneficial to the practicing manager engaged in a learning organization-type environment where the practice of spiritually informed management is lively.

To reiterate spiritual and traditional paradigms of management are complementary. However, this complementarity has some peculiarities that may be innocently unnerving. Primarily, spirituality enjoys a metaphysically different identity, compared to other realms of management research and practice. Wilber (1998) stated that knowledge comes in three epistemological eyes: the eye of flesh (empirical), the eye of mind (reason), and eye of contemplation (spiritual). The biggest danger for a spiritually-informed management theory is to collapse or reduce the study and practice of management to the eye of flesh and reason—the two prevailing modes of knowing in management “science.” As critical, postmodernist, and humanist critiques illustrate, management science may be more scientism than science. In any case, the key to moving a spiritually-informed theory of management forward is to ensure that the appropriate eyes are focused on the right ontological level of management inquiry. Wilber (1983) proffers: “Sensation, reason, and contemplation [eyes of the flesh, mind, and spirit] disclose their own truths in their own realms, and anytime one eye tries to see for another eye, blurred vision results” (p. 10). This passage is extremely liberating for management scholars and practitioners. Effectively, the new domain of management inquiry into spirituality is a domain unto itself that requires new methodologies, research paradigms, phenomenology, language, and a variety of different ideas and tools to bring it to fruition: “Spirituality does not obey the laws of conventional economics. Spirituality follows a different set of laws” (Mitroff, 1998, p. 76). An old Sanskrit proverb describes the spiritual primacy, “Sattwa,” and secondary importance of the means of operation of successful management:

*Kriya siddhih sattwa bhavati
Mhatam nopakarane*

The success of ‘great men’ [or women] comes from their self-referral, unbounded field of intelligence—coherent consciousness (Sattwa)—and basically not from the means of operation. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, 1995, p. 109)

Old worldviews of traditional management focusing on the eyes of the flesh and mind are still valid. Indeed, they may be necessary to some extent; however, they are not sufficient in and of themselves for a spiritually informed theory of management.

That is, although all three eyes see clearly in their own realms, it is the eye of the spirit that has the most omniscient and inclusive gaze. As the “ground of being” (Wilber, 1998, p. 95), spirituality is the foundation that “transcends but includes” (Wilber, 1998, p. 9) conventional management theory and practice. As Mitroff (1998) wisely exhorted, “*Spirituality is the essence of management*. Spirituality is an integral part, if not the very essence, of management” (p. 77).

This shift to relocating spirituality as the central core of the management disciplines is provocative and inspiring. Thus, a spiritually-informed theory of management may be able to address pragmatically the exigencies faced by scholars and managers in today’s business environment. Perhaps the most overarching concern for management is how to think and act in an increasingly expansive and holistic milieu on planet Earth—how to embrace and enact with an unbounded world consciousness. Cultivating this form of knowledge will greatly augment utilizing the eye of the spirit, or spiritual knowledge. Of all three eyes, it is only the eye of the spirit that incorporates empiricism and reason into a broader view.

Recent ethics scandals, rapid globalization, fundamental corporate exploitation of person and planet (Mander, 1992) all require transcending the small self of the ego so that managers can engage a more “enlightened economics and management” (Maslow et al., 1998, p. 20) “to share responsibility for the whole” (Harman as cited in Covey, 2004, p. 294). Mitroff (1998) ruminated about the holistic responsibility of a spiritually-informed management to ethically steward stakeholders and not just shareholders:

It [management considered in the light of spirituality] entails treating all of the stakeholders connected with one’s business with caring, concern, and dignity. This

further entails the three ethical imperatives that (a) one's products and services ought to be ethical to begin with (thus, the tobacco and TV industries are in trouble here); b) one's products and services ought to be made available to all who have an ethical need of them with minimal profits to the producing organization; and (c) **one has a deep responsibility to foster development and recovery of all those connected with one's system, such as employees, families, surrounding communities, and so forth.** (p. 77, emphasis mine)

This deep responsibility is cultivated through spirituality. Essentially, individuals engaged on a spiritual path will grow toward more compassion and benevolence for life outside their "skin-encapsulated egos."⁸ They will begin to steward transformation and healing (Khalsa & Steingard, 1999) using their "spiritual intelligence" (Cowan, 2002; Zohar, 2000).

We see concrete evidence of this spiritual sea change in the recent stakeholder movement. Basically, stakeholder management (Carroll & Buchholtz, 2002; Freeman, 1984) involves incorporating the views of employees, customers, the natural environment, the community, and so on in addition to shareholders—a "triple bottom line" (Waddock, 2002, p. 204) of profit, people, and planet. Stakeholder management may be a manifestation of a nascent spiritual shift toward more consideration and inclusiveness in business. Whereas with the profit imperative, only shareholders are served, the "circle of influence" the manager stewards expand to meet a wider "circle of concern" (Covey, 1989; excerpted from "Habit 1: Be Proactive") to meet an expanded field of responsibility and action. Waddock (2002) employed Wilber's concept of "holon"⁹—an interconnected nested system nested in other interconnected nested system, ad infinitum—to support the shift to a stakeholder mentality:

No longer can we consider that a company operates independently of its impacts on stakeholders. Because the company and its stakeholders are part of the larger holon of the communities, societies, and global village in which they are nested, they must, by this way of thinking, impact each other reciprocally. (p. 28)

This holistic embracing of stakeholders is the direct result of the spiritual development and maturation I referred to earlier as unbounded world consciousness.

As this rapidly enlightening stakeholder theory and practice evolves, we will ultimately see a fundamentally transformed practice of management grounded in spirituality—*spiritually responsible busi-*

ness (Steingard, 1997). Daniels et al. (2000) nicely epitomized the spiritually responsible business:

when business is viewed from a transcendent perspective, the means and ends are transposed. When one acknowledges the existence of a transcendent dimension either parallel to, or foundational to the material, a whole new set of causal forces and range of valued outcomes are established. Business functions to serve broader goals than mere profit. (p. 543)

As an example of an enlightened stakeholder model, spiritually-informed management theory offers a preliminary theory of spirituality that can be tested empirically, with the Wilber's eye of the flesh. In the theory's terminology (see Figure 1), we can observe what manifestations or behaviors occur when one is operating at a conscious level of awareness—from a spiritual level of unbounded world consciousness: "where conformity with transcendent reality, rather than pure self-interest" (Daniels et al., 2000, p. 550) creates radical new forms and outcomes for business.

This measurement system is indeed paradoxical. How can we use Wilber's eye of flesh (empiricism) to evaluate the verisimilitude of a spiritual state that exists in the "eye of mysticism" (spirituality)—is this not a category error? Wilber (2000) illuminated this paradox with some wisdom from the Buddhist tradition:

Anybody can say they are being "spiritual"—and they are, because everybody has some type and level of concern. Let us therefore see their actual conception, in thought and action, and see how many perspectives it is in fact concerned with, and how many perspectives it actually takes into account, and how many perspectives it attempts to integrate, and thus let us see how deep and how wide runs that bodhisattva vow to refuse rest until all perspectives whatsoever are liberated into their own primordial nature. (p. 624)

Essentially, the "bodhisattva" is an enlightened stakeholder manager operating at unbounded world consciousness. She is evaluated by how much action she takes working on behalf of person and planet (all perspectives) until they are liberated into their own primordial nature—safeguarded, developed, and whole.

Here is a relatively simple hypothesis for correlating spiritual states of being with outcomes: managers operating at higher levels of awareness (spirituality)

will generate outcomes that benevolently and effectively serve humanity and the planet.

In conclusion, spiritually-informed management theory is a philosophical and metaphysical framework for integrating spirituality and management. I hope this essay makes a helpful contribution to the fruitful synthesis of these two fields.

NOTES

1. As there is a plethora of literature in this area, a few choice samplings: Ashmos & Duchon (2000), Biberman & Whitty (1999), Boal & Hirsch (2000), Delbecq (2000), Fornaciari & Lund Dean (2001), Giacalone & Jurkiewicz (2002), Mitroff & Denton (1999), Reason (1993), Steingard & Schmidt-Wilk (2001), Vaill (2000).

2. See Fornaciari & Lund Dean (2001); Porth, Steingard, & McCall (2003).

3. Braud and Anderson (1998, chap. 1) offered a very thorough discussion of conventional and expanded views of research, paralleling Table 1's structure. Similarly, Banner and Gagné (1995) presented a helpful, analogous application of Table 1 to organizations by exploring traditional and transformational views of organizations.

4. To further articulate this parallelism, ontology (reality) and epistemology (knowledge) can have a more or less material or spiritual composition, objectively and subjectively. Material reality can be empirically validated through the five senses, whereas spiritual reality exists "beyond the five senses" (Daniels Franz, & Wong 2000, p. 540). However, as Wilber's (1998) three epistemological eyes (flesh, mind, spirit) demonstrate, one's knowledge of reality is dependent on one's state of consciousness. Thus, because it is challenging to cleanly distinguish ontology and epistemology, the model places them on a continuum from material-personal to spiritual-transpersonal. Daniels et al.'s (2000, p. 542) 2x2, worldview framework proffers a similar system. For example, "Mystical" is a state of being found in the Subjectively Known and Transcendent quadrant of the model. It is not, and cannot be located elsewhere, for example, in the Objectively Known and Material quadrant, the province of a worldview that is Modern. For more on the interrelationship of ontology and epistemology, see Wilber's (2000) extensive explication of quadrants.

5. However, meditation is a physiologically objective process (brainwaves can be measured) as well as an intersubjectively validated psycho spiritual phenomenon (self-descriptions of internal states of being) (Murphy & Donovan, 1997; Schmidt-Wilk, Heaton, & Steingard, 2000; Wallace, 1970).

6. Perhaps with the exception of emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995).

7. See Cameron, Dutton, and Quinn (2003) for a nice parallel of spiritually responsible scholarship: positive organizational scholarship.

8. This is an expression from Alan Watts. Another variation, "ego in a bag of skin," is found in Watts (1966, p 9).

9. This term originates with Koestler (1976).

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