

Psycho-Spirituality: Tensions, Conflicts, and Complementariness

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Abstract

Mind is not something that hangs in the air. It is essentially related to the interior realm of human being that is the soul. Mind is essentially related to the spiritual self and consciousness. Boundaries of mind and spirit overlap, so much so, it is not easy to clearly state where the soul begins and where the mind ends. Reductionism is untenable and has done havoc to the human nature. The alternative is a synthesis of psychological and spiritual elements. Some psychological problems are deeply related to the spiritual self. By touching the root of human personality, changes in the personality can be affected rather easily. One's spiritual nature is a psychological fact. It is the real and transformative force that empowers one's life. Formation should involve the whole person and every aspect of personality shall be synthesized to the core. Emotion is a key element in our personality. Everything else faces serious threat if emotions are not integrated properly. Wholeness occurs when both psychological principles and spiritual principles come together and support each other and hence we speak of Psycho-Spirituality.

Introduction

How many parts a person has is a wrong question to ask. We can feel the awkwardness of it by the very way it sounds. There are apparent polarities and paradoxes in human personality. These polarities and paradoxes become the source of creative tension to continue our struggle for a larger self and greater wholeness. Humans are spirit incarnated in the body with ability for transcendence and meaning beyond here

and now. The struggle to integrate the human and the divine is the characteristic human existence that makes it what it is to be. George Ladd (1974: 457) opines that such terms as body, mind and spirit are not different separable faculties of humans but different ways of seeing them. Psycho-spirituality refers to the fact that though apparently dual phenomena, mind and spirit are indivisible.

The essential nature of human personality is spiritual. This is very well brought out by St. Augustine's prayer. "Our soul is restless until it finds rest in thee, O, Lord. For, thou hast made us for thyself." We are unfinished and incomplete until we establish an enduring communion with the Supreme Self for which our inner selves are longing. We are having spiritual thirsts and quests. When you are thirsty you can take any drinks ranging from soft drinks to alcoholic drinks. Temporarily it may satisfy you, because they are liquids, but it is pure water that serves the body needs and makes one healthy. Our fundamental spiritual yearnings can be quenched temporarily by developing false selves and needs. Psycho-spirituality is the route to trace the genesis of our false selves and identities in order to leave it for larger self and new identity in Christ. The human personality needs love, affection, approval, and nurture. Without drawing these basic sustaining elements, self will starve and the emotional effects are devastating for the total person. Psycho-spirituality addresses the basic problems of the deprived rejected and idealized self. Psycho-spiritual formation by addressing the basic issues facilitates self acceptance, identity, positive self image and self esteem that help to find one's true identity in Jesus.

Psychology versus Spirituality

It is interesting to analyze the etymology of the word psychotherapy and psychology. Psyche means "soul" and therapist means "servant." Psychotherapist is, therefore, the servant of the soul; similarly psychology is the study of the soul. Therefore, psychology and psychotherapy are connected to the religious tradition of caring and curing the soul and its wholeness. Contemporary psychology took up the psychological nature of the soul leaving out the spiritual nature. Thus, they make use of a variety of psychological means to modify mental, emotional and behavioral disorders. Psychologists tended to view religion as pre-scientific and wanted to see themselves as professionals. Earlier, we have been led to believe that intrapsychic problems are mainly of two types, namely, psychological and spiritual and we need two different specialists to deal with the disorders. Modern psychology in the course of its development showed a special interest to distance itself from religion and spirituality. They separated the mind from the soul and viewed themselves as

supervisors of the mind segment. Philosophy, which actually was the source of modern psychology, began to be viewed inappropriately as speculative and metaphysical and maintained a distance from that, too. While psychologists proudly view their discipline as a science, it is as much an art, too (Benner 1988: 12)

In the past decades psychology bashing was very much part of being a good Christian. It is seen as a New Age conspiracy. Scripture and Magisterium are the normative guides for Christian living. So, can psychology be adopted to make sense in Christian spiritual life?

Every truth is from God. So, if there is truth regarding human experience, mind and related areas where psychology claims to have some authority, it is to be heeded. Some have made use of psychological studies to become more effective Christians and leaders. It is a developing discipline. Not everything in its domain has been conclusively established as perfect scientific truth. Many of its claims have proximity to the truth, not absolute truth. Certainly not everything they propose is to be accepted immediately. Most of them are theories and hypothesis. Making psychology one's God is misguided just as dismissing it as devil's work. Psychology is not the final answer to many of the problems in the Church. In actual situations many psychological concepts have to be considered, if they are not basically inconsistent with the Scripture.

To be truthful we have to acknowledge there is a gap between theology and contemporary human experience. Academic Christian thinkers have come to believe that we can adequately deal with God and evil as intellectual ideas without being touched by them. In contrast, the practical and experiential attitude maintains that ideas are not truly known and understood until they are experienced and affect our lives. According to this later view, spiritual world must be encountered in personal experience. Psychological theology – theology of experience – leads us to confrontation and encounter with the whole realm of spirit, demonic and angelic. As we learn to look deeply into our unconscious self, we experience our darkness and woundedness. By experiencing it, one can be more open to the healing energies of the divine. Obviously only a theology that understands the experience of human brokenness and hurt is able to help those who have been wounded and are seeking help.

Many spiritual masters and theologians are afraid that psychologists will reduce religion and religious beliefs into mere psychology. There are psychologists and psychologies that do not acknowledge the

existence of a non-material world. Pure materialists may not give any room to the spiritual. Many are silent or do not want to enter into the area of spirituality in order to avoid confusion and conflict with powerful religions. Most psychologists and counselors of today have no difficulty in accepting the spiritual world and spiritual experiences. Psycho-spirituality is an attempt to answer the fundamental question of life: who am I, what am I, and what can I become, with the help of the synthesis of two different approaches in human consciousness, namely, spiritual and psychological (Benner 1988: 72). Psycho-spirituality is concerned with developing a self while honouring the urge to go beyond the self.

Sources of Tensions and Conflicts

It is quite appropriate to ask how matters of spirituality relate to psychology and psychology relate to spirituality. There are no psychological problems that are unrelated to spiritual issues. Most problems are spiritual in nature but apparently look like psychological.

Psychology projects itself as a healing and restoring science. In contrast to spirituality, psychology deals with a realm that is more visible and concrete. Naturally spiritual realities are overlooked, until the 'return of the repressed' come more forcefully and compel one to act differently. It is at this juncture people are led to awakening by conversion and reorientation of life. At this juncture he/she needs radical spiritual help more than cosmetic help of psychology. Humanistic conception of people by definition insists that people have within themselves all they need to solve their problems. It is as if God doesn't make much sense because you are sufficient unto yourself. The Christian position is that, by surrendering to the grace of God, we are enabled to do what otherwise not able to do (Kay & Weaver 1997: 146).

God created humans with certain gifts to fulfill himself/herself and He also built in certain mechanisms for his/her self-realization. Thus, we have certain mechanisms for starting, maintaining and nurturing relationships. Our relationship mechanism is operative from infancy. Object Relation Theorists make it amply clear. Spiritual growth and realization are all about relationship. If we accept psychological dualism, we may have to say that God does not relate to persons through mechanism of personality involved in relationship, but through a special channel. In this view our relationship with God is mediated by spirit and its mechanisms and process. Dualistic view creates a radical bifurcation of personality – that is, there is a normal personality that deals with everyday human relationships and there is another to deal

with spiritual aspects. With the growing specialization in every field of human activities, reductionism has become the rule of the day. Spiritual reductionists assert all non-organic problems are spiritual while psychological reductionists assert that such problems are psychological in nature. According to dualists we do not relate to God with our minds and emotions, these are psychic mechanisms. But Christian literature and Scripture makes it clear that we relate to God with our minds and emotions. If we address only the mind as psychology does, we miss the spiritual core that constitutes the personality. Long standing tradition in theology tends to split human personality and evaluate it separately. Psycho-spiritual dualism is untenable as there is a constant mutual interaction and influence between them. Tournier (1963: 214) states that we cannot draw a dividing line between spiritual and psychological spheres. Probably by guidance and self-examination can one reach to discernment. When spirit is identified as part of us that relates to God, suddenly we are in the danger of relating to God with only part of our being which is against the commandment. Salvation was to restore humanity to its fullness rather than saving souls. If God was not interested in every sphere of human existence, he would have left Israel in Egyptian slavery for all times. God revealed in the Scripture is one who is interested in the whole person. Psycho-spirituality is an endeavour to take the whole person to the transforming and sanctifying power of the spirit.

Freud at one time remarked psychoanalysis is similar to pastoral work (Freud 1926: 256). This similarity was quickly forgotten and psychology confined itself to the mind. In the past centuries spiritual care and nurturance was increasingly understood in a narrower sense. Spiritual care and guidance took up their primary role as the guardianship of orthodoxy and major preoccupation was the avoidance of heresy and dubious forms of spirituality (Ehrenwald 1966: 10). Most psychological traditions arose out of the vision that humans' must change themselves and not depend for help on God. Though psychologists tried to make it a pure science unrelated to the God of philosophers and spiritualists, they baptized and give new cloaks to many religious concepts and spiritual practices. Szasz (1978: 188) opines, "Contrition, faith, confession, prayer, inner resolutions and countless other elements are expropriated and renamed as psychotherapy: whereas certain observances, rituals and other elements of religion are demeaned and destroyed as the symptoms of neurotic and psychotic illness." Psychology has borrowed a lot from religious systems and observances. Thomas Oden (1972) describes encounter groups and other intensive group experiences as demythologized secular Judeo-Christian religion. What I am

trying to underscore is that psychology and spirituality are not two distinct disciplines. In fact psychology began to grow as an offshoot of spiritual care as we have noted earlier. What is lost in between, we are rediscovering now in the new paradigm of psycho-spirituality. Psycho-spirituality is not an incompatible idea since spiritual self and psychological self are interrelated. People who seek counseling and guidance have spiritual problems often at its root. Jung (1933) has put it succinctly when he said that a good number of patients visited him over age thirty-five developed their neurotic behaviours because they had lost touch with the spiritual ground about which all religions speak.

It is difficult to define precisely where psychology as a discipline begins and where it ends. It touches on a variety of disciplines such as physiology, neurology, sociology, philosophy, etc. Because psychology covers a wide range of subject matter; it is difficult to focus on specific contact points between psychological knowledge, Christian belief and practice. Psych-spiritual developmental theory permits operational definitions and model building by scientists. Models depend upon the mental framework of the individual who constructs it. All theoretical models reflect the personality of the constructor. Theories of Freud, Maslow, and Frankl, all point out to this fact. Many social scientists do not believe in God. Their theoretical constructs reflect their biases. The extent to which the scientists exclude from their thinking the concept of God will directly influence the kinds of model they build to cope with the data they observe. For example, reliance upon strict cause and effect assumptions precludes divine interventions and miracle.

Psychological wholeness is not an absolute for spiritual growth. Sometimes psychological wounding serves to fuel and channel spiritual energies in ways that make spiritual attainment possible (Cortright, 1997: 72). Saints and sages come in all shapes, sizes and diagnostic categories betray the two-step model that psychological growth preceded spiritual growth. Ken Wilber (2007) later reversed his stand from the two-step model and proposed that spiritual development is a separate line of development along with cognitive development, emotional development and moral development.

Theories of human development as espoused by psychologists focus mainly on psychological level. Pastoral counselors and spiritual directors focus on spiritual development. In psychology itself distinct developmental theories have been proposed. In the psychoanalytical tradition there exists psycho-sexual theories, psycho-social theories, object relation theories, self theories and ego theories, etc. In the

spiritual tradition also different models are proposed by different authors like Jung, Tyrrell, Kelsey, Assagiloi, Benner, etc. According to the psychodynamic theory, whatever is denied or repressed is not eliminated. It is merely displaced from consciousness. Displaced unconscious contend is constantly looking for expression. They seldom remain in the unconscious. The essential spiritual nature of humans can hardly be buried under the pretext of science or professionalism. Psycho-spirituality refers to the mode of human existence. Reality transcends rational or scientific explanations. It can only be grasped by encounter with the numinous as Rudolph Otto (1973) in his classic work *Idea of the Holy states*. Integrating two different traditions to merge into one is a difficult task. Naturally it brings some tensions and conflicts, for each tradition and discipline want to keep its identity and sense of importance.

The Interconnectedness and Complementariness of Mind and Soul

Theologians have varied understanding of personality. Sometimes it is dichotomous (body-soul) and other times it is trichotomous (body, mind, soul). Hebrew mindset as is expressed in OT is totally against breaking down humans as having parts. The basis of OT psychology is that persons in their totality stand in relation to God and can only be understood in the light of this relationship (Benner 1988: 109). The irreducible unity of personality is fundamental to Hebrew belief. Parts are never looked on as separate entities, but only conceptualizations having no independent existence. In the NT, also there is no emphasis on parts as independent units. Human individuality is of one piece and indivisible. This understanding is essential to the theology of Bible. Listen what Leech (1977: 106) states: "The Christian gospel is concerned with the human person, with his loves and fears. So there can be no easy division of that person into spiritual and psychological, any more than we can divide him into body and soul. It is the whole person that breaths, experiences and worships God." Soul-psyche and spirit-pneuma are used interchangeably in the Scripture and reveal the two perspectives on the inner nature of persons. Spirit denotes as having its origin in God and soul denotes life as constituted in man (McDonald 1981:79). Both refer to the immaterial inner core of human personality that is our psycho-spiritual nature.

Psychology views anger, sexuality, attachment, greed, aggression, and venting out feelings as normal, as long as they are kept within the reasonable limits. Even anxiety and fear are regarded as adaptive so long as they do not become counterproductive. Therefore, in

psycho-spiritual approach people are not simply strengthened for survival with stress busting strategies but assisted more in the soul's journey. To bring the totality of my being into God's transforming influence, I must know the entire psyche as deeply as possible. It is meaningless to speak about the spiritual life or formation that does not involve sexual drives, power motives, our treatment of others, etc. Feelings and emotions are very much part of our human lives. They are integrally connected to our spiritual and mental wellbeing. God calls, challenges, enlightens, empowers – but never forces. We must be aware of our feelings and inner experiences. We must accept them and take stock of what is happening within us. We must become aware of and acknowledge that we are affected, angry, frustrated, sensual, frightened, as well as being drawn to God. We must reflect on these feelings and experiences and must know what they are doing to us. Once we are aware of what direction we are being pulled in, we take a stand or make a deliberate choice. Obviously, we listen to God's invitation and voice and must move in the direction he is calling us. In this way, our automatic responses are converted to authentic responses to God and others. Feelings motivate us to act. Feelings in tune with spiritual goals motivate us to do what God wants. Neglect of feelings causes trouble in our relationship with God and others (Maniampra, 2011). An integrated self has a greater awareness of feelings and behaviors and has the ability to choose fitting responses.

Benner (1988) tries to explain the interconnectedness and basic unity of psyche and spirit by employing the concepts of structure and direction. Structure and direction are the defining properties of human personality. Being made in the image of God, our being and its structures have an inherent direction toward God realization. Having freedom and choice, this directional thrust can be spoiled. Unlike other creatures or immaterial things, personality has always a direction. This directional thrust is the soul part and the energizing factor. The basic direction is achieved through the structure-mind mechanisms. A mature and developed psychological self can accelerate the direction if it is free to support the direction without much preoccupations, concerns and fears. Unfinished businesses, traumas, abuses, putdowns, lack of security, belongingness, and love all create a false self, which is always vulnerable and hence the need of constant guarding and defenses. A psychological self that is securely established can only lead towards self realization. If I am anxious about when my home will be lost or fear the loss of job, I will be definitely distracted a lot. Unfinished businesses of psychological self keep itself asserting until the problem is settled.

It is the unfinished business of the self that block many from making spiritual progress. This does not mean that all psychological needs must be met before we are able to respond spiritually. Because we are basically spiritual being, we are naturally responding to spiritual realities as it surfaces or invites us. However, psychological problems and conflicts can limit us in our ability to respond to the spiritual phenomena. Here I don't make the assumption that spiritual growth will be automatic if psychological growth occurs. In formation one may contend with self acceptance, self confidence, self efficacy and graceful behavioral skills. These are not goals of life; they are only certain steps towards the goal of self transcendence. Psychopathology deadens spiritual sensitivity and impairs spiritual response by means of self preoccupation that result from it.

Hardly theologians, spiritual authors and psychologists directly speak of psycho-spirituality, but numerous researches assert the interconnectedness of body, mind, and spirit and thereby attesting to the basic unity of the personhood. Psychosomatic disorders and numerous physiological dysfunctions are from psychological processes. What is happening in our mind is reflected in our body and body changes affect in turn the mind and the expression of the spirit, too. For intrapsychic and interpersonal problems, sometimes people need more than psychological help. Needs of the spirit are sometimes expressed through our psychological disorder. We cannot have a wholesome experience with a well-built body and alive mind, unless we have a spirit that is in good relationship with God (Maniampra, 2001: 25). When the mind takes full control of life, spirit shows its suffocation in multiple forms like meaninglessness, lack of contentment, restlessness and inability to relate to world and others in a meaningful way.

Psychology is concerned with a person's experience with God. How is God understood? What are the images of God? Is God benevolent or harsh? How much of one's father figure is projected on God? Because humans are unified psychological beings, relationship with God, self and others are mediated through the same internal psychological mechanisms and processes. Psychologists are best equipped to understand this process. There is a value in alleviating human emotional suffering that distract one from focusing on to the higher plane. However psychology has its limitations; not all problems are solved always. Increased psychological health and wellbeing shall not be an end in itself. What are the ultimate values and needs are not in the realm of psychology. Those are to be discerned by faith and prayerful attention to the here and now.

From False Self to Authentic Self and Identity

The word 'self' is being used with all its varying meanings in psychology and spirituality. In psychology it refers to the cognitive, emotional, social and behavioral ground of human beings. It refers to a unity, nevertheless, of all the mentioned elements. The self in the spiritual context is a much larger and deeper reality. It is further endowed with freedom, intelligence, moral power and power of transcendence. Since it is endowed with all these attributes, it indicates the need for continuous integration to maintain the essential unity of the self. Christian or religious formation makes use of this inherent power of self to grow and change (Maniampra, 2012). The self is rooted in the sinfulness of humanity and is open to many deformations (Tyrrell, 1998:32). One's choices, beliefs, actions, thoughts, habits and ignorance all can distort and deform the self in destructive ways resulting in somatic, psychic and spiritual consequences; hence the need of a psycho-spiritual and integrated approach in formation.

Robert Assagioli (1971) in his book *Psychosynthesis* proposes a method for psycho-spiritual growth. He says that we are dominated by everything with which our self becomes identified. We can dominate and control everything from which we have misidentified. If we identify ourselves with fears, weaknesses, faults and various complexes, we limit ourselves. If I say "I am depressed," I become more and more dominated by this depression. If I objectify my feeling of depression, that is, saying a wave of depression or some type of depressed feeling is trying to grip me can lead to a different experience in contrast to "I am depressed." He suggests misidentification exercises which can protect one from succumbing to negative identifications. Assagioli (1971:22-27) balances the misidentification process with a positive affirming of one's identity. Some key affirmations are: I have body but I am not my body, I have emotions but I am not my emotions, I have desires but I am not my desires. In the end it is concluded with definitive affirmation that I recognize my centre as a source of dynamic energy from where I can observe, harmonize all psychological processes and the physical body. The ultimate goal is to unite the "I" of our everyday experience with the true higher self.

Before denying the self or dying to the self, self must be known. We cannot turn over anything meaningfully to God about which we don't have any clear idea. Our surrender or turning over the false identities is our gift to God to receive greater gifts of infinite value. Gift should be extended with full knowledge. It is hard to be present simultaneously with one's false self and to God and others. We are present to the realm

where we are mostly identified with. If I am attached to my status, power, health, and good name then that will define my identity and impede my further growth. Mostly people are stuck with their psychological self. What we are identified with that is what we experience. A young child is identified with its body; body is primarily identified as a source of pain and pleasure. Identifying with the body self to identifying with the mind is an enormous leap in human development. The ego is now organized around cognitive faculties like thinking, planning, choosing, creating, anticipating, prioritizing, etc. It opens up a wider world and opportunities and vast experiences. So naturally one is inclined to think that life is all what this level of development offers and overly identifies with it. For many, what I can do with my mind becomes the ground of identity and it remains as the organizing centre of lives for the rest of life (Benner, 1988:107). Mental self provides greater interaction and engagement with the outside world, people and environment. It also helps to interact with the spiritual world and spiritual realities. Body-self and mind-self are necessary phases of growth in human development. It is easy to get stuck anywhere in this line with our mind because we can create any number of sophisticated false selves. Though all selves are capable of giving some flashes to the spiritual transcendent self, we don't realize the authentic spiritual self without a choice to surrender the false selves. Each level of development must be embraced before it can be transcended. To embrace is to recognize it as true, while not letting oneself be defined by it. I am my body and much more, I am my mind and much more. I need my body and mind. Identifying with each faculty is a sure way of getting stuck. Transcending one level of consciousness does not require perfection but openness and awareness of a greater consciousness that is waiting to be embraced.

Ego always wants control and resists surrender. Ego self by its very nature resists any radical transformation. So, lying at the heart of spiritual journey is surrender, losing the ego. Ego feels safe and comfortable in small places and familiar modes of relating. Adapting and identifying with new perspectives and understandings force one to renegotiate and move to a more uncertain realm. In a nutshell, ego resists change to be in the comfortable and familiar zone. Our authentic self wants us to move on and soar to new heights. We humans have spiritual quests and thirsts for our true place and proper identity. Kierkegaard recognized the need of transcending one's self and surrendering it as the only path out of egocentricity. True self is a synthesis of finite and infinite, the temporal and eternal, all things possible and all that could be. Because self is all these, human life involves a constant struggle to maintain the authenticity. Commitment

to authenticity is basic to spiritual development. Jesus said we need to lose our self in order to find it. The self to lose is the over identified ego self.

Surrendering the self to some higher purpose or being has been little appreciated in psychology. Some humanists and transpersonal psychologists acknowledge it but have not shown much interest in the spiritual significance of surrender and self transcendence. A small minority of contemporary psychologists and thinkers stress the vocation of human beings as a call to the highest level of psychological and spiritual wholeness and holiness. A person who actively cooperates with the grace of the Spirit moves gradually to the level of self-transcendence and integration, an ever deeper realization of the richest dimension of the Christ-self, which immeasurably surpasses all purely natural forms of self-realization. Much of our spiritual journey involves dealing with our ego self. Leaving the ego self to rediscover one's true self, humans need guidance, mentoring, and accompaniment. The spiritual director's role is to expose the nature of one's false self. Together with the spiritual director, the directed may explore how and in what fashion this false self is constituted or how it was reinforced and maintained so far. Living out from the false self is easy because of social conditioning and learned habits. The false self is easy to identify in most situations. The false self is the inappropriate and unrealistic dependency on what we have, what we do, and what people think of us (Howard, 2006: 235).

Psycho-Spirituality: Synthesis and Models

Psycho-spirituality is a synthesis of psychology and spirituality for optimal development and functioning. It rests on basic understanding of psychology and psychotherapy, of spirituality and religion and the relationship between them. The psycho-spiritual synthetic approach seeks to integrate the principles and healing methods of psychology and psychiatry with those of a particular religion or spirituality. Ideally the therapists who take the synthetic approach use spiritual/religious principles and methods as well as psychological and psychotherapeutic ones to facilitate healing. He or she uses psychological insights and tools along with spiritual ones to help a person grow spiritually. The synthetic approach transcends the traditional separation between psychology and spiritual disciplines. It does not deny, however, that a secular psychologist or psychotherapist can be an effective agent in the healing of psychological issues. It also acknowledges that a spiritual director, who knows enough psychology and counseling to recognize the presence of psychological deformations and various growth crises when they occur and who is enlightened to make referrals at the

appropriate time, can be an effective spiritual guide. Synthetic approach maintains the view that the ideal lies beyond the separate specialization.

Psycho-spirituality integrates the principles of healing and growth present in Christian revelation. (Tyrrell 1982: 5) St. Ignatius' Spiritual Exercises can be seen in the light of psycho-spiritual growth. The goal of the first week is reformation that is unmasking the personal deformation. Conforming, the next week's goal, is the active turning to Christ which must follow a turning away from sin. The ultimate goal is conforming the self to the mind of Christ (Rom 8: 29), bringing a new disposition of heart and mind always oriented to God. Third week is for confirmation. It is reasserting time and again one's death to sinful ways and the emerging new life in Christ. Love for Christ deepens as one seeks Christ and realizes the value of suffering and thereby identifies with the suffering Lord, who became a sacrifice for me and for all humanity. The goal of the final week is for transformation, a movement from identification with Christ in his death to contemplation of him in his glorification.

According to E. Mansell Pattison (1966), there are four basic relationships between psychology and spirituality. Psychological Means to Psychological Goals: As Maslow, Glasser and others demonstrate human beings have basic psychological needs. They have, for example, needs of the sense of being loved and belonged to and valued to. These basic psychological needs are fulfilled through the authentic human love and valuing by parents, relatives, or their substitutes. Here we have clear unambiguous examples of psychological goals which are met through psychological means of authentic acts of loving and valuing. Jesus underscores the absoluteness of human love and close relationship as individual and as community.

Psychological Means to Spiritual Goals: Relating psychological means to spiritual goals is complex. There is a danger of making psychology a substitute for religion or a new religion itself in this approach. In the early period of last century, the Church condemned the view that the human being is able to work out his salvation simply by personal effort. Christians believe in the healing and sanctifying grace of God in every effort. The expression "grace builds on nature" provides the key to understand psychological means to spiritual goals. For example, a boy who has a terrible negative image of his father may find it hard to respond to God as Father. If, however, through therapy, the boy's father image is changed and the physical block removed, then the boy becomes capable of using scriptural passages which he could not previously utilize. Until the therapist was able to aid the

boy psychologically, he is not free to respond to God's invitation to grow spiritually.

Spiritual Means for Psychological Goals: Through prayer experience, sometimes people come to a lasting sense of being loved and of value in themselves. Any priest, who has ministered for some time in bringing the sacrament of Reconciliation to psychologically wounded persons, can testify to instances where the experience of forgiveness of Jesus Christ effected transformation and healing.

Spiritual Means to Spiritual Goals: There is no complexity involved in this phenomenon. A good example is prayer. In the prayer of petition, one may ask the Lord in faith to grant a deepening love of God. The goal is spiritual since growth in the love of God is the very core of spiritual existence. Sacraments, worship, and liturgy are all means to achieve spiritual goals. We shall seek to integrate the principles and methods which complement rather than contradict with one another or differ with. Formators and Christian educators exclude on principle any insights or methods which are truly irreconcilable with the basic framework of Christian belief and practice.

Jesus said, "I have come that you may have life and have abundant life" (Jn. 10: 10). This abundant life is not something that is exclusively reserved to the next life. Because Jesus is the Lord and liberates us now from everything that restrains us and enslaves us, there shall be an experience of abundance now here on earth. A disciple's life is therefore to be understood as a whole life. Somehow some erroneous perceptions crept into Christian spirituality that this is the valley of tears; so escape from this valley at the earliest moment. The tendency was 'just make it and prepare for your next business of the coming world. Somber and gloomy faces were very much part of being spiritual. Now we have a new maxim: 'If you are a Christian, notify it in your face.' Interest in what is good about humans and their lives and in optimal human functioning has been a theme of human inquiry from Aristotle through Aquinas and from the Renaissance through humanistic psychology to the present phase in positive psychology. Scholarly interest in the human potential has always existed (Linley & Joseph, 2004: 3). Humanistic psychology movements speak to our inherent potential as human beings, with Maslow's concept of self-realization and Rogers' work around the fully functioning person, have been milestones towards a more integrative concept of psychological wellbeing along with subjective wellbeing or the more generic happiness. We deem psychological wellbeing as a sign of healthy spirituality.

Psycho-spirituality is conceived to be an integration of physical, emotional, mental, existential and spiritual aspects of wellbeing. What is whole can have no missing parts. Wholeness is a sense of harmony among different selves which are closely interconnected. The first man was a whole person. He was in perfect harmony with nature and was at ease with himself and in right fellowship with God. This is what is meant by wholeness. To be whole, one must be fully in relationship with the transcendent and must be alive in mind, too. The divine order for wholeness is spirit over mind and mind over body. Most of the discomfort, anxiety, insecurity, ill-health and restlessness all come from reversing the order. Many people don't realize the spiritual principles involved in various life situations. Everything we do has a mental, spiritual and physical component. Often only spiritually awakened people realize it. Though God is active in our lives in all reality, God's acts are primarily on the spiritual realm. Spiritual wellbeing does not require always a formal affiliation with any particular religion but does require openness to the transpersonal dimension of human experience. Because we are primarily spiritual beings, tuning consciousness differently we can receive higher vibrations from the spiritual world. Belief in the existence of a higher realm helps us to tune in rightly. Religious rituals, prayers and worship are a means to tune up to the higher realm.

To Jung, individuation is the process of coming to wholeness. He considers individuation to be a religious process describing it as the submission of the ego will to God's will. It is akin to the confession in Christian terminology, and the purification stage in classical spirituality. It means knowing one's faults and owning them. There is little journey towards individuation without it. The second step is transference – love. We grow as we develop relationships. Unconditional acceptance and regard for others help us to adopt Jesus' mind and grow in transcending our ego limits. This is why Jesus frequently said, "Love one another." The third step is integration. It involves knowing the outer world and the people in it, along with the inner depths, and trying to function as a unity. It requires a lot of hard work, discipline, and reflection. The goal of wholeness is not reached by our effort alone. It is given in the final stage as we dare to encounter our shadows and stick to our growth. The holier we become, the greater we realize the need to confess, to love, to grow, and to wait (Kelsey, 1988: 96). The work of the formator or spiritual director is to guide others through these four stages.

Psycho-Spiritual Implications in Formation

In formation, we emphasize psycho-spirituality, for psychological and spiritual aspects of personality are inextricably related and any

segregation of spirituality and psychological process is, therefore, artificial and destructive. Our focus on psychology is for the sake of readying candidates for soul care and nurturance. Formators are soul carers. One of the most powerful biblical images for soul care is that of shepherd. The OT prophet Ezekiel presents the shepherd as one who feeds the hungry, protects and heals the sick, binds up the broken, and seeks out and finds the lost (Ezek 34: 3-16). In the NT, Christ is presented as the Good Shepherd, who gives life for the sheep and who is their guide and protector (Jn 10: 11-16). Jesus strove to lead people toward repentance and conversion that would flow out of the heart to every sphere of life (Benner 1988:19). That is to have an awakening from within as the result of that life would be reorganized. Psychological growth involves the cognitive and emotional maturity. In formation we cannot stop with cognitive and emotional maturity or behavioral modification. They are only primary stages, as religious and priests need total re-orientation of life which is the goal of every formation. Psychology and psychological services shall not stop with alleviating some distress. It shall help people toward a state of readiness for soul care and guidance.

Spiritual life stresses the need for a preparatory stage when one can dispose oneself to the grace of God to make a radical shift towards spiritual. Psychological services have been accepted and recognized as instruments in forming better persons through awareness and behavioral modifications. Psychology and its resources are meant to be more for problem solving. Only in the initial stages these are important advances in spiritual life; people can live with many problems because of self transcendence. Sometimes our preoccupation with solving problems in order to create psychological easeness in individuals distracts them from listening to the message that comes through from the spiritual self. If psychology keeps people in the realm of comfort and easeness, then it becomes a religion to itself. Formators may be tempted to impart therapeutic formation where spiritual issues and questions fade out.

One ideal goal of formation is to foster in the formees an intense process of self-direction and self-transcendence (Tyrrell, 1982:49). Viktor Frankl (1975) sees the process of self-transcendence as the key to high level spiritual maturity. In the act of loving, we transcend ourselves by entering into a wider world of values, meanings and truth. The eye cannot see itself, it is self-transcendent. Frankl says being human is being always directed and pointing to someone or something other than oneself. As we move beyond basic physical needs to inner needs of the

person more and more, self-transcendence occurs that finally leads to self-realization. Tyrrell states: "At the heart of created reality there is a basic tension between limitation and transcendence, between what is and what can be, between maintaining a level of development and moving beyond it" (1982: 53).

Every organism by its nature tends toward achieving a higher level unless something interferes and blocks it. Cultivation of the forces and potentials that help towards self-realization is the aim of any facilitator. Formators are in the role of facilitators. The goal of formation is to cultivate facilitative social environmental conditions that are conducive to the formees self-realization. In a facilitative social environment, we become free to grow; we also free ourselves to love and to feel concerned for other people. Applied psychological tools in formation aim to facilitate the candidate's development more fully towards beyond the zero point of psychopathology. Instead of attempting to capture varied nuances of human behaviour as being representative of some underlying pathology or problem, applied positive psychology encourages us to look to the person's strengths, capacities and resources – the key attributes and assets that have helped them to survive and in some cases flourish despite the obstacles they faced (Linley & Joseph, 2004). As we complete our psychological nature, grace will lift us up further. This is not to say that illness and disorder are to be neglected, but simply that they shall be deemed as one aspect of the person's experience.

Spirituality is not often looked upon as a source of positive experience. Traditional spiritual formation fears that positive experiences may drive people away from God and likely to commit the sin of pride. Spirituality has been identified more with self denial and sacrifice. Formative psychology is an integrative theory of optimal functioning. Self efficacy, sense of wholeness, wellbeing, self worth, confidence, hope, intimacy and accurate empathy are all fundamental dimensions of human life which are also the desired outcome of formation. Promoting positive experiences can not only diminish psychological and spiritual distortions but also promote overall wellbeing in all human life situations.

Without giving opportunities for positive experiences, the harmony, unity and wholeness we envisage in formation may not be achieved. It is not enough to affirm the human potential for self-transcendence; equally important is to affirm the physical, moral, and intellectual potentials so that a balanced integration may take place. Religious life is a call to perfection. It is not a one day effort. It is a lifelong process.

Without positive experiences one cannot put oneself into a lifelong process. The way to perfection is a narrow way. One may experience crisis from one's own psyche, community, environment, etc. After the selection of disciples, Jesus did not abandon them to find out their own way. He accompanied them with loving care, taught them, supported them, encouraged them, corrected at some other times, and gave them positive experiences other times. Nicodemus came to Jesus at night for help. His struggle was psychological and spiritual. He had spiritual stirrings in the heart but did not have the courage to follow it. He was in need of guidance. Religious people who suffer from various emotional problems need psychological help and guidance to lead them to emotional and spiritual maturity. Not all problems are solved through psychological means. Ultimate crisis need total surrender to the Lord in faith as Jesus did. Psychological help can help formees to convert everyday challenges and crisis for opportunities for growth. Emotions are a great asset, which may lead one to advantage or disadvantage depending on the individual's ability to manage them effectively. Psycho-spiritual approach can promote emotional and spiritual intelligence in our formees along with other competencies for effective love and service. Psychology and its varied tools, when properly integrated in formation programmes, can contribute to the enrichment of the process and product. Self-realization is a process of becoming all that one is capable of becoming. It is a process through which all potentialities – intellectual, moral, affective, vocational, social and spiritual – are facilitated to come to fruition. Formation is this facilitation process that formation which should include the whole person's transformation as *Vita Consecrata* mentions (John Paul II, *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, 1992).

According to Scripture, the heart can be significantly changed only by establishing and developing a personal relationship with Jesus. There is nothing more important than the transformation of the heart through a personal relationship with Jesus. The three aspects of the heart incorporate cognition, affect, and volition – knowing, being, and doing. Heart is here the centre of the individual. It is the seat of emotional expression and response. It is the centre of the psycho-spiritual life. It incorporates conceptions, thoughts, feelings and desires (Delitzsch, 1977: 293). Feelings and emotions are key part of the heart. Our feelings and emotions are normal channels of God's contact with our selves. Our human nature is energized by the feelings and emotions and they are the means to complete us as humans. Regrettably, emotions have been unjustifiably deemphasized in the Church and in the formation for long time. Having any feelings appears to be a liability since it can drive

us away from God's commandments. The commandments, the doing part was given to Israel after the covenant relationship was instituted (Kirwan, 1984: 65). That means doing is stressed in the backdrop of their relationship, after having some level of emotional experience and knowledge of a personal God. This is a psycho-spiritual and holistic approach that strengthens each part of the personality to be at the service of each other. Psycho-spiritual formation is a journey that encompasses both the spiritual and psychological dimensions of human person, leading to transcend himself/herself and consistently strive towards a passionate love and zeal for the Lord (D'Almeida, 2007: 155).

People at large and our formees are restless more than ever before. But we are experts now in drowning the restlessness with lots of sensory stimulations. Actually, the quest for stimulation is a desire to be fully alive. God has made us in such a way that we are vitalized by sensory stimulations. But if we feed ourselves with stimulations without looking the why of the need for stimulation, it may lead to some sort of addiction. TV, music, sports, travel, alcohol, shopping, exercise, parties and many other activities serve as a source of stimulation, more often simply as an escape route from our original restlessness, which is welling up from within the deep. Religious life and formation is not far away from the danger of deadening spiritual sensitivities by framing stimulating activities and leisurely involvements.

Formation personnel speak of taking the heart and mind of Christ but in practice the Church emphasizes adopting certain beliefs and practices. Though spiritual life is a journey of transformation in order to be united with God, the ground and source of all being, practically as part of the institutional Church, we are tended to overemphasize faithfulness to religious practices, personal piety and decent behavior. Growth is incremental, but transformation is more like a quantum leap forward or a major paradigm shift in consciousness and identity.

Conclusion

The spiritual is not any more one part of the personhood or an independent part of the personality. Spiritual is perceived to be the essence of the human person and, as such, it is related to the psychological self and psychological wellbeing. As spirituality is understood more and more in terms of wholeness, self-realization, vibrant living, and maturity, it seems that psychology could be a handmaid of spirituality and spiritual formation. We are here to evolve and grow out of present limitations. We are capable of growing, learning, and changing all throughout life. Physical growth and changes are natural to man. But

psychological and spiritual growth requires involvement of free will and consciousness. And there is no limit to this growth. It is an active process that does not happen automatically.

As humans we are capable of having real self-awareness. We can examine, review and change perceptions, attitudes and priorities. Most times our desires and preferences are not freely chosen. Many are installed in us by our training and environment. Psycho-spirituality can help people to discern what are chosen values, what are instilled in us, and what are in our given nature. Spiritual perception of the self and its psychological nature can lead one to healing, restoration and growth. Most of the mortals need time and guidance in this endeavour. Generally speaking, most humans touch the core of personality by going through different levels of self and awareness.

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