Transpersonal Perspectives

ON

Spirituality

IN

Social Work

Edward R. Canda • Elizabeth D. Smith

Editors

Transpersonal Perspectives on Spirituality in Social Work

Transpersonal Perspectives on Spirituality in Social Work has been co-published simultaneously as *Social Thought*, Volume 20, Numbers 1/2 2001.

The *Social Thought* Monographic ''Separates''

Below is a list of " separates," which in serials librarianship means a special issue simultaneously published as a special journal issue or double-issue *and* as a "separate" hardbound monograph. (This is a format which we also call a "DocuSerial.")

"Separates" are published because specialized libraries or professionals may wish to purchase a specific thematic issue by itself in a format which can be separately cataloged and shelved, as opposed to purchasing the journal on an on-going basis. Faculty members may also more easily consider a "separate" for classroom adoption.

"Separates" are carefully classified separately with the major book jobbers so that the journal tie-in can be noted on new book order slips to avoid duplicate purchasing.

You may wish to visit Haworth's Website at . . .

http://www.HaworthPress.com

. . . to search our online catalog for complete tables of contents of these separates and related publications.

You may also call 1-800-HAWORTH (outside US/Canada: 607-722-5857), or Fax 1-800-895-0582 (outside US/Canada: 607-771-0012), or e-mail at:

getinfo@haworthpressinc.com

Transpersonal Perspectives on Spirituality in Social Work, edited by Edward R. Canda, PhD, and Elizabeth D. Smith, DSW (Vol. 20, No. 1/2, 2001). *"COMPREHENSIVE. . . provides theoretical and practice-oriented studies on the emerging field of transpersonal social work. The writing is both scholarly and relevant to practice. OF INTEREST TO SCHOLARS, PRACTITIONERS, AND STUDENTS ALIKE." (John R. Graham, PhD, RSW, Associate Professor, Faculty of Social Work, University of Calgary, Alberta, Canada)*

Raising Our Children Out of Poverty, edited by John J. Stretch, PhD, Maria Bartlett, PhD, William J. Hutchison, PhD, Susan A. Taylor, PhD, and Jan Wilson, MSW (Vol. 19, No. 2, 1999). *This book shows what can be done at the national and local community levels to raise children out of poverty by strengthening families, communities, and social services.*

Postmodernism, Religion and the Future of Social Work, edited by Roland G. Meinert, PhD, John T. Pardeck, PhD, and John W. Murphy, PhD (Vol. 18, No. 3, 1998). *"Critically important for social work as it attempts to effectively respond to its increasingly complex roles and demands. . . . A book worth owning and studying." (John M. Herrick, PhD, Acting Director, School of Social Work, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan)*

Spirituality in Social Work: New Directions, edited by Edward R. Canda, PhD (Vol. 18, No. 2, 1998). *"Provides interesting insights and references for those who seek to develop curricula responsive to the spiritual challenges confronting our profession and the populations we serve." (Au-Deane S. Cowley, PhD, Associate Dean, Graduate School of Social Work, University of Utah, Salt Lake City)*

Transpersonal Perspectives
on Spirituality
in Social Work

Edward R. Canda
Elizabeth D. Smith
Editors

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
NEW YORK AND LONDON

Transpersonal Perspectives on Spirituality in Social Work has been co-published simultaneously as *Social Thought*™, Volume 20, Numbers 1/2 2001.

Cover design by Thomas J. Mayshock Jr.

Transpersonal Perspectives on Spirituality in Social Work

CONTENTS

ABOUT THE EDITORS

Edward R. Canda, PhD, is Professor in and Chairperson of the doctoral program at the University of Kansas School of Social Welfare, Lawrence, KS 66045. He is also a member of the Center for East Asian Studies and a coordinator of the linkage between religious studies and social work educational programs at the University of Kansas. He has more than 50 publications on the topics of spirituality and cultural diversity in social work. More than 100 presentations span North America, Europe, and East Asia. His most recent book is *Spiritual Diversity in Social Work Practice: The Heart of Helping*, co-authored with Leola Dyrud Furman, published by Free Press in 1999. In 1990, Dr. Canda founded the Society for Spirituality and Social Work.

Elizabeth D. Smith, DSW, is Associate Professor in and Chairperson of the doctoral program at the National Catholic School of Social Service, The Catholic University of America, Washington, DC 20064. She also holds a part-time faculty position of Research Associate at Johns Hopkins University, School of Medicine. Over the past fifteen years her research has centered on spirituality and death, in particular suffering and the process of confronting one's mortality. Dr. Smith has presented nationally and internationally on these topics and is currently in the process of writing a book entitled *The Transformation of Suffering: A Transpersonal Body, Mind and Spirit Model of Social Work Practice.* She is Vice-President of the Society for Spirituality and Social Work.

Introduction

Edward R. Canda
Elizabeth D. Smith

KEYWORDS. Spirituality, transpersonal, religion, social work, psychology

The groundbreaking topic of transpersonal social work presented herein is especially apropos for social work early in this new millennium, as transpersonal theory calls us to go beyond the limits and biases of egoistic and ethnocentric views of the self, the world, well-being, and justice.

As will be shown in the following chapters, transpersonal theory has been growing steadily within psychology and philosophy since the 1960s and has gained tremendous momentum since the 1990s. However, it has only recently begun to influence mainstream social work. *Transpersonal Perspectives on Spirituality in Social Work* is intended to stimulate a quantum leap in social work innovation by helping scholars and practitioners to incorporate the important contributions of transpersonal thought and practice. For this purpose, we have collected a set of theoretical and practice oriented studies that establish a foundation for the newly emerging field of transpersonal social work. Transpersonal theory brings us back to ideas about spiritual aspects of human needs that inspired the foundation of American social work. At the same time, it

Edward R. Canda, PhD, is Professor in and Chairperson of the doctoral program at the University of Kansas School of Social Welfare, Lawrence, KS 66045.

Elizabeth D. Smith, DSW, is Associate Professor and Chairperson of the doctoral program at the National Catholic School of Social Service, The Catholic University of America, Washington, DC 20064.

propels us into challenging new perspectives derived from diverse scientific fields, Western and Eastern philosophies, and ancient and emerging worldviews.

We have organized the contents to flow from conceptual and theoretical frameworks for understanding transpersonal theory to empirical and clinical studies that focus on people's actual life experiences and social work practice implications.

Carroll's comparative analysis of various models of spirituality and spiritual development sets the context of concern for transpersonal social work, which is to address the full range of human potential from material and psychological well-being to spiritual fulfillment. Besthorn offers insights about the fundamental connectedness between human being and nature in the person/environment whole by weaving together contributions of transpersonal theory and deep ecology. Smith addresses universal human concerns about mortality and death and suggests how social workers can help alleviate death-related anxiety by applying a transpersonal and social constructionist approach. Leight points out ways that transpersonal theory can complement and enhance social work practice that focuses on empowerment and justice in work with marginalized and oppressed populations.

Cowley shows how social workers, particularly in mental health settings, can develop guidelines for differentiating between psychopathology-based hallucinations or delusions and spiritual breakthroughs of consciousness. Freeman's study explores differences in archetypes of spiritual significance between European Americans and African Americans and how they relate to expressions of violence. Canda's study of adults with a chronic illness gives a detailed example of how people can draw on transpersonal experiences and beliefs to support resilient response to challenges related to disability and death. Reese gives theoretical, empirical, and practical insights into transpersonally oriented hospice work. Finally, Derezotes provides a model for promoting compatibility and intimacy through transpersonally oriented clinical practice with couples.

All together, these articles take us through the full sweep of human experience from depths of crisis, illness, death, and injustice to peaks of spiritual illumination and transformation. Looking at this sweep of human experience more closely through the lens of transpersonal theory, social workers can perceive how spiritual growth and development are actually happening through all the lows and highs of life. Then we can align our work with this sacred process in accord with the particular spiritual traditions and practices of our clients and ourselves.

We believe that this book is groundbreaking in the profession of social work in that it presents both explanatory insights of transpersonal theory and also their implications for promoting growth and change through practice that is relevant to social work's unique person-in-environment perspective. The de-

velopment of models of practice that employ transpersonal theory and the application of holistic theoretical concepts to social work is long overdue. It is our hope that this work will spawn further research and numerous applications of the transpersonal perspective such that the fourth dimension of the individual, the spiritual, becomes a natural extension of the bio-psycho-social approach.

Furthermore, we hope that this book triggers a conversation in the social work literature about the strengths and limitations of transpersonal theory for exploring spiritual growth-related phenomena and transegoic experiences. In the past, the creative usefulness of these experiences has been neglected due to the limits of conventional Western psychology's materialistic focus on modifying the personality, primarily through talk therapy. Transpersonal theory offers the profession a whole new realm for possible helping strategies and practices and a myriad of methodologies for accessing the spiritual dimension without the imposition of a particular set of beliefs. We invite you to explore the numerous possibilities apparent in each of the articles that might encourage you to extend your own practice, teaching, and/or research.

An edition such as this does not come into being without the cooperative efforts of a number of individuals. Dr. Elizabeth D. Smith gave birth to this project out of her desire to introduce transpersonal theory into the social work literature as a viable option for holistic social work practice. As the primary editor, Dr. Edward R. Canda took the collective body of this work and worked closely with the contributing authors to shape it into a cohesive whole. And behind the scenes, Dr. Fred Ahearn, Editor of *Social Thought,* provided generous help as a skillful reviewer and text editor, for which we extend our gratitude and thanks. We thank the many manuscript reviewers, as well as Marian Abegg, who gave extensive assistance with manuscript preparation. Finally, we thank the contributing authors who are at the forefront of innovation about transpersonal theory and practice in social work.

Conceptual Models of Spirituality

Maria M. Carroll

SUMMARY. The traditional social work view of human nature and the whole person has emphasized biological, psychological, and social dimensions. Interdisciplinary and, more recently, social work conceptualizations of the whole person have added spirituality. After exploring definitions of spirituality, this article describes seven models which include diagrams that enhance the conceptual understanding of spirituality. The models are examined with regard to the spiritual growth process by drawing on developmental theories. A new diagrammatic model, Spirituality: A Wholistic Model, illustrates the relationship between spirituality and the biological, psychological, social, and transpersonal dimensions of the person. It provides a way to evaluate the helpfulness of experiences, including practice interventions, with respect to their role in assisting each individual in moving toward realization of full potential. *[Article copies available for a fee from The Haworth Document Delivery Service: 1-800-342-9678. E-mail address: <getinfo@haworthpressinc.com> Website: <http://www.Haworth Press.com> © 2001 by The Haworth Press, Inc. All rights reserved.]*

Maria M. Carroll, PhD, LCSW, is Associate Professor in the Department of Social Work at Delaware State University, Dover, DE 19904-2277 (E-mail: MCarrol@dsc.edu).

CONCEPTUAL MODELS OF SPIRITUALITY

Some helping professions such as social work (Corbett, 1925; Keith-Lucas, 1960; O'Brien, 1992; Richmond, 1930; Siporin, 1985) and nursing (Carson, 1989a; Stoll, 1989) historically have emphasized the whole person. However, they have usually emphasized the biological, psychological, and social dimensions of personhood while minimizing spirituality.

As spirituality has been increasingly considered essential for understanding the whole person, social work literature has broadened its focus to include it (e.g., Bullis, 1996; Canda, 1986, 1988a, 1997; Carroll, 1997b; Cornett, 1992; Cowley, 1993; Weick, 1983b). This new focus has raised questions such as: What is spirituality? What is the relationship between spirituality, clients' experiences, and the idea of the whole person or wholeness? How are the elements of wholeness related? How is spiritual growth demonstrated?

Spirituality, in its broadest sense, has been described as relationship or interconnectedness among self, others, and God–among all that exists in the universe (Canda, 1983). Models depicting wholeness, therefore, include the various dimensions of the person and show their interrelatedness according to the particular theorist's view. In addition to discussing spirituality and wholeness in conceptual models, several theorists from various disciplines have diagramed their models. These visual representations enhance the understanding of conceptual models.

This article will define spirituality in two different ways, present seven diagrammatic models which include spirituality, and discuss spiritual development as a process of growth toward wholeness. It will then present a new diagrammatic model of spirituality which includes its two most common meanings as well as a wholistic developmental perspective.

MEANINGS OF SPIRITUALITY

Descriptions of spirituality contain various themes. One theme is a person's experiential knowledge of and relationship with a transcendent and ultimate source of reality or creation (Berenson, 1987; Bullis, 1996; Fowler, 1981; Siporin, 1985; Titone, 1991). This relationship with God, or the transcendent, is described as a person's openness and responsiveness to God (Helminiak, 1987), sense of well-being in relation to God (the religious component) (Ellison, 1983), and focus on ultimate reality (Canda & Furman, 1999). This relationship with the transcendent may (but not necessarily) be expressed through organized religion, which serves as a means to express one's beliefs

about his or her spiritual nature (Dudley & Helfgott, 1990; Ortiz, 1991; Titone, 1991).

A second theme refers to spirituality originating from the deepest core of the person (Canda, 1990; Jung, 1954a; Siporin, 1985). This is described as what is given as a birthright (Helminiack, 1987), one's fundamental nature (Ortiz, 1991), "the ground of our being" (Joseph, 1988, p. 444), soul (Siporin, 1985), and an intangible, life-giving principle or force (Stoll, 1989).

These themes are interrelated and complementary (Canda, 1990, 1997). In discussing social work's conceptualization of spirituality, Carroll (1998) identified two different meanings of spirituality: spirituality-as-essence and spirituality-as-one-dimension. "Spirituality-as-essence refers to a core nature which provides the motivating energy toward meeting the potential for self-development and self-transformation [whereas] . . . spirituality-as-one-dimension refers specifically to one's search for meaning and relationship with God, the transcendent, or ultimate reality" (p. 11). Spirituality-as-one-dimension is frequently considered to be the "transpersonal" dimension of a person. The dimension of relatedness to God and the transcendent (however that relationship is expressed) may be framed within or separate from the belief system of an organized religion. Various words–God, transcendent, and others (e.g., creator, Higher Power, life energy)–will be used interchangeably in referring to relationship with the transpersonal. These two themes, the transpersonal dimension and spirituality (-as-essence), set the stage for exploring wholeness as reflected in diagrammatic models.

DIAGRAMMATIC MODELS OF SPIRITUALITY

From earlier world views of a heaven-earth relationship, Ellison (1983) developed a model called here the Vertical-Horizontal Approach (see Figure 1). It is indicated by two intersecting lines which represent two different, but interrelated, dimensions. The first dimension is relationship directly with God (or however the transcendent is conceptualized), and the second is all other relationships–with self, others, and the environment. While most writers discuss both of these dimensions, Ellison (1983) goes a step further by specifically identifying their separateness and interrelatedness. Although not actually constructing a diagram, he explicitly describes these dimensions as directional: *vertical and horizontal*. The *vertical* dimension refers to the relationship with God or the transcendent which is beyond and/or outside of self and is the source of the supreme values which guide one's life. The *horizontal* dimension refers to the kind and quality of one's relationships with self and others, to well-being in relation to self and others, and to a sense of life purpose and satis-

FIGURE 1. Vertical-horizontal approach as described by Ellison (1983). Constructed by author.

vertical **dimension**–relationship with God

horizontal **dimension**–relationship with
self, others, environment
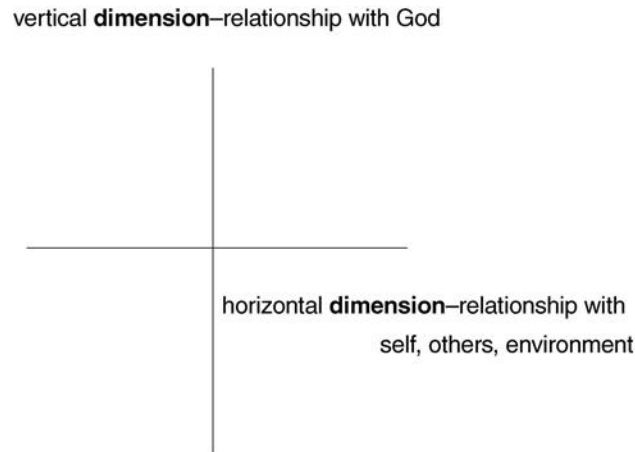
faction. This dimension may be described as the social-psychological component.

Sometimes the two dimensions are inextricably intertwined. For instance, spirituality is described as experiential awareness of transcendent realities which is reflected by the center of value in one's life and by the quality of one's relationships with the universe/God (Ellison, 1983) and as "union with the immanent, supernatural powers that guide people and the universe for good or evil" (Siporin, 1985, p. 210). When spirituality refers to human relationships and life's activities, it refers to manifestations of one's relationship with God; the horizontal dimension, therefore, seems to require and reflect the vertical.

The second model is a series of concentric circles that reflect five levels of consciousness (see Figure 2) (Vaughan, 1985/1995). (Although originally untitled, this model will be identified here as Five Levels of Consciousness.) The innermost circle is the physical dimension; moving outward, the other successive levels are the emotional, mental, existential, and spiritual. Outside of these five circles or levels (and not encircled or limited) is Absolute Spirit or "the underlying ground of the psyche" (Vaughan, 1995, p. 20). Each level involves acceptance and observation. Awareness of the outer levels requires that the preceding levels be relatively calm. "Although health or pathology at each level may appear to be independent of other levels, healing the whole person depends on awareness of well-being on all of them" (p. 21).

FIGURE 2. Five levels of consciousness. Reprinted from Vaughan, Frances (1985/1995). *The Inward Arc: Healing in Psychotherapy and Spirituality* (2nd ed.), Nevada City, CA: Blue Dolphin Publishing, p. 22. Copyright 1985, 1995 Frances E. Vaughan. Used by permission.
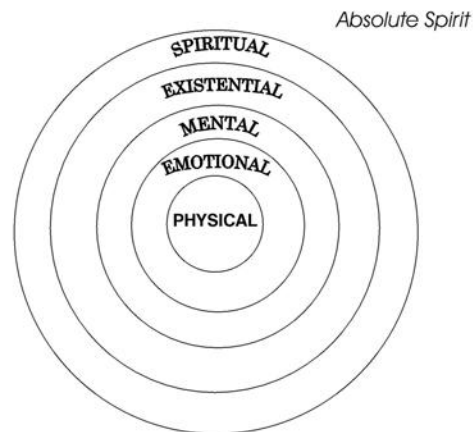
Farran, Fitchett, Quiring-Emblen, and Burck (1989) acknowledge a substantive definition of spirituality which is grounded in the belief in a transcendent and universal being or force. However, they also use a functional definition of spirituality as the person's ultimate commitment or value due to the human need to find meaning. They propose the third and fourth models to be considered here (see Figure 3). The Integrated Approach considers the spiritual dimension as one aspect equal with other dimensions (physiological, psychological, and sociological) of the person whereas the Unifying Approach views the spiritual dimension as a "totality" underlying, embracing, and unifying the other parts of the person.

A fifth model, developed by Kilpatrick and Holland (1990), is called the Self-Other-Context-Spiritual (SOCS) Circle (see Figure 4). The four realities or areas encompass all which exists or is experienced; each of the four areas needs to be fully recognized for optimal functioning. "Self" refers to the subjective reality; "other" refers to the external world of objects and states; "context" refers to "the world in the objective sense" (p. 132); and "spiritual" refers to God or the universal governing force. Three of the dimensions (self, other, and context) form a triangle within a circle. By surrounding the triangle, the spiritual dimension encompasses, permeates, and integrates the other three areas. The spiritual dimension contains two components: (1) values which provide

FIGURE 3. Options for viewing the spiritual dimension. Reprinted from "Development of a Model for Spiritual Assessment and Intervention," by C. F. Ferran, G. Fitchett, J. D. Quiring-Emblen, & J. R. Burck, 1989, *Journal of Religion & Health*, 28(3), p. 29. Copyright 1989 by Institutes of Religion and Health, Inc. Reprinted with permission.
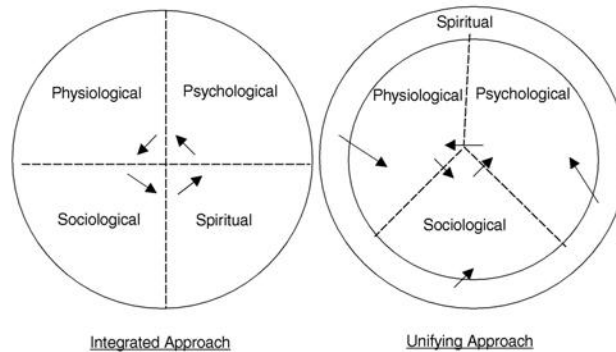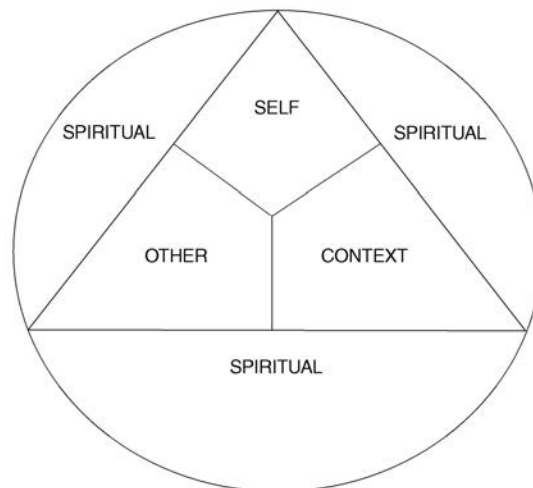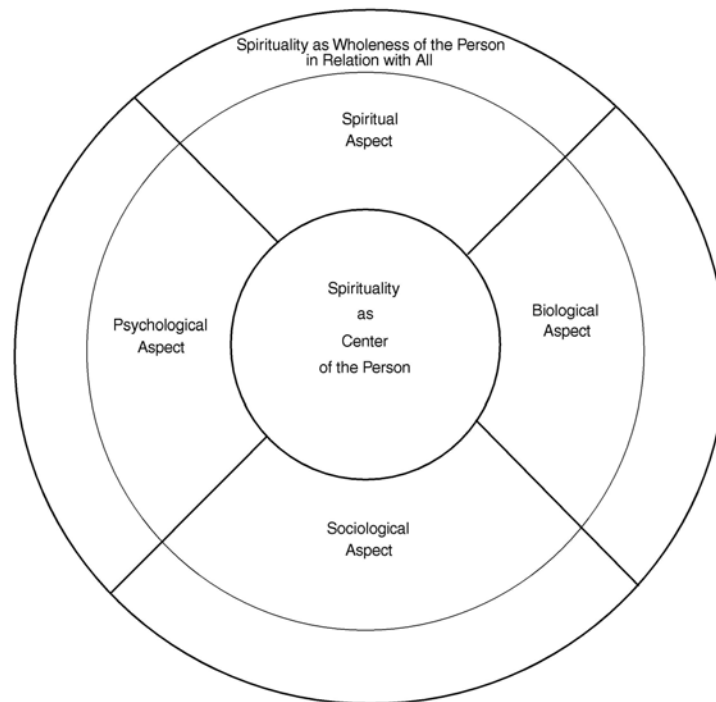

FIGURE 4. SOCS circle presentation of the Four Life Realities. Reprinted from "Spiritual Dimensions of Practice," by A. C. Kilpatrick and T. P. Holland, 1990, *The Clinical Supervisor*, 8, p. 133. Copyright 1990 by The Haworth Press, Inc. Reprinted with permission.

meaning, worth, and direction; and (2) faith which provides a way of understanding life.

The sixth model, A Holistic Model of Spirituality (Canda & Furman, 1999), consists of three concentric circles (see Figure 5). The inner circle is the center of the person, the middle circle is divided into quadrants (biological, psychological, sociological, and spiritual aspects), and the outer circle is the wholeness of the person in relationship with all. In this model, there are three metaphors for spirituality. In the middle circle, spirituality refers to the spiritual aspect of the person, which complements the other three aspects. It involves a search for meaning and morally fulfilling relations with self, others, and ultimate reality, however a person defines it. The outer circle represents

FIGURE 5. A holistic model of spirituality. Reprinted from E. R. Canda and L. D. Furman, 1999, *Spiritual Diversity in Social Work Practice*, New York: The Free Press, p. 46. Copyright 1999 Edward R. Canda, PhD, & Leola Dyrud Furman, PhD. Reprinted with permission.

Spirituality as Wholeness of the Person in Relation with All

Spiritual Aspect

Psychological Aspect

Spirituality as Center of the Person

Biological Aspect

Sociological Aspect

spirituality as wholeness of the person in relation with all. It transcends and embraces the four aspects of a person. The center circle represents spirituality as the center of the person. It is immanent within the person and integrates all aspects.

The seventh model, The Whole Person: A Model (Ellor, Netting, & Thibault, 1999), is three-dimensional (see Figure 6). The spiritual dimension (on the top level) includes affective, behavioral, and cognitive aspects; the traditional clinical dimensions (on the bottom level) include the physical, emotional, and social dimensions. The in-between space, Integrative Dimension, provides the vehicle through which the Spiritual Dimension interacts with the traditional dimensions.

All of these models reflect the whole person and his or her dimensions but do so in different ways depending on the definition or meaning of spirituality. *Spirituality as soul, essence, or ground of one's being* is present in A Holistic Model of Spirituality (as Center of the Person) and in The Whole Person: A Model (in the Integrative Dimension). It is also implied in the Vertical-Horizontal Approach (both axes together), in the SOCS Circle (with values and faith originating from one's core), in the spiritual dimension of the Unifying Approach (with the basic need to find meaning originating from one's core), and in the Absolute Spirit of the Five Levels of Consciousness.

The *transpersonal dimension* is reflected in the vertical axis of Vertical-Horizontal Approach, in the spiritual level of Vaughan's (1995) model

FIGURE 6. The whole person: A model. Reprinted from Ellor, James W., Netting, F. Ellen, & Thibault, Jane M. (1999). *Understanding Religious and Spiritual Aspects of Human Service Practice*, Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, p. 118.