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## PAYING THE DEVIL HIS DUE: LIMITS AND LIABILITIES OF WORKPLACE SPIRITUALITY

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*Despite the intrinsic human benefit and potential organizational benefit of spirituality, we suggest that there are limits to the effectiveness of spirituality in the workplace. Spirituality in the workplace is subject to dilemmas, costs and outright negative effects. Successful implementation of spirituality in the workplace requires organizations to pay attention to six issues: (1) net economic cost of implementation, (2) potential for worker exploitation, (3) replacing or substituting community's function or role in spirituality, (4) inappropriate practice of spirituality in the workplace, (5) potential for competitive disadvantage, and (6) increased groupthink. We conclude by discussing research opportunities and practical suggestions.*

**Keywords:** Spirituality, Limits

A substantive portion of the existing literature on spirituality in organizations espouses the one-sided view that spirituality is beneficial (Chappell, 1999; Conlin, 1999; Leigh, 1997; Milliman, Czaplewski, & Ferguson, 2001; Neck & Milliman, 1994; White, 2001). This literature posits that spirituality is a natural and intrinsic part of being human, and, therefore, an important factor of employee well being. It also points out that an increasingly fragmented social environment causes increased alienation and stress at the individual level. Employees are therefore looking to their work environment for increased meaningfulness and the sense of community that is being lost in their non-work life. This stream of work focuses on individual well being, urging organizations to provide for their employees' spiritual

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needs. A parallel (albeit smaller) stream of scholars argues that spirituality is beneficial to the organization in terms of gaining competitive advantage and superior performance. While the two streams of research may differ in their level of analysis, they coincide in their conclusions. Both posit that catering to employees' spiritual needs results in a better work organization.

Our fundamental assertion is that while spirituality may well have benefits, it also has costs that have generally been ignored. While many human (e.g., motivation) and organizational (e.g., power, politics, knowledge, and learning) properties have been found to be useful, they are also confusing, paradoxical, and, at times, counterproductive. The same is true of spirituality in organizations. As such, in this exploratory paper, we focus on highlighting the limits and liabilities of workplace spirituality. Following a brief review of the foundations of spirituality in management, we consider several issues that must be addressed in order to properly assess the role and efficacy of spirituality in the workplace. Finally, we offer new directions for research and practice of workplace spirituality.

### Spirituality: The Concept

Spirituality is a thorny concept. It is, therefore, not surprising to find a variety of definitions of spirituality. Similarly, it is not surprising that a number of authors have identified problems with existing definitions of spirituality (Brown, 2003; Garcia-Zamor, 2003). An important issue has to do with treating spirituality and religion as being the same. Some authors have taken pains to distinguish spirituality from religion and ethics. For example, the Dalai Lama (1999) identifies spirituality as concerned with qualities of the human spirit such as love, compassion, forgiveness and a sense of responsibility. In contrast, he suggests that religion concerns faith in one or another tradition including an acceptance of a heaven and practice of various rituals such as prayers and offerings. Of course, religions include spiritual aspects but religion is not necessary in order to develop spirituality. Some suggest that spirituality is closely connected to standard religions and belief in God (Bell & Taylor, 2001; Nadesan, 1999; White, 2001). Some of these authors see this as a natural or even required connection (White, 2001) while others are more critical (Nadesan, 1999). One conclusion that a critical study of this literature leads to is that spirituality is antecedent to religion; it is a part of the definition of the human condition. Religion is an institutionalized means aimed at addressing the questions that spirituality raises.

But what is spirituality? What aspects of the human condition does it focus on? In one way or another, studies of spirituality focus on two dimensions of human life: transcendence and community (Banner, 1995; Elkins, Hedstrom, Hughes, Leaf, & Saunders, 1988; Guare, 1995; Twigg, Wyld, & Brown, 2000). Transcendence has to do with the quest of humans for answers to two related questions: Does life have meaning? Is there a purpose to life above and beyond the physical world? Writings assert that search for answers to the questions takes an individual to a state of knowledge/consciousness that is best captured by terms such as 'ultimate reality,' 'Supreme Being,' or 'universal spirit.' In contrast to transcendence, writers on the community dimension see spirituality as leading to charity, integrity,

brotherly love and an emphasis on relationships, and a search for meaning (Bruce & Novinson, 1999). The search for meaning generally encompasses both community and transcendence. Also, in both dimensions of spirituality, connectedness is an integral element of the final meaning that the search finds. It is pointed out that the answer to life's meaning will involve an integration of the self with the 'other.' This 'other' can be as specific as another human being and a Supreme Being or as broad as nature and the universe.

There are perhaps other aspects of spirituality, in addition to transcendence, connectedness and religion that need to be better clarified. However, we focus on highlighting these aspects because of their salience for a critical analysis of spirituality in the work place. For example, Mirvis (1997) highlights efforts at community building that are not linked to any single religion. These efforts are aimed at creating a 'true community' that is inclusive and entails mutual obligation and commitment to the community. Other efforts identify connection with the larger external community through service activity sponsored and supported by the organizations. Finally there are efforts at meditation, private time and other inner-directed but nondenominational gatherings.

### **Spirituality in the Workplace: Evolution and Driving Forces**

Although the burgeoning literature on spirituality in the work place may give the idea that it is a trend of the 90's, interest in the topic is not new. There has been discussion of the historical antecedents of the current interest in spirituality. One such grounding (Mirvis, 1997) suggests that early images of work promoted by Scientific Management gave way to more interest in workers as human beings through the Hawthorne experiments (Human Relations movement) and eventually resulted in more satisfying work (Job Enrichment). While job enrichment (Hackman, Oldham, Janson, & Purdy, 1975) studies may appear to be interested in a narrow set of task related characteristics, Mirvis (1997) notes that this has given way to an understanding of the human component of work as well as the context of the task activity. Although efficiency continues to be the main management standard of practicing managers, prescriptions of the Human Relations movement are used as an important adjunct by Personnel and Human Relations departments (Briskin, 1996).

A driving force behind the current rising interest in spirituality in the work place comes from changing work conditions. Historically, workers at the beginning of the twentieth century could look forward to a lifetime career with a stable company. More recently, downsizing, reorganization, frequent job changes, and the use of a temporary workforce have resulted in a great increase in instability for workers. This more confusing and stressful work situation leaves workers needing more satisfying work and has resulted in a "discourse" that focuses attention of the corporations and how their emphasis on profits has affected workers (Nadesan, 1999). Nadesan also suggests roots in the New Age movement of the 60's. Here the new age focus on self-reflection and self-actualization emphasizes issues of personal growth that work organizations might help satisfy.

To this list of driving forces, others (Cash, Gray, & Rood, 2000) have added technology, globalization and workforce diversity. All these internal and external dynamics have led employees to seek value, support, and meaning in their work, and organizations are seriously considering incorporation of spirituality in their workplace.

In their adaptation of the spirituality concept for organizational research, Ashmos and Duchon (2000) suggest that *spirituality at work* is

the recognition that employees have an inner life that nourishes and is nourished by meaningful work that takes place in the context of community.

Thus, we see spirituality at work as having three components: recognition of employees' inner life, meaningful work, and community. (p. 137)

For current purposes, this appears to be a workable definition as it captures the fundamental elements to be focused on when studying spirituality in organizations.

There are at least two levels of implementation of spirituality at work. At the simplest level, organizations are *accommodating* the expression of private spiritual views. This requires acceptance and accommodation of spiritual expression in the workplace but does not try to form a larger organizational community. At the advanced levels of *encouraging*, organizations attempt to form a new 'community' within the workplace. Workers are encouraged to discuss spiritual aspects of work and life, and form a place where meaning can be jointly determined. This latter view is closer to the idea of a 'secular religion' as proposed by (Ashforth & Vaidyanath, 2002). Perhaps there are other levels of spirituality between these two extremes. Irrespective of where organizations aspire to be on these levels, they need to address a set of issues if they want to successfully implement spirituality in their workplace.

### Spirituality at the Workplace Issues

If spirituality is simply the search for superordinate goals, acceptance of diverse viewpoints and a search for work with higher intrinsic value then we are simply retracing old paths. All of these are well recommended and can be achieved without the use of the terminology and activities of 'spirituality.' We believe that the various calls to become more spiritual in our work life suggest something more. They involve both transcendence (making work more valuable to individuals; work becomes an expression of the self) and community (by stressing acceptance of diversity, openness to other individual viewpoints, and a willingness to voice individual values related to workplace decisions). Proponents of workplace spirituality, in addition to calling attention to the transcendence and community dimensions, also propose that by adopting workplace spirituality organizations can obtain additional creativity, greater appreciation of and commitment to work, and greater satisfaction. In addition to the general emphasis on improving working conditions it is recognized that recent lapses in ethics (Enron, Worldcom, Adelphi, etc.) have reached crisis proportion. Benefits from spirituality are one proposed step to improve the ethical climate of business and help to prevent future lapses.

We do not have any argument with the fundamental proposition that workplace spirituality *could* be an important organizational resource. What we wish to

explore are the contexts and circumstances that stand in the way of an organization's wish to make spirituality an important resource and a source of competitive advantage. In the following subsections, we summarize six critical issues that researchers and practitioners need to pay attention to if workplace spirituality is to deliver the positive consequences that its proponents aspire for.

### **Source of Net Economic Benefit?**

**Potential Benefits.** Let us turn to the outcomes of the various efforts at achieving spirituality at work. Authors cite a variety of potential benefits for both employees and the organization. It is suggested that, at the least, increased spirituality enables employees to gain a better perspective of themselves, their family, firm and community (Cavanagh, 1999). Others suggest stronger consequences. Enhancing spirituality in the workplace, it is said, can lead to more room for creativity, increased satisfaction, and reduction in fear and harassment (White, 2001). In fact, Palmer (2000) sees a potential for great harm absent spirituality. He posits that in decision-making contexts, lack of a strong spiritual foundation results in "functional atheism"—i.e., a situation in which managers believe themselves responsible for everything. This leads to managers imposing their will on others, resulting in increased stress and potential for burnout.

While many assertions about the positive consequences of spirituality exist there appear to be few empirical investigations. Existing research on organizational spirituality is restricted (limited) to worker attitudes such as satisfaction and commitment. Thus potential productivity of spirituality depends on research showing benefits accruing from these personal factors. One of the well-done studies we found (Milliman et al., 2001), indicates a positive relation between spirituality and employee job satisfaction. The positive link was confirmed to exist for most combinations of the dependent and independent variables—i.e., increases in spiritual components (sense of community, individual/organizational values alignment, experience of purpose and meaning in work) is linked to increases in traditional job satisfaction variables (intent to stay at the firm, individual commitment to work, job involvement, greater satisfaction, organizational self-esteem). Thus, we might expect lower costs (less turnover, greater satisfaction, and higher organizational commitment) from successful efforts at spirituality.

While it is pleasing to note the positive effects of spirituality on intent to stay at the firm, we offer some cautions. This positive relationship does not necessarily mean that bottom line benefits follow for the firm. Research looking at high-performance practices such as empowerment found little positive effect on firm level performance (Cappelli & Neumark, 2001). The literature on organizational commitment also is equivocal. Organizational commitment is one of the most studied constructs related to employee attachment to organizations. Organizational commitment includes acceptance of the organization's goals, willingness to put forth effort on behalf of the organization and intentions to stay with the organization (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982). The first meta-analysis, conducted by Mathieu and Zajac (1990), indicated that early research did not establish a strong link between organizational commitment and productivity. A more recent meta-analysis (Ricketta, 2002) found only a weak link between organizational commit-

ment and performance. A study of processes underlying organizational commitment is not very promising either. For example, Ittner and Larcker's (1997) study shows that the two process activities of training and commitment to teamwork do not directly improve bottom line performance. The authors argue that those two activities "may still be lower-level enablers that are required for other process management practices to be successful" (p. 532). Benkhoff (1997) did find some links between organizational commitment and output in a banking situation but cautioned against generalization. Even within the banking industry, she noted differences between supervisors and lower level employees in the commitment-performance relation. Benkhoff also pointed out that, for her study, causality is in question since correlations between commitment and output might come from the possibility that high performance leads to increased commitment rather than the other way around.

So what implications do organizational commitment studies have for proselytizers of workplace spirituality? It is that although managers can expect spirituality to generate higher organizational commitment in their employees, it may be difficult to discern bottom line benefits (if they exist at all). But that does not mean all spirituality efforts are worthless. The potential benefits to workers, firms and society at large are too great to ignore. Converting potential into actuality lies in effective implementation. And implementation is not costless. We now turn our attention to identifying some of those costs.

**Costs.** Spirituality literature suggests that current organizations are often not spiritual and that changes are required in leadership and culture in order for organizations to become more spiritual. Even routine organizational change is not cheap. Changes in leadership and culture are certainly not routine. They are strategic in nature having profound space (organization-wide) and time (long-term) effects. Strategy implementation studies inform us that successful change efforts call for large scale training and development of existing staff. Also, during a strategic change it is not uncommon to see an abnormally large number of employees exit the organization voluntarily (because of disagreement with the direction of change) and involuntarily (through downsizing and retrenchment). The organization incurs costs not only to hire new employees but also to develop them for the new organizational climate. That such is the case is evidenced by authors who note that spirituality is 'foreign' to existent management practices (White, 2001) or who propose new techniques aimed at fostering spirituality (Neck & Milliman, 1994).

Of course these costs are present in any organizational change. The difficulty with implementing and paying for change is generally recognized in the organizational development literature. What is important in this situation is that most proponents of spirituality do not explicitly discuss the associated costs related to achieving organizational spirituality.

In summary, costs associated with adapting spirituality to the workplace are not trivial. They need to be explicitly accounted for, to assess the net economic benefit of spirituality in the workplace. Few (if any) writers have attempted to examine all the costs associated with creating a spiritual organization.

### **An Instrument of Exploitation?**

The transcendence dimension of spirituality informs us that the value of spirituality at work is that workers find work as a means of finding and externalizing their inner self. As noted earlier spirituality can increase the intrinsic value of work and increase the attachment of workers to their work and to their communities. If workers focus on inner benefits and take more responsibility for their satisfaction they may become less focused on the fact that they could be exploited by their organization. Workers often volunteer or take lower wages for work in causes they believe in. Organizations come to expect more efforts and commitments from workers without offering equitable rewards. Critics of the capitalist system point to it as a historically important source of discrimination. According to them the system has led to systematic marginalization and exploitation of the working class. Focusing on the individual and on non-monetary rewards from work leads to perpetuation of inequity based on power and gender (Nadesan, 1999).

Workplace spirituality brings with it the potential for manipulative control (Brown, 2003). It could serve as a legitimizing device, used by managers to manipulate meaning, gain acceptance of organizational goals and achieve compliance. Recent scandals such as Enron and Worldcom suggest that workers might not want to offer a blanket trust to management. In addition, ongoing concerns regarding top management machinations to pay themselves high salaries and bonuses irrespective of their firms' performance, further suggest that workers may be skeptical of management intentions (Fonda & Kadlec, 2004).

If workplace spirituality is to be effective then employee acceptance of the organization's intentions is crucial. This requires two types of trust. One, employees must trust management not to exploit their increased performance and commitment. Here the onus is on management to show unequivocally that monetary and non-monetary benefits accruing to the corporation will be shared equitably. Two, employees must trust each other that spiritual expressions will not be misused. This is particularly important in modern-day organizations where many operations are carried out based on team work.

### **Source of Disunity?**

Bringing spirituality into the workplace may do exactly the reverse of what is intended. Rather than serving as a source of unity it may result in unhealthy disension leading to increased individual stress and decreased organizational performance. Two diversity related issues are raised here. First, we propose that not all individual workers will be equally prepared or equally willing to engage in work as a source of spirituality. Second, we note concerns regarding the accommodation of diverse spiritual and religious viewpoints and the impact this might have on organizations implementing spiritual programs.

**Individual Differences.** Individuals differ on where they are in their spiritual journey. It is therefore not unreasonable to expect to find wide variation in type and degree of spirituality among a group of employees. Some may be low on both transcendence and community dimensions of spirituality whereas others may be high on both the dimensions. Thus, employees bring divergent skills and different levels

of interest in spirituality to the workplace (Lips-Wiersma & Mills, 2002). Not all of them will be interested in pursuing their spirituality through work or willing to express and share inner values with co-workers. Some may be at the spiritual stage where they are quite productive emphasizing rational, scientific and materialistic values (Brown, 2003). Maslow's need-based theory argues that people's needs fall into a hierarchy with physiological and safety needs at the lower levels and self-actualization at the higher level. A sense of belonging to a community is pointed out as one of the means to achieve self-actualization. While the existence of a universally applicable hierarchy has been disputed, there is general acceptance of the view that intensity of the different needs varies across individuals. There is, thus, a basis for us to expect systematic differences across individuals in terms of where they fall on the transcendence and community dimensions of their spirituality. One would expect such variation to affect effectiveness of team work and not always positively.

A slightly different issue arises when there is a divergence between individual and group spirituality. Sometimes an organization that emphasizes spirituality will ask members to confront the fact that some of their own deeply held values may not be universal and these values may come into question. For example, in the case of T-groups, Mirvis (1997) noted historic concerns that efforts to create community or train people in spirituality might lead to indoctrination. Experiences with T-groups in the 60's and 70's suggest that at least two problems may occur. One is that individuals may have problems if they are led to question values that have been strongly held for a long time. Second, individuals who learn to be open will not maintain this openness unless embedded into a setting of like-minded individuals. The latter point suggests a kind of 'all or none' problems associated with spiritual openness.

**The Impediments of Religion and its Exclusivity.** A second diversity concern relates to the role of religion in workplace spirituality. Religion is often avoided in efforts to discuss spirituality. This is generally due to the exclusiveness of religions and the fact that some religions are proselytizing. Religion is also seen to emphasize specific rites and rituals that may exclude certain groups. Writers advocating spirituality have been found to often distinguish religion from spirituality and to deemphasize or exclude the latter (Cash et al., 2000; Cavanagh, 1999; Hicks, 2002).

Not all aspects of religion are equally troublesome. Lewis and Geroy (2000) points out that within any culture there are three major groups of religions. They argue that the largest and easiest to deal with are the religions that represent the majority of citizens in the country. A second group, small in number but more difficult to deal with, are those who espouse no religion (i.e., agnostic or atheist.) A third small but more difficult group are religious evangelicals. Evangelical Christians often endorse individual responsibility, an emphasis on free enterprise, and a nuclear family (Nadesan, 1999). These characteristics may not fit with other views of spirituality insofar as spirituality emphasizes equity (including gender equity) and community responsibility for its members.

Despite attempts to separate religion from spirituality there are advocates of keeping them together (Bell & Taylor, 2001; Hicks, 2003). Other writers, noting

the growth of religion in the United States suggest that this will naturally be reflected in organizations. This includes discussion of religion at work as well as increases in complaints about religious discrimination (Conlin, 1999). It appears that religious and even non-denominational spirituality efforts may become increasingly entangled with anti-discrimination and privacy laws (Cash et al., 2000).

The conundrum here is that advocates of workplace spirituality wish to open the workplace to spiritual expression. On the one hand, for a substantive percentage of workers religion is a natural vehicle for their spirituality. This would make it problematic to open the door to spiritual expression without simultaneously opening the door to religious expression. On the other hand, for some employees religion may not be the means to their spiritual enlightenment. The New Age movement falls in this category. Spirituality, to people in this group, has to do with personal growth and self-actualization. The roots of their spirituality are variously lying in humanistic psychology, Eastern philosophical mysticism, and Western paganism (Nadesan, 1999). To this group, connecting spiritualism to any formal religion would be highly problematic.

### **Is Work the Right Place to Practice It?**

Larger social issues are also at work. Americans already spend more time at work with the concomitant loss of time for family and leisure activity. This loss of access to the family and other forms of support is cited as one reason that spirituality is needed at work. Some advocates of workplace spirituality suggest that looking more closely at personal values may well result in spending more time in home and community activities rather than less. The spiritual workplace (accepting, aligned with personal values) may offer a safer space than would the family or larger community with their associated threats and conflicts. The concern here is that these outside groups may have even more complex problems with less sense of community and acceptance than the spiritual work situation. At least at work you are assured (in the spiritual organization) of acceptance and efforts to truly understand. Thus having a better work community might lead to spending even more time in the 'improved work community' thus draining attention from family, church, and leisure (Caproni, 1997).

At the heart of this issue is the relative benefit of specialization of social organizations. Perhaps churches (temples, mosques and synagogues) are preferred sources of spirituality, families the preferred source of intimacy, and business the source of economic productivity. One of the basic reasons for forming corporations is that they are effective tools for achieving economic efficiency. We might argue that spirituality is more appropriately achieved through organizations that specialize in spirituality (i.e. organized religions). This might lead workers to devote more time and energy in the setting more amenable to success and community building (i.e. work), further exacerbating the existing imbalance.

### **Leading Lambs to the Slaughter?**

Will emphasizing spirituality help firms gain a competitive advantage vis-à-vis rivals? Some note that it could do the opposite. Mirvis (1997) noted that critics

sometimes point out that preparing 'communities' and emphasizing spirituality may just be preparing the "lamb for slaughter" in the highly competitive business world. This criticism recalls the Hobbes' (1957) characterization of life as "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short" (p. 82). The argument here focuses mostly on the economic ideas of competition and the possibly deleterious effects from competition and self-interest.

Another way to see this situation is to observe an anecdote that suggests individuals who are able to see both sides of an issue truly accept that the other side has a 'point.' This might put them at a disadvantage with a competitive adversary that 'knows' their position is the only way to go. The key issue here is whether spiritual individuals and organizations might be more willing to compromise than non-spiritual opponents.

Economists and game theorists studying the prisoners' dilemma have noted this issue. In the prisoners' dilemma if all participants cooperate then a social maximum is reached but the situation is such that when most are cooperating any defector gains significant reward for defecting. This game highlights some of the problems associated with trying to achieve cooperation in the face of self-interested competitors. The problem is essentially that those who want to cooperate are at the mercy of those who would take advantage of them.

### **Escalating Commitment and Groupthink?**

Spirituality's community dimension points to the importance of relationships in human existence. This dimension has become the roots of a new stream of work in leadership wherein managers are enjoined to "lead with soul." (Bolman, 1995). In much of this literature, the emphasis is on creation of a 'community' that entails individuals accepting a sense of responsibility for and to other community members. The potential positive consequences to the group of such leadership are noteworthy. The problem arises in the strong sense of cohesion that community building brings. The disadvantage of highly cohesive groups is well documented. They have a natural tendency toward escalating commitment and groupthink. These two group characteristics have been shown to be associated with ineffective decision-making with potentially catastrophic consequences (Janis, 1983; Staw, 1981).

Writers (Bolman, 1995) who strongly encourage the use of spirit and soul recognize the possible difficulties related to cohesiveness. It is also true the decision-making problems created by groupthink and escalating commitment exist independently of whether organizations and groups are spiritual. The concern becomes very strong in spiritual organizations as they start to build their internal community. As community gains ascendancy it turns into a process of "sacralizing" the work environment (Ashforth & Vaidyanath, 2002). In this situation organizational goals and normative goals impart a cosmology that answers the workers' desire for transcendence. Workplace sacralizing is clearly seen in religious based organizations and organizations where work has become a secular religion. In the former, work is a place to further practice shared religious beliefs that add to cohesiveness. In the latter, work itself has become the transcendent objective and individuals might be expected to increase commitment not only to stay with the organization but also to be cohesive and potentially insular in their approach. There

is a need for organizations to take into account the disadvantages associated with high cohesion as they build their spiritual community.

### **New Directions for Research and Practice**

#### **Research**

We have suggested that the creation of 'spiritual' organizations includes several issues that may limit the efficacy of organizations. These issues present challenges for researchers. For example, the value of spirituality in the workplace has been suggested to partially rest with increased productivity achieved through increased creativity and wider participation in decision processes. What has been demonstrated so far is that increased spirituality is likely to increase organizational commitment and worker satisfaction. These are possibly antecedents of low turnover (i.e. lower costs) but are not demonstrated to be antecedents of the hypothesized increases in bottom line profitability. Thus it becomes especially important for researchers to devise and carry out careful empirical examinations of spiritual and non-spiritual organizations with the aim of demonstrating or refuting the 'spirituality → organizational performance' link.

We have proposed that more encompassing efforts at spirituality may lead to increased cohesion with potential limitations to some of the factors related to improved productivity. This also should be subject to empirical investigation. Do strong forms of spirituality lead to increased measures of cohesiveness? Does a sense of spiritual community also generate a broader cohesiveness with regard to attitudes toward competition? How (if at all) does a sense of spiritual community affect the range of ideas and opinions expressed in the organization?

Beyond empirical tests of spirituality it will be helpful to provide additional theoretical development about how effects of spirituality relate to the processes and outcomes of an organization. It seems particularly important to develop connections and distinctions related to existing organizational behavior constructs such as organizational commitment and job enrichment. Additionally, it will be useful to build new models of how spirituality affects other factors (e.g., innovation and speed of reaction time) that in turn enhance performance.

#### **Practice**

One of the most important justifications for introducing spirituality into the organization is ethical. Acceptance of spirituality as central to human existence suggests that becoming more spiritual is 'the right thing to do.' This ethical correctness is largely distinct from a pecuniary motive and avoids major concerns about the 'benefit' to the organization.

Our earlier presentation, while pointing out the lack of clear empirical justification for bottom line benefits, does allow for the possibility that these benefits may simply have not been discovered or that the benefits act on profitability by more indirect means. Those managers who feel a need to justify the introduction of spirituality on economic grounds are well advised to examine the costs of introducing spirituality as well as the potential benefits. These costs include careful

assessment of training needs and the impact that heightened spiritual awareness may have for existing employees.

Managers implementing spirituality in their organizations need to be aware of the need to manage key paradoxes and dilemmas that we have outlined above. The following list identifies some of the key management issues.

- Basic skills needed in the areas of diversity and appreciative listening must be incorporated into the introduction of spirituality.
- Training and introduction of spirituality may need to be done on the basis of entire work units in order to create the environment in which trust can safely be developed.
- Management must address the ways in which spirituality will be rewarded and acknowledge the importance of fairness in distribution of economic gains.
- Be aware of the potential for problems associated with heightened cohesiveness at both the group and organizational level. These risks can be mitigated (managed) by specific attention to recruitment and decision-making. Recruitment may seek diverse individuals while decision-making should include standard means to avoid premature consensus (such as devil's advocacy and dialectic inquiry).
- Recognize that spirituality will not be without conflict. Make the stance toward religion a part of the plan for introducing spirituality. Beyond the legal issues thought must be given to how religion should be handled.
- Prepare a place for those who do not wish to bring spirituality into their work environment. Make work/life balance a fundamental part of the spirituality program to avoid further imbalances that spirituality might make.

### Conclusions

At the end of the day the authors have a gut reaction that it would be genuinely beneficial to work in an organization having the characteristics attributed to spiritual organizations. Nevertheless we recognize that achieving such organizations is a formidable task that is not well understood. The goal may be clear but the path to attainment is murky at best. Further, we are concerned that the natural enthusiasm that positive management ideas engender may well founder on the considerable problems of implementation. We thus hope that researchers will take up the challenge to further define and examine the concept of workplace spirituality and that managers will introduce spirituality with a recognition of the inherent difficulties and bring appropriate resources to their implementation efforts.

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