
Preface

There are many people to mention and to thank for making this book and the research on which it is based happen. But first of all, we want to thank all of our research participants who accepted our invitation to take part in the online questionnaire; special thanks should go to those who have shared their thoughts and reflections about their lives and about “spirituality” in personal interviews. Without their participation, this study would have never been possible.

The research that is presented in this book has been carried through by research teams at the University of Bielefeld, Germany, and at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. Under the cooperative leadership of the editors of this volume, both teams have cooperated in designing research, collecting data, evaluating them quantitatively and qualitatively, and finally in writing the chapters of this volume.

In Chattanooga, the study consisted of two phases during the research and analysis process. The first phase included quantitative and qualitative data collection from around the USA. Based on quantitative results, participants were recruited to complete faith development interviews with members of the Chattanooga research team. These interviews were conducted by some of the best and brightest students at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. The data collection team consisted of Paul Rosenberg as the assistant project manager. Additionally, the team included Heather Durham, Hadia Ghazi, Sara Hall, Lindsey Ogle, Emily Pica, Jeffery Greene, Hillary Warrington, Madelyn Esposito, Katharina Hauck, Hannah Herrod, Michelle Kelley, and Stephanie Wilson. The second phase consisted of students who assisted in the data analysis process. The data analysis and coding team consisted of Thomas J. Coleman III as the assistant project manager with other researchers such as Charlotte (Beene) Wells, Karen (Curry) Colangione, Kristen Mcgeehon, Maria Matty, Erica L. Hicks, Stephanie Pyke, Joshua Lang, Christopher Adam Vance, Rachel Nolen, and Derek Giamundo. All contributed significantly to the analysis phase of the project. Finally, a couple of members of the Chattanooga team worked throughout both phases of the project. Those team members were Christopher F. Silver who served as the project manager of the Chattanooga research team, Michele Wollert who served both as a researcher and as a training consultant for faith development interviewing and analysis, and Matthew Durham who served both as an interviewer and as a member of the data analysis and coding team.

Additionally, we would like to say thank you to Zhuo Job Chen who consulted and advised during the data analysis portion of our study in Chattanooga. Finally, the Chattanooga team would like to thank the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga including the Department of Psychology and the Learning and Leadership Doctoral Program for their kind support of our project.

The Bielefeld team included Barbara Keller, who is also a licensed psychotherapist for psychoanalysis and psychodynamic therapy. She has participated in designing the project and preparing the application for the German Research Foundation (DFG). She was responsible for the coordination of research in Germany and the USA. Having also been involved in the previous Deconversion Project, she has continued to contribute to the revision of faith development theory and methodology and has trained interviewers and raters on both sides of the ocean. Anne Swhajor-Biesemann has contributed on all levels of this cross-cultural and bilingual project, in particular in interviewing, organizing data collection, and data processing, as well as data analysis, including interview evaluation. Daniela Ticu has been responsible for numerous administrative tasks, including literature search and procurement, and has, while working on the project, developed her own scientific interests. Sven Luhmann has taken care of all IT aspects of the project, from the implementation of the online questionnaire to the transfer of different types of data between data bases. Constantin Klein, theologian and psychologist, has supported all phases of this research as consultant for methods and methodology and maintenance of the data basis. In particular, he has set up the IAT experiment for the study of semantics of “spirituality.” Regarding fieldwork in Germany, a team of well-trained interviewers conducted the interviews: Besides Anne Swhajor-Biesemann and Sven Luhmann, we enjoyed the help of students of psychology—Svenja Albrecht, Cornelia Herzig, Roland Hörmann, Caroline Kroll, and Selma Romanci. Clemens Eisenmann has joined as interviewer and continued to support the project by the content-analytic evaluation of free-text entries (see Chap. 9). He was supported by Uwe Drexelius, Roland Hörmann, Sakin Özisik, and others. Svenja Albrecht, Roland Hörmann and Caroline Kroll, Anne Swhajor-Biesemann, Barbara Keller, and Heinz Streib were engaged in the evaluation of Faith Development Interviews in Germany. Also, we thank Stefan Altmeyer for contributing his expertise in corpus analysis to our research and conducting the corpus analyses that are reported in Chap. 8.

Special thanks go to Ramona Bullik, who has been with this project from the first constituting meeting to the final proofreading of the chapters and interview transcripts included in this volume and the production of the index.

We also express our thanks to Springer publishing house to include this volume in their collection of psychological works, especially we thank the publishing editors, Esther Otten and Hendrikje Tuerlings, for their kind support.

We also wish to thank Bielefeld University for hosting our research, especially the financial administrator, Ralf Möller, for his help. And last but not least, we are very grateful to the German Research Foundation/Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft for funding this cross-cultural research project.

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