

## A Transpersonal Understanding of Youth Spirituality: Implications for an Expanded View of Social Work

Jeong Woong Cheon

### Abstract

This article draws on interdisciplinary literature to identify the spiritual capacities and experiences of children and youth. Several major theorists who describe the process of spiritual development in the context of stage-like models and non-stage developmental experiential perspectives are discussed in order to provide a transpersonal understanding of children and youth spirituality. Although transpersonal theorists hold many different views on children's capacities, all recognize the existence and importance of children's spirituality. Implications for youth work are presented, including application of spirituality to therapeutic treatments fostering resilience, spiritual education, outdoor activities, and other practices that expand the transpersonal potential of social work and positive youth development.

*Keywords:* transpersonal, youth, spirituality, social work, theory

### Introduction

During the past fifteen years, there has been a significant increase of interest in spirituality within social work, including recent calls for more attention to children and youth (Canda, 2005; Canda & Furman, 2010; Hodge, 2004; Kvarfordt & Sheridan, 2007). This parallels a growing desire to create environments in which young people can get in touch with their spirituality among scholars, researchers and practitioners in the interdisciplinary youth work field (e.g. Lerner, Roeser, & Phelps, 2008; William & Lindsey, 2005; Christian, 1999). Spirituality plays a central role in the perception and construction of meaning in the lives of many people, including children and youth (King & Benson, 2005; Garbarino & Bedard, 1996). Insights from transpersonal theory have recently expanded the social work profession's theoretical base for understanding spirituality in the course of human development (Robbins, Chatterjee & Canda, 2006). This article connects these three trends (i.e. social work, youth

work, and transpersonal theory) of interest in the spirituality of youth in order to expand the view of youth work in both theory and practice.

Canda's model of spiritually sensitive social work practice emphasizes that respect for diverse religious and non-religious forms of spirituality is paramount (Canda, 2008; Canda & Furman, 2010). According to Rice (2002), "Pivotal to the model is an approach that focuses on the client's systems of meaning and support aimed at achieving the highest levels of potential and development" (p. 309). Social workers and other helping professionals who work with youth need to acquire an understanding of spirituality that focuses on children's spiritual capacities and experiences in order to promote their spiritual well-being (Crompton, 1998; Kvarfordt & Sheridan, 2007; Scott, 2003).

In fact, spiritual development is an important factor in many young people's lives. Garbarino and Bedard (1996) consider that children are more open to spirituality than adults and that they are more ready to believe that there are spirits everywhere around them since they are less constrained by social constructions of reality held by adults (Garbarino & Bedard, 1996). Some children and youth have transpersonal experiences that transcend the ordinary and have lasting impact on their lives. While transpersonal theorists advocate for transpersonal developmental possibilities throughout the life span, they have mainly focused on developmental processes and therapeutic practices pertinent to adulthood (Canda & Furman, 2010; Hart, 2005). Unfortunately, the neglect of youth spirituality in research, theory, and practice is widespread. For example, few publications focusing on youth appear in the comprehensive bibliography on spirituality and social work by Canda, Nakashima, Burgess, Russel, & Barfield (2003). According to Hart (2005), "Children have generally been seen as developmentally immature, without sufficient intellectual growth to manifest anything that might be understood as meaningfully reflective and/or spiritual" (p. 163).

This article provides a transpersonal understanding of children and youth spirituality by drawing on interdisciplinary literature to identify the spiritual potential, capacities and experiences of children and youth.

### Definition and Importance of Youth Spirituality

The definition of spirituality differs from person to person and across ethnicity, gender, class, generational, and cultural lines. However, a common thread is the notion that there is a connection with a power greater than oneself that transcends temporality. Although spirituality is often closely associated with religion, not all people express their spirituality through religion. Rather, many young people tend to

conceptualize spirituality as distinct from religion (Smithline, 2000). Wilson (2004) found that adolescents are more likely to become interested in secular spiritual activities-unconnected to any institutionalized system of belief. Religion, in particular, holds negative connotations for some practitioners (Cascio, 1998). Scott (2003) describes that “tension has emerged with regard to the use of religious language and vocabulary on the part of both the researchers and the children” (p.119).

Therefore it is especially important in youth work to define spirituality as distinguished from religiosity (Canda, 2008; Benson, Roehlkenpartain, & Rude, 2003). As Canda and Furman's (2010) interdisciplinary review of definitions of spirituality and religion points out, spirituality is typically defined as the search for purpose, meaning, transcendence, and connectedness in one's life, whereas religion entails a systematic body of beliefs and practices related to such a spiritual search. Some view spirituality as a more internal process that can include a sense of connection to a higher power, whereas religion appears to be focused on the outward manifestations of spiritual beliefs (Bullis, 1996). Yet there are ways that spirituality and religion overlap in that both are concerned with the search for meaning and spirituality expresses in religious forms for many people.

This article views spirituality and religiosity as distinct but overlapping concepts. Spirituality is broader than religion. It involves an existential theme of searching for the meaning and purpose of life. Spirituality may or may not be expressed in a particular religious faith or religious institution (Sheridan, 2003). Spirituality is conceptualized as a human quest for meaning, connectedness to self, the environment, or a higher power in religious or secular contexts. Youth spirituality is regarded as young people's developmental search engine for connectedness, meaning, and being in touch with one's real life.

Whether experienced through religious or non-religious contexts, spirituality can be respected and nurtured in every setting. In Crompton's (1998) view, spirituality is integral to the whole child through the whole experience of every-minute of living and dying. Kvarfordt and Sheridan (2007) state that “increasing numbers of adolescents are finding introspective or subjective religion to be important in their lives” (p. 3). In Lippman and Keith's study (2006), many youth considered integrating spirituality into life to be an essential or very important objective.

The interdisciplinary field of positive youth development is beginning to focus on the spiritual development of children and youth (e.g. Donelson, 1999). Issues of meaning, purpose, relationships, and identity are particularly salient during adolescence (Benson et al, 2003; (Dowling, Gestddottir, Anderson, von Eye, & Lerner, 2003; Marcia,

2002). Several major reviews of positive youth development indicate that spiritual and religious engagement can reduce risk behavior and/or enhance positive outcomes (Bridges & Moore, 2002; Benson et al., 2003). Larson (1996) identified five spiritual virtues that can emerge from healthy adolescent development, including trust, power, purpose, mastery, and self-sacrifice. Wilson (2004) notes that spirituality is associated with four developmental tasks of adolescence, including questioning of authority, meaning-making, identity formation, and search for connectedness or belonging.

### Transpersonal Understanding of Youth Spirituality

Transpersonal theories “concern our highest aspirations and potentials and our needs for love, meaning, creativity, and communion with other people and the universe” (Robbins et al., 2006, p. 386). Transpersonal theories assume that spiritual fulfillment is the ultimate goal of human development and that spirituality should be the basic foundation for understanding the human psyche (Washburn, 2003). Spiritual development manifests our ability to transcend the limitations of our egoic identity and to become fully aware of our true nature, which is deeply connected with all other beings, the natural world, and the cosmos (Robbins et al., 2006; Wilber, 1996). The word transpersonal refers to transcending the limits of an ego. Development to transpersonal levels of awareness means that the ego must be well established and then included within a wider scope of identity.

#### *Transpersonal Perspective in the Context of Developmental Theory*

Historically, developmental theory has underestimated the psychological and spiritual capacities of children and youth. Through most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the understanding of spiritual development was dominated by stage-based theories. Traditional hierarchical stage theory commonly posits that there is a progression of cognitive and emotional capacities as the human develops through the life span. Spirituality is understood to be experienced in more evolved ways over time. The predominant paradigms have conceptualized linear developmental stages that represent a link between chronological age and increased adaptation (Elkind, 1997; Fowler, 1996). Therefore, a common assumption is that children are unable to experience a sophisticated spiritual life (Levine, 1999).

Fowler (1981) elaborated his model of faith development from established models of ego, moral, cognitive, and psychosocial development as well as empirical research. Fowler (1995) believed that faith is “a universal feature of human being” (p. 14) and that faith or

spiritual development becomes an active process in adolescence that develops throughout adulthood. Fowler's broad description of faith is similar to spirituality as it is conceptualized and commonly defined in social work (Canda & Furman, 2010; Robbins et al., 2006; Sheridan, 2003). Fowler describes the process of faith development as a spiraling upward movement. It expands and becomes increasingly wider as people grow in complexity of understanding ourselves, others, the world, and the universe around us. Fowler's developmental stages represent a continuous flow of movement along a continuum. Few people reach the final stage of universalizing faith. In his view, many people stop developing spiritually at an early stage, never moving to full potential.

However, many different views of spiritual capacities of children and youth have appeared among transpersonal theorists. They look at how growth can continue beyond the pre-egoic (childhood linked) and egoic stages (usually linked to adolescence and adulthood). They generally recognize the existence and significance of adolescent spirituality.

For example, as one of the major contributors to the emergence of transpersonal theory, Maslow (1970) defended the view that spiritual experience is a higher potentiality of human nature that belongs to humans inherently as a species. He argued that it was important to develop human beings' full potential so that they could transcend themselves and reach for ultimate ideals. He described certain spiritual experiences as 'peak' or 'plateau' experiences that may have mystical or religious qualities in that they involve breaking through the ordinary sense of limitation to the individual body and ego. Maslow was able to demonstrate that persons who had spontaneous peak experiences frequently benefited from them and showed a distinct trend toward self-realization or self-actualization. Maslow suggested that such experiences might be supernormal, rather than subnormal or abnormal. He attributed them to natural human capacities rather than to supernatural origins.

Wilber (1976) developed a theoretical model of the spectrum of consciousness based on wide-ranging materials from contemporary psychology, biology, sociology, philosophy, history, and comparative religion. The key notion of Wilber's model of the spectrum of consciousness is the insight of perennial philosophy that human consciousness is a multilevel manifestation of a single consciousness, the Universal Mind. Wilber (2000) postulated that spiritual experiences can be experienced at any level of development, but are understood, internalized, and contextualized within a person's current age and stage of development.

Wilber (2000) recognized various concepts of spirituality. For example, spirituality can be understood as an elevated or expanded state

of consciousness that can be transitory, such as a peak experience. Spirituality can also be understood as a line of development over time that concerns expanding one's sense of meaning, worldview, and identity as consciousness becomes more inclusive and deep. Like Fowler, Wilber maintains that spirituality is not necessarily the same as religion. Spirituality is not limited to a set of beliefs or what is done in any particular religious setting. Rather, the spiritual lies within a person's heart and is based on a foundation of experience. In other words, spirit exists within us and within all other things in the universe. Spiritual development, or consciousness development, is the awakening, uncovering, and deepening of our spiritual nature. Wilber (1996) acknowledged that children carry with them the seeds of their spiritual blossoming. According to Wilber (2000), "infants and children at the very least seem to have access to some types of spiritual experiences" (p. 142).

Unlike Fowler and Wilber who propose theories based on a structural hierarchical paradigm, Washburn (1995) suggests that transpersonal development is dynamic and dialectical. Both Wilber and Washburn agree that development is divided into three broad phases: preegoic, egoic, and transegoic. However, they differ in their conception of the psyche or consciousness and how the stages are related to each other. Washburn (1995, 2003) presented a view that human development follows a spiral path involving departure from the newborn state of rapture with the divine through a sense of individuation and then return to divine origins with spiritual maturity. Washburn's primary focus is on the ego's interaction with dynamic life qualities such as energy, power, and spirit. He conceptualizes the source of this interaction as the Dynamic Ground. The Dynamic Ground gives rise to life dynamism, spirituality, energy, spontaneity, and creativity. Therefore, Washburn emphasizes the significance of spirituality from infancy.

Pearce (1992) also recognizes the spirituality of early childhood. He explores how unique personal experience of spirituality forms through the way the brain/mind translates from a common pool of potential, a universal field shared by all of us. He also explores the critical role played by a biological connection between heart and brain. He maintains that we are born with the necessary brain structure for the potential for higher states of consciousness, but that we do not naturally act from that structure because the higher capacity must be developed. Pearce (1992) asserts that "our heart apparently plays a major if fragile role in our overall consciousness" (p. 103). Actions in the heart precede the actions of both body and brain. In this sense, he recognizes three major heart-centered stages of life. The first stage begins at birth, the second stage begins at mid-adolescence, and the final stage occurs later in life.

According to Pearce, spiritual development in these stages involve: (1) the development of a heart-mind synchrony that is necessary for physical life and is observed in the various Piagetian stages; (2) synchronization of the developed physical self and the creative process that culminates in later adolescence; and (3) a final “highest heart, which moves us beyond all physical-emotional systems” (p. 105). Accordingly, the success of life depends on the development of this heart-mind dialogue.

As a psychiatrist and transpersonalist, Grof (1985) has expanded our understanding of the human unconscious and its transpersonal potentials. Grof (1985) suggests that humans have profoundly important spiritual experiences very early in their existence. According to Washburn (1995) “Grof has gone farther than anyone else in exploring the numinous and archetypal experiences that lie in the deeper strata of the unconscious” (p. 3). Grof believes perinatal experiences to be actual gateways to transcendental states. He asserts that birth-related experience serves as central organizing principle for the psyche. These experiences can be a source of great trauma, but they can also provide direct access to higher experiences such as the sense of bliss, heavenly paradise, and unity available in the womb. From his clinical observations, he recognized that the human unconscious contains repositories or matrices, the activation of which leads to the reliving of biological birth and a profound confrontation with death. “The resulting process of death and rebirth is typically associated with an opening of intrinsic spiritual areas in the human mind that are independent of the individual’s racial, cultural, and educational background” (Grof, 1985 p. 38).

As discussed above, for Fowler and most transpersonalists, children and youth are thought to have spiritual dimensions and transpersonal experiences. However, it is commonly believed that they are unable to integrate the experiences fully into consciousness and living because they do not have the requisite life experiences and psychosocial structures to accomplish such transpersonal self-realizations (Peter-Frank, 2002). The experience of transcending the self is inherent within spirituality. Spirituality provides a sense of profound connectedness with divine, human, or natural others, giving a young person an opportunity to experience himself or herself in relationship to God, a community of believers, society, or nature. This moving beyond the egoic self provides opportunities for the search for meaning and belonging that are central to the task of identity exploration for youth and adolescents (Benson, 1997; King, 2003).

*Nonstage-Based Developmental Experiential Perspectives*

The most significant source of information concerning transpersonal experience in childhood and adolescence comes from young people themselves. For example, historical spiritual figures and mystics who had transpersonal experiences or displayed evidence of spiritual insight in childhood and adolescence include: Jesus at twelve, Dante at eight, and Khan at fourteen (Crompton, 1998).

Several studies have gathered retrospective stories of children and youth through personal interviews (e.g. Coles, 1990; Hart, 2003; Hay & Nye, 1998; Robinson, 1983). These studies reveal ways that children and youth experience spirituality in their own words. They imply that children and youth can experience spirituality primarily because it is based in biology, feelings, and personal experiences (Scarlett, 2005). According to Oser, Scarlett, and Bucher (2006), “children have the capacity for rich and varied spiritual experiences that form (or should form through being encouraged and supported) the foundation of their religious, ethical, and spiritual development” (p. 969). These studies recognize that there is a cognitive element to spirituality. However, the required cognitive ability to step back and be aware of the mystery of life can be obtained by around age 4 to 6 (Hart, 2005).

Hay and Nye (1998) suggest that children have a spiritual inclination that is expressed as relational consciousness, that is, an intentional and natural process of relating to the world, to all things animate and inanimate, to others including a Divine Other, and to the self. According to Hay and Nye’s relational consciousness model of children’s spirituality, three categories of spiritual sensitivity are claimed: (1) awareness-sensing (e.g., music, art, nature, reality, self); (2) mystery-sensing (e.g., awe of nature, fantasy life, the symbolic world, imagination; and (3) value-sensing (e.g., making sense of the world, understanding key issues, asking questions like “Why am I here?” “Where do I belong?”).

Scott (2003) believes that the concept of relational consciousness can be useful as a guide for helping practices and research that engage children’s spirituality. “Acknowledging that children are relational, that they can and do have beyond-the-self experiences, that they have perceptions and sensitivities that open them to spiritual experiences can provide an initial framework to inform our understanding of children as spiritual in a variety of cultural settings” (p. 127). Robinson (1983) provides examples of children who have had experiences of oneness with or through nature or have a sense of the world being alive or infused with light. Their experiences of oneness are seen as giving them grounds for meeting life and engaging difficult circumstances with optimism and



meaningful perspective. They sometimes provide a core sense of certainty and occasionally an impetus to vocation.

Coles (1995) wanted to learn from young people the exquisitely private sense of things that nurtured their spirituality. He researched how children develop a sense of values, right and wrong, and citizenship. He also studied children's spiritual and religious lives, based on many conversations with individuals and groups. He asserts that the way in which adolescents resolve their questions of meaning and purpose is likely to influence their choices about their future, their attitudes toward life, and their overall sense of well-being (Wilson, 2004). Coles (1990) suggests the child is like a pilgrim, that is, someone on a life quest to seek beyond the self in an intentional way and to interpret life. Both Robinson (1983) and Coles (1990) suggest that children have a visionary capacity that includes a search for significance or meaning that may take a variety of interpretive forms. Children may have visionary experiences that are about more than their own lives and contain valuable insights for their communities.

These theorists and researchers focus on the spiritual experiences of children and youth without fitting it into standard stage models of development over the life span or into adult-centered standards. These varied experiences reveal a rich and significant spiritual life that has gone largely unrecognized in the mainstream child development study. Yet these experiences may provide some of the most fundamental sources of human motivation. As Hart (2005) stated, "The evidence of these experiences and innate capacities challenges conventional views of childhood spiritual life and therefore has significant implications for the care and nurture of young people both within and outside of religious contexts" (p. 163).

Stage models of development are still widely accepted for understanding life span developmental processes even though many do not include sufficient focus on the experience of spiritual development, especially for children and youth. Nonstage theories have emphasized the distinctive qualities of childhood spirituality more so. Both stage and nonstage developmental theories recognize innate spiritual capacities of children and youth. As Hart (2005, p. 175) said, "children already have a spiritual life; they have access to wisdom and wonder, struggle with questions of meaning and morality, and have a deep sense of compassion." The current challenge for social workers and other youth-serving professionals is to incorporate insights from this wide range of developmental and experiential theories into helping practices that address spirituality. These theoretical perspectives also require evaluation

through more empirical studies of the actual experiences and perspectives of children and youth.

### Implications for Social Work with Children and Youth

The youth-work field has not yet developed sufficient skills and strategies to address spiritual experiences. Many youth workers are not provided with adequate guidelines or models, because spirituality is still not widely integrated into the education of helping professionals. Also, some professionals may hesitate to address controversial issues of religion in children's lives, thus blocking the youth-work field from resources and insights about spirituality (Scott, 2003).

However, there are a variety of interventions and practice implications mentioned in the literature on professional helping of youth (e.g., Cascio, 1998; Derezotes, 2006). These can be organized into categories of therapeutic treatments promoting resilience, education, wilderness practice and outdoor activities, and transpersonally oriented activities and techniques.

#### *Therapeutic Treatment and Resilience*

Spirituality is one of the essential foundations for the remediation of an addictive disease, but it is the one that child welfare professionals or youth workers understand the least (DiLorenzo, Johnson, & Bussey, 2001). Many addiction treatment counselors believe that when individuals are reconnected to a positive spiritual momentum, they are more likely to take control of their lives. The recovery practice of child substance abuse especially emphasizes the importance of spirituality. In fact, evidence exists that individuals in recovery who have participated in spiritually based programs have made the most significant progress in their recovery from addiction.

Spirituality also gives an important insight for the understanding of the resilience of survivors of childhood violence. Spirituality can be utilized as an effective strength for analysis and therapeutic treatment practice for the children and youth who experienced child abuse or maltreatment (Pfeffer, Jiang, Kakuma, Hwang, & Metsch, 2002). Increasingly, clinicians are realizing that it is not necessary for therapy and spirituality to be dissociated (Adam, 1995; Lukoff, 2005). Trauma has consequences that can be described as metaphysical or spiritual related to threats to a sense of the meaning of life (Garbarino & Benard, 1996). Kepner (1995) viewed spirituality as being essential for the healing of all survivors of maltreatment because he found that most survivors had a compelling need to develop a transcendent spiritual or philosophical

framework that could grapple with the existence of abuse and give meaning to the experience. Although spiritual concepts may be underdeveloped for some abuse survivors, some childhood sexual abuse survivors have reported that their spirituality helped them in the process of healing from their injuries (Gange-Fling, Veach, Kuang, & Houg, 2001).

### *Spiritual Education*

As Rothberg (1999) pointed out, education is one of the most significant areas for future inquiry and exploration in the transpersonal field. For many years, it was considered dangerous for educators or leaders in public programs to address the question of spiritual development. But recently, the void of spiritual guidance for teenagers has become more widely recognized as a contributing factor to the self-destructive and violent behaviors plaguing the world. For many young people, drugs, sex, and gang violence may reflect a search for connection, mystery, and meaning, as well as a response to the pain of not having a genuine source of spiritual fulfillment. Formal spiritual education could enable a young person to be more in harmony with the external world, and as a consequence with their own individual self (Christian, 1999). Children and young people can be considered spiritually educated when they are inspired to achieve a fuller realization of their humanness in solidarity with others. Just as a child's body grows when the hunger for fuel and air is fed, a child's emotional life grows when the hunger for love and guidance is met. Out of connection, students can grow compassion and passion for people, for goals and dreams, and for life itself.

### *Wilderness Practice and Outdoor Activities*

Spirituality is closely related with the interaction between youth and nature. People often experience spiritual awakening to mystery and meaningfulness in beautiful natural settings (Crompton, 1998). Wilderness practice recognizes that humans and nature share a core of being and interconnectedness that transcends cultural and individual boundaries (Besthorn & Canda, 2002). Wilderness programs help clients form deep committed relationships with the land. The experience of wilderness opens people up to vivid realization of our practical dependence on nature, the need for cooperative relations between people for survival and social enjoyment, and the beauty and profundity of the life web of which we all are a part. According to Wilson (2004), "many wilderness programs designed for troubled adolescents, are meant to instill a sense of connection to nature and to encourage feelings of caring and responsibility for the planet" (p. 10).

Wilderness therapy assesses and treats emotional and behavioral problems of youth clients (Harper, Russell, Cooley, & Cupples, 2007). It typically involves immersion in wilderness areas, group living with peers, individual and group therapy sessions, and educational and therapeutic curricula, including backcountry travel and wilderness living skills. It is designed to reveal and address problem behaviors, foster personal and social responsibility, and enhance the emotional growth of clients.

Other outdoor therapeutic activities relevant to youth include caring for and playing with small animals, personal tending to flowers or gardens, cooperative tending to shared urban green spaces, and outdoor adventure such as ropes courses and rock climbing combined with counseling. These activities can facilitate empathetic capacities, build trust, improve self-image, foster responsibility and self-control, strengthen inner confidence, enhance relaxation skills, and improve communication and relationship skills (Besthorn, 2001; Mark, 1988; Morgan, 2006).

For example, “introducing a group of children to the natural world experienced daily on a small farm can be an exciting, loving and soul altering experience” (Besthorn, 2001, p 39).

According to Mark (1988), “For teens with a perceived empty and irrelevant future, outdoor challenges get them thinking about short-term goals. For adolescents living in dysfunctional homes, outdoor adventure teaches them to take better control of their environments” (p. 517).

#### *Transpersonally Oriented Helping Activities and Techniques*

There are a variety of assessment and intervention techniques that can be used to explore spirituality (Canda & Furman, 2010; Cascio, 1998). In particular, some practices can help youth access transpersonal awareness. These include Gestalt techniques (such as psychodrama), journaling, metaphor, various forms of prayer, meditation, ritual, yoga, martial arts, and rites of passage programs (e.g. Crompton, 1998; Derezotes, 2006; Kvarfordt & Sheridan, 2007; Scott, 2003; Twemlow & Sacco, 1998).

For example, a youth worker might use guided visualization with a group of children to help them imagine and consult with a loving and wise “higher self” about a life problem. Dream-talk is another way to open exploration of spiritual feelings, ideas and experiences. By simply asking a small group of children to describe a dream, we can gain fascinating insights into their spiritual worlds. It is also vital to look at the world of dreams from the child’s point of view and to consider how they have been affected by society’s opinions (Adams, 1995).

## Conclusion

As Robbins, Chatterjee, and Canda (2006) put it, “Transpersonal practitioners appreciate the internal personal spiritual strengths of clients and cooperate with religious and spiritual resources and support systems in the environment” (p. 418). Given social work’s commitment to understanding people and their environments, the social work profession can make an important contribution to youth work by making links between transpersonal theories and practice with children and youth at micro and macro levels. This article encourages such innovation by summarizing and integrating insights from interdisciplinary literature on spirituality and youth work in a variety of settings.

## References

- Adams, N. (1995) Spirituality, science and therapy. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Family Therapy*, 16, 201-208.
- Benson, P.L. (1997). Spirituality and the adolescent journey. *Reclaiming Children and Youth*, 5(4), 206-209.
- Benson, P.L., Roehlkepartain, E.C., & Rude, S.P. (2003). Spiritual development in childhood and adolescence: Toward a field of inquiry. *Applied Developmental Science*, 7(3), 205-213.
- Besthorn, F. H. (2001). Transpersonal psychology and deep ecological philosophy: Exploring linkages and application for social work. In E. R. Canda & E. D. Smith (Eds.), *Transpersonal perspectives on spirituality in social work* (pp.23-44). Binghamton, NY: The Haworth Press.
- Besthorn, F.H. & Canda, E. R. (2002). Revisioning environment: Deep ecology for education and teaching in social work, *Journal of Teaching in Social Work*, 22(1/2), 79-101.
- Bridges, L. J., & Moore, K.A.(2002). *Religion and spirituality in childhood and adolescence*. Washington, DC: Child Trends.
- Bullis, R. K. (1996). *Spirituality in social work practice*. Washington, DC: Taylor & Francis.
- Canda, E. R. (2005). The future of spirituality in social work: The farther reaches of human nurture. *Advances in Social Work*, 6(1). 97-108.
- Canda, E. R.(2008). Religion and spirituality. In T. Mizrahi & L. E. Davis (Eds.). *Encyclopedia of social work*. National Association of Social Workers and Oxford University Press (e-reference edition) University of Kansas. 15 October 2008 <http://www.oxford->

- [naswsocialwork.com.wv2.lib.ku.edu:2048/entry?entry=t203.e188-s4](http://naswsocialwork.com.wv2.lib.ku.edu:2048/entry?entry=t203.e188-s4).
- Canda, E. R., & Furman, L. D. (2010). *Spiritual diversity in social work practice: The heart of helping* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Canda, E. R., Nakashima, M., Burgess, V. L., Russel, R., & Barfield, S.T. (2003). *Spiritual diversity and social work: A comprehensive bibliography with annotations* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Council on Social Work Education, Inc.
- Cascio, T. (1998). Incorporating spirituality into social work practice: a review of what to do. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Human Services*, 79(5), 523-529.
- Christian C. (1999). Spirituality in the context of multi-cultural youth work. *Youth & Policy*, 65(1), 38-47.
- Coles, R. (1990). *The spiritual life of children*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Coles, R. (1995). The profile of spirituality of at-risk youth. In T. Everson (Ed.), *The ongoing Journey: Awakening spiritual life in at-risk youth* (pp. 7-35). Omaha, NE: Boys Town Press.
- Crompton, M. (1998). *Children, spirituality, religion and social work*, Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing.
- Damianakis, T. (2001). Postmodernism, Spirituality, and the Creative Writing Process: Implications for social work practice. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Human Services*, 82(1), 23-38.
- Derezotes, D. S. (2006). *Spiritually oriented social work practice*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- DiLoenzo, P., Johnson, R., & Bussey, M. (2001). The role of spirituality in the recovery process. *Child Welfare*, 80, 257-273.
- Donelson, E. (1999). Psychology of religion and adolescents in the United States: Past to present. *Journal of Adolescence*, 22, 187-204.
- Dowling, E.M., Gestsdottir, S., Anderson, P.M., Von Eye, A., & Lerner, R.M. (2003). Spirituality, religiosity, and thriving among adolescents: Identification and confirmation of factor structures. *Applied Developmental Science*, 7(4), 253-260.
- Elkind, D. (1997). The origins of religion in the child. In B. Spilka & D. N. McIntosh (Eds.), *The psychology of religion* (pp. 97-104). Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Fowler, J. W. (1981). *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of human development and the quest for Meaning*. San Francisco: Harper & Row.

- Fowler, J. W. (1996). *Faithful change: The personal and public challenges of postmodern life*. Nashville: Abingdon Press.
- Gange-Fling, M., Veach, P. M., Kuang, H. M. & Houg, B. (2001). Effects of childhood sexual abuse on client spiritual well-being. *Counseling and Values, 44*, 84-91.
- Garbarino, J., & Bedard, C. (1996). Spiritual challenges to children facing violent trauma. *Childhood, 3*, 467-478.
- Grof, S. (1985). *Beyond the brain*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Harper, N. J., Russell, K. C., Cooley, R. & Cupples, J. (2007). Catherine freer wilderness therapy expeditions: An exploratory case study of adolescent wilderness therapy, family functioning, and the maintenance of change. *Child Youth Care Forum, 36*, 111-129.
- Hart, T (2003). *The secret spiritual world of children*. San Francisco, CA: Inner Ocean.
- Hart, T. (2005). Spiritual experiences and capacities of children and youth. In E. C. Roehlkepartain, P. E. King, L., Wagner, & P. L. Benson, (Eds.), *The handbook of spiritual development in childhood and adolescence* (pp. 163-177). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Hay, D., & Nye, R. (1998). *The spirit of the child*. London: Fount Paperbacks, HarperCollins Publishers.
- Hodge, D. R. (2004). Why conduct a spiritual assessment? A theoretical foundation for assesment. *Advances in Social Work, 5*(2), 183-196.
- Kepner, J. I. (1995). *Healing tasks: Psychotherapy with adult survivors of childhood abuse*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- King, P. E. (2003). Religion and identity: The role of ideological, social, and spiritual contexts. *Applied Developmental Science, 7*(3), 197-204.
- King, P. E., & Benson, P. L. (2005). Spiritual development and adolescent well-being and thriving. In E. C. Roehlkepartain, P. E. King, L., Wagner, & P. L. Benson, (Eds.), *The handbook of spiritual development in childhood and adolescence* (pp. 384-398). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Kvarfordt, C. L., & Sheridan, M. J. (2007). The role of religion and spirituality in working with children and adolescents: Results of a national survey. *Journal of Religion & Spirituality in Social Work, 26*(3), 1-23.
- Larson, S. (1996). Meeting needs of youthful offenders through the spiritual dimension. *Reclaiming Children and Youth, 5*(3), 167-172.
- Levine, S. (1999). Children's cognition as the foundation of spirituality. *International Journal of Children's Spirituality, 4*(2), 121-140.

- Lippman, L. H. & Keith, J. D. (2006). The demographics of spirituality among youth: International perspective. In E. C. Roehlkepartain, P. E. King, L. Wagner, & P. L. Benson (Eds.), *The handbook of spiritual development in childhood and adolescence* (pp. 109-123). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Lukoff, D. (2005). Spiritual and transpersonal approaches to psychotic disorders. In S. G. Mijares & G. S. Khalsa (Eds.). *The psychospiritual clinician's handbook: Alternative methods for understanding and treating mental disorders* (pp. 233-257). Binghamton, NY: The Haworth Press.
- Marcia, J. (2002). Adolescence, identity, and the Bernardone Family. *Identity: An International Journal of Theory and Research*, 2(3), 199-209.
- Mark, J. D. (1988). An outdoor adventure counseling program for adolescents. *Social Work*, 33(6), 517-590.
- Maslow, A. (1970). *Religions, values, peak experiences*. New York: Penguin.
- McCormick, R. M. (1997). Healing through interdependence: The role of connecting in First Nations healing practices. *Canadian Journal of Counseling*, 31, 172-184.
- Mercer, J. A. (2006). Children as mystics, activists, sages, and holy fools: Understanding the spirituality of children and its significance for clinical work. *Pastoral Psychology*, 54(5), 497-515.
- Morgan, O. (2006). *Counseling and spirituality: Views from the profession*. Florence, KY: Wadsworth Publishing.
- Oser, F. K., Scarlett, G. & Bucher, A. (2006). Religious and spiritual development throughout the life span. In W. Damon & R. M. Lerner (Eds.), *Handbook of Child Psychology: Vol 1. Theoretical models of human development* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.) (pp. 942-998). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- Pearce, J. C. (1992). *Evolution's end: Claiming the potential of our intelligence*. San Francisco: Harper.
- Peter-Frank, D. (2002). Toward a transpersonal child psychology: Theoretic openings and therapeutic opportunities. *Journal of Psychospiritual Transformation*, 3, 1-18.
- Pfeffer, C. R., Jiang, H., & Kakuma, T., Hwang, J., & Metsch, M. (2002). Group intervention for children bereaved by the suicide of a relative. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 41(5), 505-513.
- Rice, S. (2002). Magic happens: revising the spirituality and social work debate. *Australian Social Work*, 55(4), 303-311.



- Robbins, S. P., Chatterjee, P., & Canda, E. R., (2006). *Contemporary human behavior theory: A critical perspective for social work* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Boston: Pearson Allyn & Bacon.
- Robinson, E. (1983). *The original vision: A study of the religious experience of childhood*. New York: The Seabury Press.
- Rothberg, D. (1999). Transpersonal issues at the millennium, *The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 31(1), 41-67.
- Scarlett, G. W. (2005). Toward a development analysis of religious and spiritual development. In E. C. Roehlkepartain, P. E. King, L., Wagner, & P. L. Benson, (Eds.), *The handbook of spiritual development in childhood and adolescence* (pp. 21-33). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Scott, D.G. (2003). Spirituality in child and youth care: Considering spiritual development and “relational consciousness.” *Child and Youth Care Forum*, 32(2), 117-131.
- Sheridan, M. J. (2003). The spiritual person. In E.D. Hutchison (Ed.), *Dimensions of human behavior: Person and environment* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed), (pp. 219-267). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Smithline, C. (2000). *Spirituality as a protective factor against adolescent substance abuse*. Ann Arbor, Michigan: Dissertation, United States International University.
- Twemlow, S., & Sacco, F. C. (1998). The application of traditional martial arts practice and theory to the treatment of violent adolescents. *Adolescence*, 33(131), 5050-518.
- Washburn, M. (1995). *The ego and the dynamic ground: A transpersonal theory of human development*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Washburn, M. (2003). Transpersonal dialogue: A new direction. *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*. 35(1), 1-19.
- Wilber, K. (1976). *The spectrum of consciousness*. Wheaton, IL: Quest.
- Wilber, K. (1996). *A brief history of everything*. Boston: Shambhala.
- Wilber, K. (2000). *Integral psychology: Consciousness, spirit, psychology, therapy*. Boston, MA: Shambhala.
- Williams, N. R., & Lindsey, E. (2005). Spirituality and religion in the lives of runaway and homeless youth: Coping with adversity. *Journal of Religion & Spirituality in Social Work*, 24(4), 19-38.
- Wilson, M. (2004). *A part of you so deep: What vulnerable adolescent have to say about spirituality*. Boxboro, MA: New England Network for Child, Youth and Family Services.

Author's notes

Jeong Woong Cheon, Ph.D., is Professor, Catholic University of Daegu, Department of Social Welfare.

Address correspondence to Dr. Jeong Woong Cheon, Catholic University of Daegu, Department of Social Welfare, Hayang-Eup, Gyeongsan-Si, Gyeongsangbuk-Do, 712-702, Republic of Korea. (e-mail: [jwcheon@cu.ac.kr](mailto:jwcheon@cu.ac.kr); phone: 82-53-850-3225).