SPIRITUALITY AND THE UNIVERSITY

By PHILIP ENDEAN

THOUGH ACADEMICS OF A RELIGIOUS BENT debate, even agonize, about the concept of spirituality, there is no denying people's thirst for it. Believers in our time are yearning for an experience of God. The means traditionally used to communicate the Christian message seem to have lost strength and credibility, and Christian faith is no longer a cultural habit. Instinctively believers are recognizing that their commitment, if it is to survive at all, needs to be grounded in a personal experience. What Karl Rahner prophesied back in the 1960s, in one of his most often quoted sentences, seems to be coming true: 'the committed believer of tomorrow will either be a "mystic" – someone who has "experienced" something – or will not exist anymore'.[1]

The manifestations of this movement are multiple, extending across the whole range of Christian experience and activity. This article is concerned with just one of these manifestations: the growth of spirituality as an academic subject in institutions of higher education, notably in faculties of theology. This phenomenon is, of course, ecumenical: Protestant seminaries which, a generation ago, would have regarded spiritual direction or mysticism with deep suspicion are now developing programmes under the name 'spirituality'. Moreover, spirituality is proving an important basis for dialogue between Christians and adherents of other faiths. Nevertheless, this article draws chiefly on Roman Catholic sources, because it is only about the transformations in my own tradition that I can hope to write with any sensitivity.[2] The situation today is so pluralist and so much in flux that any overview risks oversimplification; moreover, we may still be too close to the deep changes taking place for anyone to have an appropriate perspective on them. But it may nevertheless be illuminating to compare current developments with a more traditional Roman Catholic understanding of spirituality.

Spirituality in the new Catechism

The spirit of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* is restorationist, and its treatment of spirituality is no exception; hence, despite its recent

date, it illustrates rather well what has provoked Roman Catholic scholars of spirituality in the last twenty years to revolutionize their approaches. I quote a passage from the section on prayer:

> As a final stage in the purification of his faith, Abraham, 'who had received the promises', is asked to sacrifice the son God had given him. Abraham's faith does not weaken ('God himself will provide the lamb for a burnt offering') for he 'considered that God was able to raise human beings even from the dead'. And so the father of believers is conformed to the likeness of the Father who will not spare his own Son but will deliver him up for us all. Prayer restores humanity to God's likeness and enables us to share in the power of God's love that saves the multitude.[3]

Earlier in the same *Catechism*, however, the topic was ethics. We were told that no one could ever claim for themselves the right to destroy an innocent human being; moreover, murder within the family was singled out as an 'especially grave' crime because of the breakage of natural bonds it involved. But when prayer is in question, the authors of the *Catechism* retreat from their ethical rigorism, and indeed appear to commend Abraham's willingness to perpetrate ritual murder.

At least by implication the authors of the *Catechism* are here showing some sense of the divine strangeness at the heart of all Christian existence. The principle regarding the right to life of the innocent is, of course, important, but life sometimes throws up situations where this principle is in conflict with other equally important ones, or where the lives of two innocent parties are at stake and only one can be preserved. When such things happen, rigid statements of the moral law only intensify the agony. Moreover, the God of Jesus Christ acts among us sometimes in a way that at least raises questions about conventional morality. However indirectly, the authors of the *Catechism* are, in what they say about prayer, acknowledging that their ethical teaching has its limits, and one can only rejoice over this.

Nevertheless, the way in which this acknowledgement is made remains deeply unsatisfactory. When the talk is of ethics the moral norm admits of no exception; when the talk is of prayer it does. Implicitly, then, prayer operates in its own world. This world is described admiringly, in fulsome rhetoric; but it is not the world in which ordinary Christian living takes place. For that, one merely follows the general rule. People's ongoing experience of God is acknowledged, indeed honoured, but also firmly marginalized from any serious reflection on what it is to be human before God. Spirituality

is extolled, but apparently not allowed to shape ethical or doctrinal teaching. For Sandra Schneiders, the superiority of spirituality understood in this kind of way appears 'somewhat akin to that of the Victorian wife': 'Placed on a pedestal and extolled for her superior worth she was, nevertheless, not taken seriously in the affairs of the world nor allowed to participate even as an equal, much less a superior, in the important business of life'.[4]

Moreover, just as this version of spirituality fails to influence theology, so theology fails to influence this version of spirituality. Because the life of prayer occurs in a world of its own, it need not be subjected to the critical rigour required for theological reflection on everyday life. The paragraph quoted above exemplifies some of the worst qualities of a certain kind of 'spiritual reading'. The unctuousness of the tone belies what is ethically at least a questionable, if not monstrous, content, and gives the impression that any good Christian should accept the latter as a matter of course. The writing is larded with scriptural allusions and quotations, but these are being used in a quite fundamentalist way. The final statement, unexceptionable though it may be, seems to have little logical connection with what precedes it.

Such writing honours people's spiritual experience, but only superficially. It does not allow that experience to inform, still less transform, our self-understanding; nor does it take that experience sufficiently seriously to subject it to intellectual criticism and refinement. The fact that the section on prayer has been better received than other parts of the *Catechism* may indicate that the habit of an unholy double marginalization, of prayer from critical awareness and of critical awareness from prayer, continues to be rampant.[5] One can readily understand why reputable academics want nothing to do with spirituality understood in these terms. But the modern study of spirituality is rather different. Its concern is to study people's experience of God with all possible academic rigour, in the hope that such study will help us grow, both individually and communally, as human beings before God.

Admittedly, of course, there had been an undertaking called 'spirituality' for some decades in the Roman Catholic academy before the contemporary developments began; indeed this version of 'spirituality' functioned as an important institutional starting-point for what was to come. Thirty years ago, 'spirituality' was a term used primarily to denote what was distinctive about the various forms of consecrated life: Ignatian, Benedictine, Carmelite and so on. This version of spirituality was sometimes intensively studied, particularly once Vatican II mandated religious institutes to renew themselves in the charisms of their founders. Nevertheless, important though it was and is, it

remained marginal to the wider theological project of our self-understanding before God. The focus was not on human beings in general, but on one particular group who often described themselves as having fled from the world. Moreover, this version of spirituality was often pursued in near total innocence of how historical consciousness and the human sciences were transforming the theological enterprise.[6]

Crossing the barriers

Modern academic students of spirituality are trying to overcome the kind of separation between religious experience and intellectual reflection that I have just been indicating. Their primary focus is cognitive: one may reasonably expect that study of the great spiritual traditions will foster moral and spiritual growth, but that is not the principal concern of scholars in the way that it would be, say, of a retreat-house staff. The efforts of contemporary scholars are, properly, fluid and pluralist, and any generalizations about them must use controverted terms in question-begging ways. One will not get very far, for example, without coming up against some major theoretical issues such as what we mean by experience or the relationship between Christianity and what Christians call 'other religions'. But it is broadly fair to say that scholars in spirituality today, whatever their other differences, are all seeking to analyse human religious experience with full intellectual seriousness, and hoping thereby continually to enrich and deepen our self-understanding as people before God.

This development in the discipline of spirituality of course at once parallels, participates in, and overlaps with other major shifts in Christian consciousness during the second half of our century. The holy occurs not in distinction from the everyday, but in and through it. Formal prayer is not the only point at which we contact God, but rather the struggle to deepen a contact that pervades every moment of our lives. All are called to holiness, not just special people with 'vocations'; hence we are gradually learning that the varied experience of those who are called, patronizingly but inevitably, 'lay people' or 'the faithful' is an important object for the study of spirituality. Because their Church, for better or worse, has highly developed institutional structures, Roman Catholics can identify Vatican II as the point where major changes crystallized; members of other traditions are experiencing these changes in a more diffused way.[7]

In passing, we should also note that the exclusion of experience from theology in the pre-Conciliar Catholic academy owed something to Enlightenment ideals of scholarship. Objectivity was the goal, and the

role of the observer was systematically discounted. Academics working within such presuppositions were innocent of how a set of concepts could be historically conditioned, or of how the axioms of an intellectual discipline could reflect, consciously or otherwise, the interests of those in power at the time when it arose. But such innocence is now being happily lost in all fields of scholarship, including the natural sciences, much to the benefit both of theology and spirituality.

Contemporary academic spirituality, then, represents an attempt to take seriously ongoing religious experience as a source for intellectual reflection, largely in reaction against approaches to theology which excluded experience. The agenda is one of overcoming the marginalization of human experience from the religious academy, of submitting religious experience to critical scrutiny and allowing that experience to enrich our reflective self-understanding.

Differing strategies

Perhaps rashly, I offer what I have just written as an account of a significant consensus. The consensus, however, certainly stops once one looks at how various scholars are seeking to carry out this agenda. Once we recognize that there is a spirituality of family life, of relational breakdown, of industrial relations, of politics or war, the question then arises how a spirituality of such realities relates to an ethics or a theology of them. The question becomes all the more insistent when one acknowledges that modern works of theology and ethics give great attention to experience and subjectivity, especially those of groups whom the Christian academy previously neglected: women, the poor and those from non-European cultures.

The positions which people take up are varied, nuanced and constantly changing, and here is not the place to rehearse them in detail. But my simple contrast of the present scene with a more traditional Roman Catholic approach perhaps throws into relief one fundamental issue on which opinions are divided. There is general agreement on the need to overcome the mutual marginalization between religious experience and the theological academy, but there is less consensus on the form this reconciliation should take. Is it a matter of treating experience with appropriate intellectual rigour, but in a way that remains somehow distinct from the wider theological project? Or is the ultimate goal that of using reflection on religious experience, not to develop a new, relatively autonomous discipline, but rather precisely to enrich and revivify theology at large?

Sandra Schneiders at least appears to opt for the first of these alternatives. While not denying a broad sense in which spirituality is a theological discipline, Schneiders insists:

> . . . theology does not contain or control spirituality . . . [S]pirituality is not a subdivision of either dogmatic or moral theology . . . I find most convincing and clarifying the position that regards spirituality as an autonomous discipline which functions in partnership and mutuality with theology.[8]

The second broad approach appears to be advocated by Bernard McGinn, of the University of Chicago Divinity School. While acknowledging the benefits of teaching spirituality as a separate discipline, McGinn goes on record as not wanting to do so himself, claiming rather that the study of spirituality points us to the particularities of experience in a way that is proper precisely to theology:

> . . . I believe that it is quite possible to teach spirituality effectively in and through traditional disciplines such as theology, both historical and constructive, ethics, and also the history of Christianity . . . The reason for this has been well put by von Balthasar when he says, 'Nothing in the Church is mere abstract principle; everything that is valid for all rests on concrete persons, or better, on concrete tasks entrusted to concrete persons'. This attention to the concrete person and the concrete task in the study of religion necessarily implies what I understand as spirituality.[9]

Recent trends both in theology and spirituality have certainly brought the two closer, and many, like McGinn, believe that the two either have already fused or should do so. Theology now takes ongoing experience seriously as a source; spirituality now deals not with particular kinds of prayer experience but with the whole of human life before God. Many contemporary definitions of spirituality as an ongoing experience seem hardly to distinguish between spirituality and religion; many contemporary descriptions of the discipline leave one wondering how it is meant to differ from theology.[10]

Schneiders, while acknowledging the force of the arguments for fusion, nevertheless holds out for some autonomy. In the most recent statement of her position, she writes of the disadvantages of a 'theological approach', which

> . . . rules out, or at least prescinds from, the study of some of the most interesting phenomena on the current spirituality scene such as the integration into Christian spirituality of elements from non-Christian sources, e.g., native spiritualities, the other world religions, or feminism in a way that goes well beyond classical ecumenical or interreligious dialogue. Furthermore, the theological approach has a strong

> tendency to apply normative criteria of acceptability which is not equivalent to the deductive and derivative approach of the nineteenth century manuals but which nevertheless does make spirituality subject to dogmatic and moral theology in a way I consider far too restrictive given the enormous variety and latitude of contemporary Christian spirituality.[11]

Much turns here on whether 'theological approach' is to be understood narrowly or broadly: if narrowly, then Schneiders' claim appears persuasive; if broadly, perhaps not.[12] Perhaps the Schneiders position is most fairly illustrated when, while reaffirming her intuitive commitment to the distinctiveness of spirituality, she admits that it is not yet possible adequately to specify that distinctiveness. We are at the beginnings of the discipline:

> It is going to take some time to delineate precisely the subject matter of this new field and to distinguish it adequately from that of other fields but we know that we are interested in studying something that exists and that does not fit precisely into any of the existing fields of study.[13]

Spirituality is also a field where Christian and non-Christian scholars can meet, and another reason often put forward for maintaining a distance between theology and spirituality is connected with the need to protect this opportunity for dialogue. 'Spirit' and 'spirituality' can indicate anything on a spectrum running from the human person's self-consciousness, however conceived or directed, to life in the Holy Spirit. Though the potential for confusion is obvious, the dialogue is mutually beneficial. Even in the New Testament, one can see the Christian message being realized in new ways as it encounters classical culture, while the insights of non-Christian scholarship today, 'can broaden the perspectives of committed students of Christian spirituality, can challenge assumptions and conclusions accepted too easily, and can suggest avenues and methods of research that might occur less readily to Christian scholars'.[14] Similarly, human scientists are increasingly realizing that some aspects of human behaviour can only be understood properly if religious experience is taken seriously on its own terms.

Spirituality, theology and religious studies

Perhaps what we are witnessing is the growth not of one new discipline but of two, albeit two that are closely related: a theological

discipline and a discipline within the purview of religious and/or cultural studies. For convenience, I shall designate them with the inelegant titles of spirituality(T) and spirituality(RS), and I shall try to describe them by drawing two broad contrasts.

Firstly, though both spirituality(T) and spirituality(RS) will be concerned with dialogue between religious traditions and other sources of knowledge, they will conduct this dialogue according to rather different ground-rules. Let us imagine as an example a case of religious neurosis, of psychological immaturity presenting as devout Christian piety. Spirituality(RS) – assuming it is not reductionist – will place the psychological interpretation of the experience in question alongside what it takes to be a theological one. It will proceed on the assumption that there are many different ways of interpreting experience. It will hold that one only arrives at an adequate interpretation by giving a hearing to a wide selection of such interpretations, and coming, by some procedure or other, to a balanced judgement taking appropriate account of them all. The contributions of a religious tradition are one factor to be taken into account among others.

By contrast, spirituality(T) will certainly welcome what the psychologists tell us about neurosis, but it will not see this information, devastating though it may be to pious ears, as discrediting or even relativizing theology. Rather, the contribution of psychology will serve as an enrichment and as a corrective, part of the theological enterprise as such. A Christian version of spirituality(T) takes it as axiomatic that all human experience must ultimately be understood in terms of God's self-gift to humanity as made manifest in the events of the New Testament.[15] Hence theology is not one element among others in the pluralist variety of interpretative disciplines, but rather seeks, albeit in a reverent, open-ended spirit, to integrate that pluralism. Spirituality(T) must, therefore, be open to truth from any relevant source, particularly information which unmasks the oppressive illusions perpetrated by religious establishments. Nevertheless, the open-mindedness for dialogue characteristic of spirituality(T) has some limits: practitioners of this version of spirituality do not enter dialogue with a readiness to abandon their theological convictions altogether under the dialogue's influence. Their openness is more restricted, if still important and significant: an openness for the dialogue radically to change *how* they understand and appropriate their theological commitments.

A second broad contrast between spirituality(T) and spirituality(RS) lies in how they approach the complex reality we call human experience. Spirituality(RS) will tend to take its cue from the famous

definition of religion to be found in William James' *The varieties of religious experience*: 'Religion . . . shall mean for us *the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine*'.[16] In one crucial respect, this definition is echoed in one of Sandra Schneiders' descriptions of spirituality: 'In short, spirituality refers to the experience of consciously striving to integrate one's life in terms not of isolation and self-absorption but of self-transcendence towards the ultimate value one perceives'.[17] Schneiders' description is clearly less individualist and more challenging than that of James, but they converge in referring, not to the divine or transcendent as such, but to what 'one perceives' or to what human beings 'may consider' as being divine. Both descriptions imply that the study of religious experience ignores (James), or that the study of spirituality initially brackets (Schneiders), questions as to whether people's accounts of their experiences are true, or even intelligible. The primary focus is on what people say is happening, not what actually is happening.

Probably the most impressive scholarly achievement resting on such a basis is *World spirituality*, the 25-volume cross-cultural encyclopaedia currently in progress under the general editorship of Ewert H. Cousins. The working definition of spirituality used in planning the series begins, significantly, with the human person, and only then moves to claims about the object of their experience: 'The series will focus on that inner dimension of the person called by certain traditions "the spirit". This spiritual core is the deepest center of the person. It is here that the person is open to a transcendent dimension; it is here that the person experiences ultimate reality.' Cousins himself acknowledges the point explicitly in a commentary on the definition:

> Note that the definition focuses on the deepest centre of the person and identifies this as the locus of spirituality. One could say that this is the point where the divine Spirit touches the human spirit. However it was thought best to avoid the terms 'divine Spirit' or 'God' in the definition since this statement was sent to all editors and contributors who included Buddhists, who do not make a positive metaphysical affirmation of the divine. Hence it was deemed wise to focus on the human person and not directly on the divine or transcendent realm since on that level there is considerable diversity among the religions.[18]

The focus is on the human person, the goal mutual understanding between peoples based on comparative empirical study. Relations with

'the transcendent' – and it is not just Buddhists but also believers in the New Testament who should find that term problematic – are important because one cannot understand the human without taking them into account. But, for spirituality(RS), theological claims are not the primary focus of attention.

Spirituality(T), by contrast, conceives experience primarily in terms of how the divine actually is at work in human consciousness, in a way in principle independent of people's reports. Its principal interpretative resource is some dogmatic understanding of God's presence among us, which it uses, in conjunction with other disciplines, as a basis for interpreting what people say is happening to them. This is not, however, totally to subordinate spiritual experience to the categories of dogmatic theology, because people's spiritual experience can bring to light potentials in the dogmatic tradition that have hitherto remained unperceived. Moreover, spirituality(T) is, surprisingly, open to a wider range of experience than spirituality(RS); spirituality(T) is prepared to discuss experience where none of those directly concerned are using religious terminology at all, on the ground that God could nevertheless be active there in a particularly significant way. The classic example, inevitably a Christian one, would be Karl Rahner's account of anonymous Christians, who are sustained by and respond to the grace of Christ without articulating it as such. The general principle has been stated most sharply by Nicholas Lash, significantly in a critique of a tradition which Lash sees as typified in William James:

> . . . it is not the case that all experience of God is necessarily religious in form or content, and, on the other hand . . . not everything which it would be appropriate to characterize, on psychological or sociological grounds, as 'religious' experience . . . thereby necessarily constitute(s) experience of God.[19]

The distinctions I have been making may also help clarify the questions arising when the term 'Christian' is linked with the study of spirituality. I would suggest that 'Christian' can apply both to the subject matter and to the method of spirituality study: there is both the study of Christian spirituality and the Christian study of spirituality. The former is a specialism restricted to the study of Christian experience; the latter a Christian version of spirituality(T).[20] Moreover, the decisions whether or not to specialize in Christian subject-matter and whether or not to adopt a Christian method are, at least logically, independent. It is possible to pursue the Christian study of spirituality without necessarily confining oneself to the experience of Christians; it

is equally possible for a scholar to specialize in the experience of Christians without using Christian tradition as a primary interpretative resource. Again, some scholars will continue both to adopt a method shaped by Christian commitments and to restrict their focus to Christians, while others will continue using some other framework of interpretation to focus on human experience in general.

In offering this distinction between spirituality(T) and spirituality (RS), it is in no way my intention to set them up in any kind of competition. Both have, in my opinion, a right to exist in the modern university; there are already significant scholarly achievements in both fields and the promise of much more for the future. Each has much to gain from coexistence and interaction with the other. Nor do I want to absolutize the distinction, or to deny the wide variety of ways in which both forms of academic spirituality can be practised. The distinction as articulated here is one between two ideal types, neither of which, arguably, exists at present in a pure form and perhaps never will. Nevertheless it may (or indeed may not) offer a way of thinking which clarifies some current theoretical debates. Of course much helpful writing in spirituality moves unreflectively between the two approaches; the purpose of my distinguishing them here is not to outlaw this kind of move, but merely to highlight both for readers and researchers some wider questions at stake when people make it.

Whether spirituality(RS) and spirituality(T) will divorce in the modern university, whether one will absorb the other, whether they will somehow amalgamate, or whether they will remain in more or less fruitful dialogue – all these remain to be seen. Political and financial factors, both in university administration and civil society at large, are likely to be at least as influential on future developments as the theoretical issues I have been dealing with in this article. The security of a discipline in the academy often has little to do with the precision or otherwise of its self-definition. Moreover, the unclarities regarding spirituality and its relationship to other disciplines and subdisciplines seem to me no greater than those regarding fundamental theology, pastoral theology, or indeed biblical studies.

The distinction I have sketched between two understandings of spirituality as an academic subject turns on the relative weight to be given to theology and the human sciences and on the difference between what God is in fact doing in us and what we describe God as doing. For a Christian, however, such contrasts, though perhaps valuable for a time in some contexts, can never be absolute. There is no God except Emmanuel, God-with-us, God present in our experience;

there is no human experience except that which is shot through with God's presence. Provided, therefore, that Christian theologians and other scholars approach that experience with honesty and integrity, their efforts will finally – whatever happens in the meantime – converge. As the experience of a Christian culture becomes more and more a memory of the past, it is vital that we Christians draw on every resource available as we constantly discover the mystery of God in human experience and thus negotiate our identity anew.

NOTES

[1] Karl Rahner, *Theological investigations* VII (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1971), p 15 (translation altered).

[2] A random example may illustrate the problems involved in interpreting the whole spirituality movement ecumenically. John H. Westerhoff, who appears to have moved to Anglo-Catholicism from a more Reformed tradition, writes in his *Spiritual life: the foundation for preaching and teaching* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994) of how clergy typically discover spirituality and its importance in mid-life, after various experiences of disintegration when 'they realize they have nothing left to inform their teaching and preaching'. At the bottom of the trough, 'all that has given shape and form to their lives as preachers and teachers is eroding. Their spiritual lives have been ignored. Only when they come to this point are they ready to take the radical step necessary to make their spiritual lives the focus of their attention.' Interesting though this generalization is, readers from a different culture or denominational tradition have little basis for assessing its accuracy or for understanding in any depth the spiritual, cultural and personal movements it evokes.

[3] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n 2572, with quotations from and allusions to Heb 11:17, Gen 22:8, Heb 11:19, Rom 8:32, 16–21. For the contrast with the moral teaching of the *Catechism*, compare especially nn 2258, 2268–2269.

[4] Sandra M. Schneiders, 'Theology and spirituality: strangers, rivals, or partners?', *Horizons* 13 (1986), pp 253–274, here p 263. This is the first of four important articles by Schneiders on the identity of spirituality as a discipline; other contributions, including this present one, are more or less overt responses to the positions she puts forward. As one of the moving spirits behind the doctoral programme at the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, California, surely at present the major centre in the world for the academic study of spirituality, she has had great influence on contemporary developments. Schneiders' other articles are: 'Spirituality in the academy', *Theological Studies* 50 (1989), pp 676–697; 'Spirituality as an academic discipline: reflections from experience', *Christian Spirituality Bulletin* 1/2(Fall 1993), pp 10–15; 'A hermeneutical approach to the study of Christian spirituality', *Christian Spirituality Bulletin* 2/1 (Spring 1994), pp 9–14.

[5] My own essay, 'The encounter known as prayer' in *Commentary on the Catechism of the Catholic Church*, edited by Michael J. Walsh (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1994), pp 395–409, which expands on the points I make here, remains the only piece I have seen that takes up a critical line on the prayer section of the *Catechism*.

[6] Within the Jesuit tradition, for example, recent works such as John W. O'Malley, *The first Jesuits* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993) or David Lonsdale, *Eyes to see, ears to hear: an introduction to Ignatian spirituality* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1990), are ground-breaking and of international importance precisely because they are among the first works in the field to draw on critical methods which, elsewhere in theology, have been standard for a generation.

[7] For a stimulating and acute account of how Vatican II marked a transformation in the self-understanding of Roman Catholics, see the essays collected in John W. O'Malley, *Tradition and transition: historical perspectives on Vatican II* (Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1989).

[8] Sandra M. Schneiders, 'Spirituality in the academy', pp 687, 689.

[9] Bernard McGinn, 'The letter and the spirit: spirituality as an academic discipline', *Christian Spirituality Bulletin* 1/2 (Fall 1993), pp 1–10, here p 9. The quotation comes from Hans Urs von Balthasar, 'The Gospel as norm and test of all spirituality of the Church', *Concilium* (Spirituality) no 1 (1965), p 11. McGinn's article gives a helpful initial bibliography on the contemporary discussion.

[10] See, for example, Michael Downey's editorial preface in *The new dictionary of Catholic spirituality* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1993), p viii: 'Spirituality is concerned with the *human person* in *relation* to God. While this may be said to be the concern of any area of theology or religious studies, it is the specific concern of the discipline of spirituality to focus precisely upon the relational and personal (inclusive of the social and political) dimensions of the human person's relationship to the divine.' Theology, then, is left with the non-relational dimensions of a relationship!

[11] Sandra M. Schneiders, 'A hermeneutical approach', p 12.

[12] Philip F. Sheldrake, 'Some continuing questions: the relationship between spirituality and theology', *Christian Spirituality Bulletin* 2/1 (Spring 1994), pp 15–17.

[13] Sandra M. Schneiders, 'Spirituality as an academic discipline', p 15.

[14] Walter H. Principe, 'Spirituality, Christian', in *A New dictionary of Catholic spirituality*, edited by Michael Downey (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1993), pp 931–938, here p 935.

[15] There are frequent references in the literature to Christian criteria as norms for evaluation of experience. Here I prefer to talk in terms of interpretation, given that, on Christian premises, our information about a situation is always incomplete, open to supplementation, and that judgement ultimately lies with God alone. But, since it would clearly be absurd to deny that some experiences are more authentically Christian than others, there are interesting issues here which merit further consideration.

[16] William James, *The varieties of religious experience: a study in human nature*, edited with an introduction by Martin E. Marty (London: Penguin, 1982), p 31 (towards the beginning of lecture II).

[17] Sandra M. Schneiders, 'Theology and spirituality', pp 266–267.

[18] Ewert H. Cousins, 'The nature of faith in interreligious dialogue', *The Way Supplement* 78 (Autumn 1993), pp 32–41, here p 33. This article reproduces the full definition, which can also be found in the General Introduction to each volume of the series.

[19] Nicholas Lash, *Easter in ordinary: reflections on human experience and the knowledge of God* (London: SCM, 1988), p 7.

[20] One could obviously imagine versions of spirituality(T) informed by at least some non-Christian world-views.