

Západočeská univerzita v Plzni

Fakulta pedagogická

Katedra anglického jazyka

Bakalářská práce

DUCHOVNÍ ŽIVOT AMERIČANŮ

Ivana Švehlová

Plzeň 2012

University of West Bohemia

Faculty of Education

Department of English

Undergraduate Thesis

SPIRITUAL LIFE OF AMERICANS

Ivana Švehlová

Plzeň 2012

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V Plzni dne 29. června 2012

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Ivana Švehlová

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Mgr. Gabriela Klečková, Ph.D., the supervisor of this work, for her patience, advice and mainly for her goodwill during the writing process of this thesis.

ABSTRACT

Švehlová, Ivana. University of West Bohemia. June, 2012. Spiritual Life of Americans. Supervisor: Mgr. Gabriela Klečková, Ph.D.

The main purpose of this undergraduate thesis is to discuss various aspects of Americans' spiritual life. At first, there is a division of particular beliefs in the USA. Institutionalized religion is one of the aspects of spiritual life. There are also groups in the U.S. which do not appreciate any religion but trust in God and similar things. The other aspect includes these people living spiritual life. The spiritual people deal with several movements. The movements are described chronologically in this work so as to show gradual evolution of spirituality. This thesis also comprises famous American people exploring spirituality. At the end of the work, there is a comparison of the various aspects of spirituality.

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INTRODUCTION

This work is about spiritual life of Americans. There are many people believing in God in America. Some of them are adherents of religion and others live in a spiritual manner.

The first chapter mainly describes division of individual beliefs in the USA. A lot of people deal with Christian faith. There are almost 80% of Christian Americans. The Christian faith is divided into groups such as Protestant, Catholic, Mormon, Jehovah's Witness, Orthodox and the other Christians. There are also other religions in America for instance Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism and other world religions. A group of people, who are not connected with any organized religion, is known under the name unaffiliated. These people are perhaps atheists who do not have any faith, agnostics who hesitate whether God exists or not and spiritual people. People dealing with spirituality trust in metaphysical things but in a little different way than followers of organized forms of religion.

The second chapter chronologically represents an evolution of spirituality on the American continent. It starts with native American inhabitants. They believed in laws of nature and metaphysical principles intensely based on spirituality. Then it talks about the era of the first colonists where people were still interested in supernatural principles. But during the era of Enlightenment, there was a spiritual pause. People were oriented predominantly on their reason and science. Deism, Freemasonry, Unitarianism and Universalism belonged to the first metaphysical religions. These tendencies established foundations for metaphysical movements. The following text is about metaphysical awakening. Swedenborgianism, Transcendentalism, Mesmerism and Spiritualism, the movements of metaphysical awakening, are closely defined and compared with one another. At the end of this chapter, there are described spiritual and metaphysical trends such as New Thought, New Age and Neopaganism.

The third chapter introduces famous personalities who dealt with spirituality. One of them was Edgar Cayce who was known for his prophesying. He reportedly communicated with celestial beings. He healed people by means of his visions. Followers of Transcendental psychology Abraham Harold Maslow and Stanislav Grof explored altered states of consciousness.

The last chapter compares different points of view respecting spirituality. First, the distinction between the standard form of religion and the spirituality is described. Atheists and believers of any faith are compared too. Advantages and disadvantages of spirituality are at the end of this project.

Beliefs in The USA

The Main Division of Faiths

Spiritual faith is one of the main factors forming the identity and values of people in America. Religion plays an important role there. There are about 90% of Americans who believe in God (Datesman, Kearny, & Crandall). 78.4% of Americans believe in various kinds of Christian faith. 4.7% of them are interested in other religions; 16.1% of people in the U.S. do not trust a particular religion and 0.8 percent of them do not know or refuse to talk about their spirituality. These numbers are shown in the table called Major Religious Traditions in the U.S. In the end, there are many ways by which Americans express their faith.

Christians

Protestants and their three traditions. Protestants, who represent 51.3 percent of total adult believers in the USA, form the majority of Christians. Protestantism is comprehended not as a single religion but it is divided into three traditions. Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life (2008) reports the meaning of the word tradition: “A religious tradition is a set of denominations and congregations with similar beliefs, practices and origins“(p. 13). So Protestantism is parted into evangelical Protestant churches, mainline Protestant churches and historically black Protestant churches. There are 26.3% of adult evangelical Protestants totaling one-half of all Protestants in the U.S. More than one-third of them are followers of mainline Protestant churches who form 18.1% of the overall adult population. Historically black Protestant churches compose the last group of Protestantism. It has 6.9% of total adult churchgoers and about one-seventh of all Protestants. All three traditions composing of plentiful denominations receive similar practices, beliefs and history. In brief, Protestantism is not a single religion, but it has three diverging traditions in the United States.

Major Religious Traditions
in the U.S.

Among all adults
%

Christian	78.4
Protestant	51.3
<i>Evangelical churches</i>	26.3
<i>Mainline churches</i>	18.1
<i>Hist. black churches</i>	6.9
Catholic	23.9
Mormon	1.7
Jehovah's Witness	0.7
Orthodox	0.6
Other Christian	0.3
Other Religions	4.7
Jewish	1.7
Buddhist	0.7
Muslim*	0.6
Hindu	0.4
Other World Religions	<0.3
Other Faiths	1.2
Unaffiliated	16.1
Don't know/Refused	0.8
	100

* From "Muslim Americans: Middle Class and Mostly Mainstream," Pew Research Center, 2007

Due to rounding, figures may not add to 100 and nested figures may not add to the subtotal indicated.

From "U.S. Religious Landscape Survey," Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, 2008

Denominational families and denominations. Protestantism forging 65% of Christians in the U.S. is very varied. It includes a lot of denominational families. There are many examples of these families such as the Methodist, Baptist, Lutheran, Presbyterian, etc. The denominational families involve different types of denominations. Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life (2008) explains the word denomination in this manner, “The term “denomination” refers to a set of congregations that belong to a single administrative structure characterized by particular doctrines and practices“(p. 13). These denominations can occur in all Protestant traditions. However, they have a slightly different name. But not all denominations and families are shown in all three traditions. For example, the Presbyterian denomination called the Presbyterian Church in America is connected with the evangelical tradition. The same denomination under the name the Presbyterian Church USA belongs to the mainline tradition. And the historically black tradition does not include Presbyterians. Indeed, there are many denominations and families within Protestant traditions.

The Baptist family is the greatest Protestant family in the U.S. Baptists form a number (41%) in the evangelical tradition. Historically black churches have 64% of Baptist followers. But mainline Protestantism accounts for one-tenth (10%) of Baptists. In addition to the Baptist family, Americans have about 20 other important families. The Methodist family is the second major Protestant family. There are 12.1% of all Protestants and 6.2% of the adult American population in the Methodist family. The other Protestant families are Lutheran and Pentecostal. Each has about 4% of the total adult believers. Lutherans occur only within mainline Protestantism and Evangelicalism. The other abundant Protestant denominational family is the Presbyterian one. It consists of 2.7% of accumulate adult population in the U.S. Presbyterians occur in all Protestant traditions except the historically black one. The Restorationist family composing of 2.1% of the American adults has its charges within evangelical and mainline Protestant churches, not in historically black church. The Anglican/Episcopal family does not abound within historically black churches and accounts for 1.5 % of the adult population. Holiness in the Evangelical Tradition and Holiness in the Historically Black Tradition give 1.2% of people together. Each of the remaining Protestant families has approximately 1% of the overall believers, for example the Anabaptist, Adventist and so on. There are also people who do not want to join with any denominational church. Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life (2008) indicates that, “Nearly 5% of the adult population consists of Protestants who attend nondenominational churches, that is, churches that are not affiliated with any specific denomination“(p. 15).

The most nondenominational Protestants are within the evangelical tradition. There are many Protestants, who are associated with any denominational family, but 4.5% of them are involved in no family. All numbers of followers of denominations and families are displayed in a table called Large Denominations and Protestant Religious Traditions. This table is situated in Appendix. To sum up, the Baptist family is the most populous and the most numerous protestant family in the USA.

Catholics and other Christian faiths. Christian faith is divided into several religious groups, such as the Protestants, Catholics, Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, Orthodox and other Christians. Catholics are spread in America in 23.9%. They make up more or less 30% of Christians. According to U.S. Census Bureau, Statistical Abstract of the United States (2012), "there are 57,199 of adult Catholics in the USA. Their number increased by about 11,000 from 1990 to 2008" (p. 61). The rest of Christian faiths are minor. Adult Mormons represent 1.7% of the American population. Jehovah's Witnesses have 0.7% of adherents. The Orthodox faith accounts for bare 0.6% and members of other Christians form 0.3% of Americans. Therefore, all Protestants, Catholics, and other Christian faiths summarize 78.4% of Christians in America.

Other Religions

A group called Other Religions stands next to the Christians and includes for example Buddhists, Muslims, etc. Jews generating the next faith tradition in the USA own 1.7% of adults. There are also other relevant faith traditions such as Buddhists acting 0.7% of population, Muslims forming 0.6 percent, Hindus totaling 0.4% and memberships of other world religions. Other world religions account for 0.3% and these religions involve for example Baha'is, Zoroastrians and so on. Other faiths connecting New Age, Native American religions and Unitarians constitute the rest 1.2% of American religious people. Data of these religions are clearly written in a table called Make up of Smaller U.S. Religious Traditions and of the Unaffiliated. As a result, a group called Other Religions total 4.7% of American adults who are affiliated with religion.

Make up of Smaller U.S. Religious Traditions
and of the Unaffiliated

Among all adults
%

Christians	78.4
Other Religions	4.7
Jewish	1.7
<i>Reform</i>	0.7
<i>Conservative</i>	0.5
<i>Orthodox</i>	<0.3
<i>Other</i>	0.3
Buddhist	0.7
<i>Zen Buddhist</i>	<0.3
<i>Theravada Buddhist</i>	<0.3
<i>Tibetan Buddhist</i>	<0.3
<i>Other</i>	0.3
Muslim*	0.6
<i>Sunni</i>	0.3
<i>Shia</i>	<0.3
<i>Other</i>	<0.3
Hindu	0.4
Other world religions	<0.3
Other faiths	1.2
<i>Unitarians and other liberal faiths</i>	0.7
<i>New Age</i>	0.4
<i>Native American religion</i>	<0.3
Unaffiliated	16.1
Atheist	1.6
Agnostic	2.4
No particular religion	12.1
<i>Secular unaffiliated</i>	6.3
<i>Religious unaffiliated</i>	5.8
Don't know/Refused	0.8
	100

* From "Muslim Americans: Middle Class and Mostly Mainstream," Pew Research Center, 2007

Due to rounding, figures may not add to 100 and nested figures may not add to the subtotal indicated.

From "U.S. Religious Landscape Survey," Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, 2008

Unaffiliated to Any Religious Group

There is as well a group which has members who are not allied to any particular religious group. But it does not mean that all these 16.1% of adult Americans are nonreligious. 1.6% of them are atheists, 2.4% of these Americans are agnostics and the rest is composed of people who believe in some kind of spirituality. Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life (2008) states: “The remaining three quarters (12.1% of the adult population) consist of people who describe their religion as nothing in particular” (p. 20). This group is composed of two unequal subgroups. Secular people in the first group say that religion is not relevant or not at all relevant for them. On the other hand, adults in the second group consider religion an important phenomenon in their lives in spite of their lack of association with any religious group. So this second one is seen as the religious unaffiliated. Americans at the age of 18-29 proclaim they are not associated with any specific religion. Datesman, Kearny, & Crandall (2005) explain their statement, “Many young people prefer to identify themselves as being spiritual, rather than religious. The majority prefer also to explore the beliefs of several religions, rather than just one” (p. 59). Finally, these unaffiliated Americans look for a belief method that supports them in growing and improving their mind.

Atheists. Atheists do not believe in God. They rely on reason and common sense. Nonbelievers have existed in every period of the human history. Due to social influence, religion becomes less important for the rational group. Believing in God is not intellectual for many educated people. Science is classified to one of the first rankings in terms of understanding this world. The supernatural concept is taboo. American atheists point out their infidelity in this manner,” Atheism is the lack of belief in a deity, which implies that nothing exists but natural phenomena (matter), that thought is a property or function of matter, and that death irreversibly and totally terminates individual organic units. This definition means that there are no forces, phenomena, or entities which exist outside of or apart from physical nature, or which transcend nature, or are “super” natural, nor can there be. Humankind is on its own“ (Atheism, n. d., para. 1). And there is one question. In what do atheists believe? Who takes control of this world? Something surely has to direct the whole universe. In shaping the opinion, whether someone believes in science or religion, culture plays a major role. In the end, people being neither religious nor spiritual use mainly their logical reasoning and recognize mainly physical principles.

Agnostics. There is one group in which people do not know whether they believe in deity or not. They are called agnostics. Agnostics are not decided if some kind of superior power exists. They describe it in this manner: “Many agnostics continue to hold to the idea that agnosticism represents some sort of “third way” between atheism and theism“ (Agnosticism 101, n. d., para. 2). According to these people, our human reason is not able to perceive facts of existence or nonexistence of spirituality. In short, agnostic people can not state whether some kind of superior power controls our world or not.

A group not fully connected with religion. The other group which is included in the unaffiliated group is multivalent. There are people who go under some religion but do not frequent churches and there are Americans who often go to church while they are not connected with any organized religion. Authors of Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life (2008) agree with this statement: ”About half of people who describe their religion as nothing in particular (6.3% of the overall adult population) say that religion is not too important or not at all important in their lives. Thus, they can be thought of as being mostly secular in their orientation. But the other half of this group (5.8% of adults) says that religion is somewhat important or very important in their lives, despite their lack of affiliation with any particular religious group“ (p. 20). In other words, some Americans do not want to join any religion even if they receive its teachings. It may become that unchurched Americans visit churches more often than religious followers. Why do not some religious followers attend churches? Maybe it is easier for them. This period is time-consuming. People work a lot so as to earn enough money. If someone has a family he or she needs sufficient financial means to provide for their children. There can be other reasons, for instance a family and friends may receive different faiths or simply typical formal reasons. Thus, religion is for a specific number of Americans unnecessary in spite of these people acknowledge values of particular religions and some Americans are related to any religion even if they do not accept values of religion in general.

Spiritual Group of People

The last group of people is composed of people who are not affiliated with any church. However, they are joined with spiritual things and faith. No connection with formal religious organizations is typical for them. These people are spiritual, but they are not religious. Spiritual and religious words can be seen as the same words but it is not.

Both otherwise represent believing in some kind of superior power. On the other hand, to be spiritual means to be independent of religious organizations. Fuller (2001) describes it in this way: “The word spiritual gradually came to be associated with the private realm of thought and experience while the word religious came to be connected with the public realm of membership in religious institutions, participation in formal rituals, and adherence to official denominational doctrines“(p. 5). A lot of Americans try to find inspiration in spiritual books and guides of famous people like Edgar Cayce, Doreen Virtue and so on. These unaffiliated people are interested in spiritual faith, things and books. They watch films about this theme, visit talk shows and find out news respecting spiritual issues. Wuthnow (1998) supports the increase of spirituality: “Judging from newspapers and television, Americans’ fascination with spirituality has been escalating dramatically“(p. 1). Spiritual people believe in God one way or the other. But God does not mean for them a person, animal or something similar. It is some force that has a control over the entire world. Taylor (1999) offers his essence of spirituality: “The primary one being that the motivating power behind it is not originating in mainstream institutionalized science, religion, or education. Rather, we are witnessing a popular phenomenon of epic proportions that is at once provoundly personal, experimental, and transcendent“(p. 6). This is the other view of seeing a difference between religion and spirituality. Lastly, the group professing no particular religion tries to find something spiritual that controls our world.

Evolution of Spirituality and Important Movements

This chapter presents the mentioned spiritual group of people. In the first chapter, there was described a division of faith in the U. S. The division included various beliefs such as religions, spiritual oriented faiths, etc. This chapter would like to focus on the spiritual faiths. Their evolution is described from the beginning that is to say from the era of the native American inhabitants and several movements dealing with spirituality are described and compared here.

Native Americans' Spirituality

Spirituality on the American continent has its roots in time of native American inhabitants. Norris (1996) explains how the term native Americans originated: "Native Americans is a name that we have given to all of the people who lived in America when Christopher Columbus and other Europeans arrived. Columbus called these people Indians" (p. 5). Native Americans' spirituality goes beyond organised forms of religion so the spirituality of native Americans is not a set of rules or commands which followers have to perform. It is misleading to understand spirituality of native Americans as religious tradition. This spirituality is not a moral codex of rules and orders (Freeke and Renault). Indians' spirituality is also based on coexistence with nature. All creatures on earth including people, animals and so on are somehow alive and are a part of interconnected nature. According to native Americans, our world teems with life. Every component of existence represents the Creator and every thing is in its own way alive. People are not the only ones who own a spirit but animals and herbage own it too, even rocks, rivers and rainbow (Freke and Renault). In brief, the main idea of native Americans is living in harmony with the earth, respecting all living being and spirituality diverging from organised forms of religion.

Natives vs. Modern People's Point of View

Native inhabitants of America consider this world as a sacred and spiritual way but the modern way very often does not see this. People perceive themselves as individual existences. Physical and material things are mostly the most important things for them. Natives hold a different view. They prefer spiritual part of a human. They think that

human being consists of spirit, mind and a body. The spirit has the first-rate importance for them. In agreement with Indians, we are not human beings on spiritual pilgrimage. We are spiritual beings on human pilgrimage. The part of every person which says “ I am“ is a part of spirit. It is immortal and unlimited. Mind functions as a link between spirit and a body. The body is an envelope where the spirit is hidden. It is a part of Earth Mother and goes back to her when we die. Our spirit is a part of the only Great Spirit. And if we are in balance when death point comes the spirit can pass through a gate and return to collectivity of all souls (Freke & Renault). Communication between physical and spiritual world is easy and obvious for natives. These Americans understand death not as the end but as a transformation in another form of existence. They think of life as a visiting way that leads us back to our Creator where some unity dominates. Lastly, it is natural for native American inhabitants to believe in transmaterial world while the civilized people prefer material world.

Native Americans living the old way of life can regard manners of present-day people as bad. Indians do not understand their life disharmony and think that they exist in darkness because civilized people lost a memory of old manners of life such as human’s cooperation with nature, earth and animals. Native inhabitants want modern people to look back in time and find out how to live (Freke and Renault). Indians believe in mankind improvement because old nations appreciate time moving in circle, as Mayan culture received. The time moving in circle represents alternating good and bad spiritual periods. Calleman (2007) supports it in foreword of his book called *The Mayan Code: Time Acceleration and Awakening the world*: “The whole point of the Mayan Calendar is that it is not a linear calendar counting astronomical cycles, but one that describes the shifting spiritual energies of time“(p. 2). Indeed, Indians want civilized people to return to old and natural life pattern so as to live in harmony.

The First Colonists’ Spirituality

Early in the seventeenth century one-third of people were linked with church and the rest of colonists received spirituality alike native American Indians. Fuller (2001) supports it in his work *Spiritual, But Not Religious: Understanding Unchurched America*: “In the late 1600s, less than one-third of all adults belonged to a church. Most early Americans, for example, engaged in a wide array of magical and occult practices“(p. 13). Both church and spiritual followers were interested in supernatural powers. And people

wondered about things which could take control of events happening on this Earth. Fuller (2001) gives examples of the main practices: “Divination, fortune-telling, astrology, witchcraft, and even folk medicine competed with the Christian churches as sources of the colonists’ understanding of the supernatural powers that affected their destiny. Divination was perhaps the most widespread of these unchurched attempts to understand and manipulate supernatural power“(p. 14). Fortune-telling was a way by which people strived to find out their future. Astrology became also very popular. Horoscopes appeared in many almanacs and books. Witchcraft was closely associated with healing. These spiritual sciences were used by nearly all circles of people. Period of people recognizing predominantly supernatural powers continued approximately until the middle of the eighteenth century.

Age of Reason - Pause

Magical and spiritual era in America ended because of Enlightenment. A storm of new settlers from Europe doubted religion and spirituality. Human reason and laws of nature got ahead supernatural powers. The Age of Reason spread first in Europe and then on the territory of the present United States. These things were happening after the American Revolution. The human reason endorsing science had the main power. Historians confirm the power of reason in the time: “The advocates of this movement stressed the power of humans to reason so as to promote progress“(The Enlightenment in Colonial America, n. d., para. 1). Mathematics and natural sciences were basking in glory. After all, spirituality was considered an intricate power which took control of reasonless people. Technological and intellectual progress was on the top of acknowledged theory. The Age of Reason was the era of making revolt against Christian doctrines and the supernatural powers.

Foundations of The First Metaphysical Religions

Deism became the other theme in time when Enlightenment dominated. Deism is explained like this: “Deism is knowledge of God based on the application of our reason on the designs/laws found throughout nature“(Welcome to Deism! n.d., para. 1). According to Deism, God and human being created this world, but the human should survive with his or her reason and consciousness. Deists exclude supernatural powers like prophecy, miracles

and so on that can be accepted in Christianity. Deism was a kind of faith that received God as a creator, human reason as feator in this world and both cooperated with nature.

Another well-known motion was Freemasonry. It originated probably from Stonemasonry. Hodapp and Cannon (2007) parallel the creation of Freemasonry: “The generally accepted origin of Freemasonry is believed to have been from stonemason guilds formed during the Middle Ages in Scotland, England, and France“(p. 184). The main symbol of Freemasons is a connected square and compasses. The square and compasses make out supposedly together a unit where the square represents earth in material sense. The compasses can draw a circle which imagines sky in spiritual sense. Hodapp and Cannon (2007) explain the meaning of the symbol in this manner: “The symbol has had many interpretations to Jews, Christians, Muslims, and alchemists. In *The Da Vinci Code*, Dan Brown declared the symbol to be a representation of the masculine and the divine feminine, and many believe it represent good and evil, heaven and earth, and other similar yin-yang themes“(p. 192). So Freemasonry contained also esoteric aspect not merely reasonable one as accepted Deism. It acknowledged spiritual and magical phenomena from the pre–Enlightenment era full of supernaturalistic elements. Stavish (2007) speculates that; “Freemasons were privy to secret esoteric teachings and occult operations (p. 4). In short, Fremasonry was one of the first movements which honoured even spiritual point of view.

Unitarianism and Universalism were other organizations founding metaphysical religion. Unitarians maintained that the Bible was written by a human being. They insisted it was processed in order to conform to men’s needs. And so it can not be without error. Rationality and moral principles were more important than ruled doctrines for Unitarians. It had adherests of such people who wanted progressive spirituality that supported free thinking. Universalists disagreed with Christianity’s doctrines. They did not believe that God can save only selected people. They received universal salvation. Fuller (2001) describes Unitarianism and Universalism in this way: “Rejecting evangelical Christianity’s doctrine that only a select few were destined for salvation, they preached universal salvation. The concept of universal salvation necessarily fostered liberal and experimental approaches to spiritual living. If we have salvation regardless of our specific beliefs or practices,then we are free to follow our personal spiritual inclinations rather than conform to institutional norms. For this reason Universalists tended to draw the era’s “free spirits.” Though typically drawn from a less affluent, more rural background than their Unitarian counterparts,the Universalists also became magnets for the era’s most progressive religious

ideas“ (p. 22, 23). To sum up, Unitarianism even Universalism acknowledged free and rational manners in deity faith.

Metaphysical Awakening

Swedenborgianism, Transcendentalism, Mesmerism and Spiritualism were the first greatest movements which influenced American spiritual life. Fuller (2001) supplies the information about this: “there have been periodic awakenings in America’s unchurched religious life. The periods between 1835 and 1860, 1885 and 1910, and 1970 and 1995 witnessed dramatic surges in public awareness of philosophies and practices outside the spiritual teachings of the nation’s churches“(p. 23). Each awakening affected religions based on the Bible. There were spiritual oriented faiths more popular than classic religions in the mentioned times. And the material concept of world, where the main power had human’s reason as in the time of Enlightenment, was extended to the idea of more-than-physical universe. In brief, the new trends brought American people another opinion on religious and spiritual life.

Swedenborgianism

A new religious movement called Swedenborgianism was established by Emanuel Swedenborg in the eighteenth century. The main purpose of Swedenborgianism is to detect spiritual sphere. Fuller (2001) describes how Swedenborg got knowledge of principles of universe: “His angelic guides taught him that the universe consists of seven interpenetrating dimensions (the physical, mental, spiritual, angelic, etc.). Spirit and matter are thus not opposed to one another, but rather complementary and inseparable dimensions of a single universal system“ (p. 25). All dimensions should be interconnected and God occurs within all of them. He also believed that he opened up the true meaning of the Bible. Swedenborg took a view that the Bible symbolizes just several spheres of existence not only the physical and spiritual (Fuller). Swedenborgianism was one of the phenomena that contributed to the development of spirituality in the USA.

Transcendentalism

Transcendentalism was established by rebellious young Unitarian speakers headed by Ralph Waldo Emerson. The first followers of Transcendentalism honoured some Unitarian codes. There were for instance religious liberty, Jesus as a human by himself and the essence of the Bible affected by mankind culture. Transcendentalists preferred freedom in religious thinking, romantic aspects and experience from human's heart. Emerson and Thoreau (2008) appreciate this information: "Transcendentalism embraced some principles of Christianity, Eastern religions, and the English Romantics, but was not a subcategory of any of them; instead, it was a new, truly American philosophy, with the idea of self-reliance at its core" (p. 8). The other famous adherents of Transcendentalism were Henry David Thoreau and Margaret Fuller. Transcendentalists also received the association between spiritual and material world analogous to Swedenborgianism. They held the view that every person is endowed with an ability to receive universe spiritual energy. But Transcendentalists did not believe in angels working as mediators connecting God and human being. According to them God is everywhere in everyone. To sum up, Transcendentalists embraced some fundamentals from Unitarianism, Swedenborgianism, Christianity and Eastern Religions.

Mesmerism

Mesmerism is the other movement which was brought to the American continent. It was developed by a doctor and psychoterapeut called Franz Anton Mesmer in the eighteenth century. But the man who spread it around America was Charles Poyen. Mesmerism can be also known under the term Animal Magnetism. Buckland (1850) explains the principle of Mesmerism in this way: "Animal Magnetism, or Mesmerism, is the name given to a science, by the practice of which the vital principle existing in human beings may be transferred from the healthy to those who are sick and suffering" (p. 5). Animal Magnetism is maybe a kind of alternative medicine and healing. Its main purpose is to cure people by the help of vital force and applying the force to people's painful parts of a body. It is a spiritual tendency which rather pays attention to practical usage of spirituality than pure speculation about it. Fuller (2001) writes in his words how he understands Mesmer's Animal Magnetism: "Animal Magnetism was the etheric medium linking the universe and making possible the transmission of causal influences from one

object to another“ (p. 31). Animal Magnetism is reportedly included in all beings in universe. It is a gift from our Creator to help people with healing. Buckland (1850) mentions that Animal Magnetism is a power from God in his book: “The great truth, being now generally received, that Mesmerism is a powerful curative agent, a blessing from God to all who choose to accept it, it is time the world should know that the process is as simple as it is efficacious“ (p. 7). To sum up, Mesmerism or Animal Magnetism is a movement which attends predominantly practical healing by the help of some vital universe force.

Spiritualism

Spiritualism probably arose around the middle of the nineteenth century. The people who contributed to origin of the movement Spiritualism were the Fox sisters. All began when Maggie and Kate Fox moved with their family to a new house. Supposedly, in the house, there were various strange sounds similar to knocking. The sisters one day responded to these freak sounds and the mystery was a spirit of a man buried in their home. Lehman (2009) acknowledges that Fox sisters had a share in origin of spiritualism: “The Spiritualist movement, which some refer to as a “religion,” began, most historians agree, in Hydesville, New York, with the notorious “rapings“ of the Fox sisters in 1848. They were living with their parents in an isolated farmhouse when the family began to be troubled by mysterious loud rappings and knockings throughout the house“ (p. 79). The sisters later became famous people communicating with ghosts therefore they arranged various seances for audiences. Lehman (2009) confirms this statement: “Other spirits began to identify themselves and tell their stories through Kate and Maggie Fox, and Hydesville became the center of attention and what we might now call a “media blitz,” with crowds coming from miles around to see the “spook house“ (p. 80). To summarize, the Fox sisters were one of the first promoters of spiritualism.

Andrew Jackson Davis is as well connected with flowering of spiritualism but in a slightly different way than the Fox sisters. First he received mesmerism and then freely moved to spiritualism. Davis’s beginnings with these movements started when one mesmerist came to his hometown to show people animal magnetism. Davis was chosen as a volunteer of an experiment. And due to this séance he found out that he has transcendental abilities. Fuller (2001) describes what Davis experienced during his mesmeric trance: “When mesmerized, Davis performed such feats as reading from books while blindfolded, telepathically receiving thoughts from those in the audience, or

travelling clairvoyantly to distant locales“ (p. 39). Later he could communicate with spirits and celestial beings alike the Fox sisters. Davis wrote down his experiences as a medium connecting spirits and people from our world to his work *The Harmonical Philosophy*. In brief, Andrew Jackson Davis belonged to famous founders of spiritualism as well as Maggie and Kate Fox.

Spiritualism is a direction which emphasises spiritual aspects of life. Material world is not so much substantive as spiritual world for spiritualists. Peebles (2003) even exaggerates the principle of Spiritualism: “Spiritualism is the philosophy of life – and the direct antithesis of materialism“ (p. 5). Spiritualism deals with supernatural powers, metaphysical existences like spirits and celestial beings like angels. It also explores life after death and reincarnation. Bechhofer Roberts (2004) shows in his work how The National Spiritualist Association of the United States explains the term Spiritualism: “Spiritualism is the Science, Philosophy and Religion of Continuous life, based upon the demonstrated fact of communication, by means of mediumship, with those who live in the spirit world“ (p. 10). Indeed, Spiritualism is one of the movements which are interested in spirituality very much.

New Thought

Around the beginning of the twentieth century there were many people receiving new progress theories. New Thought was one of these movements. Mayo (2009) confirms it in his work *Creativity, Spirituality, and Mental Health: Exploring Connections*: “During the early years of the twentieth century, psychiatry in the United States and Europe underwent a number of changes, most notable an increasing focus on social progress and general societal welfare. There were other forces that shaped the field included new religious movements such as New Thought, Spiritualism, etc.“ (p. 7). These people wanted to show the world that things really exist beyond material reality. They looked for special phenomena in nature and in universe which scientists have not discovered yet. The New Thought followers made much account of person’s inner thoughts creating his or her destiny. Roof (1999) explains what New Thinkers the most emphasized: “New Thought placed great emphasis on the inner life and possibilities for its transformation, on mystical and harmonial experiences, and on the psychic frontiers of the mind. These latter movement, remarkably optimistic about the individual’s own power to shape his or her own fate, emphasized the connection between the self and the universe and the divine

spark within every individual“ (p. 153). Thus, New Thought belonged to progress movements at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth century.

Phineas Parkhurst Quimby was one of the main thinkers promoting the new tendencies like New Thought. Quimby had a similar opinion as Mesmer. Mesmer believed in animal magnetism, the healing vital force, which is involved in every existence. Fuller (2001) describes Quimby’s main thoughts like this:

He held that the real source of human health is the magnetic fluid or vital force that enters the human nervous system through the deepest levels of the mind. Beliefs function like control valves or flood gates: they either connect or disconnect the conscious mind and its unconscious depths. Some beliefs focus our attention solely outward. Such beliefs render the mind wholly reactive, blocking its receptivity to the inflow of spiritual forces available through the unconscious. Severed from its internal source of vital energies, the body eventually lapses into disease. When, on the other hand, we hold beliefs that focus our attention inward, we remain continuously open to the inflow of spiritual energy. As a consequence, we radiate health and creativity (p. 46).

Quimby and all the other New Thinkers took a view that thoughts in terms of cause produce some energy which then creates deserved health consequences. Quimby healed mainly students by his method. And one student Warren Felt Evans then learned Quimby’s practices and opened his own surgery in Boston. He was concerned also in establishing of The Metaphysical Club of Boston in 1895. Pike (2004) also reports that Quimby’s healing was really expanded and Evans was his superseder: “At the end of the nineteenth century New Thought had established an informal network of healers. Quimby also healed Warren F. Evans, one of the founders of New Thought“ (p. 61). To conclude, Quimby and Evans were very important characters endorsing the tendency New Thought.

New Age

The other movement called New Age developed probably from New Thought and other similar tendencies. The New Age supporters also believed in relationship between matter and spirit and they attached importance to spiritual sphere. Pike (2004) mentions in

his work *New Age and Neopagan Religions in America* how New Age supposedly arose: “New Agers inherited the belief in continuity between matter and spirit from the western metaphysical tradition that includes Transcendentalism, Swedenborgianism, Christian Science, New Thought, Theosophy, mesmerism, spiritualism, and dowsing (using a divining rod). Nineteenth century spiritual healing traditions emerged out of a system of beliefs that scholars have called “metaphysical” or “harmonial” religion. The central teachings of harmonial religion—that humans and the universe are ultimately one, that they are interconnected and the divine is not outside the world but within human beings as well—has been taken up by the New Age movement“ (p. 24). So New Agers recognized God as a main spiritual source in universe but in a different way than institutionalized religions. Typical religions consider God as the only one who governs the whole world. On the contrary, this metaphysical movement sees all beings as well spiritual and divine as God. According to New Agers, existences on Earth even cooperate with God, of course within spiritual dimension. Indeed, New Age acknowledges primarily metaphysical philosophies analogous to New Thought, Transcendentalism, Swedenborgianism and so on.

Followers of New Age gave sense to positive thinking. According to them, our consciousness and thoughts influence our future and state. If someone has positive thinking, he or she deserves happy future. On the other hand, if somebody thinks in a negative way, he or she will be unhappy. Roof (1999) describes in his book *Spiritual Marketplace: Baby Boomers and The Remaking of American Religion* what New Age tradition emphasizes: “This metaphysical tradition puts greater emphasis on personal happiness, growth and self-fulfillment, and harmony with nature and universal truth“ (p. 38). In summary, positive thinking, self-improvement and the consonance between material and spiritual world were the most relevant things for New Age adherents.

New Agers know lots of techniques by which they achieve the altered state of consciousness. There are for example meditation and visualization. People sometimes pass through a different state of mind during meditation. Thanks to meditation, first they get to rest and then explore their thoughts. On the basis of this experience, yogis find out how they can change and improve their inner self. Pike (2004) explains techniques which New Age followers use so as to reach the altered state of mind:

New Agers are committed to the transformation of both self and society through a host of practices that include channeling, visualization,

astrology, meditation, and alternative healing methods. For New Agers, self-growth techniques and physical healing practices are based on the assumption that positive thinking most effectively produces change. They believe that salvation comes through the discovery and cultivation of a divine inner self with the help of techniques that can be learned from books and workshops as well as spiritual teachers (p. 22, 23).

As a result, New Agers are familiar with lots of techniques and methods which help them with self-improvement of their spirit and mind.

Neopaganism

Neopaganism is another movement which is engaged with spiritual life. It can be said that it is quite similar to New Age. Supporters of Neopaganism believe in harmony between matter and spirit too. The next common attribute is spirituality and divine emerging in all forms of life on earth including human, animals even the rest of being and in all universe. Pike (2004) supplies the other examples: “They also have a similar orientation to the world, such as a tendency to privilege internal over external authority and experience over belief, and a focus on self-exploration as the best route to truth and knowledge“ (p. 22). Further, both movements do not receive stereotyped dogmas prevailing in institutionalized forms of religions because they have roots in metaphysical traditions like Spiritualism, Swedenborgianism etc. On the other hand, both movements possess also different characteristics. Neopagans like returning to ancient habits and practises while protagonists of New Age try to look into the future. New Agers focus on positive thinking and optimism whereas people interested in Neopagan trend appreciate realism. According to Neopagans, New Agers‘ view of the world is almost like a fairy tale where every one gets what he or she wants. It is like a fantasy world where people wear pink glasses. So the Neopagans rather prefer the real world. Their real world is not only about the good. It is also about the evil. And the good and the evil complement each other as yin and yang. Despite of these differences in some elements, some people can combine these two streams together. Pike (2004) explains that it can happen and confirms some other distinctions: “ Many Neopagans object to being identified with the New Age movement or defined under the New Age umbrella. They make clear distinctions between their religion and New Age, which they criticize for being too focused on money and

“white light,“ by which they mean that New Age positive thinking is too simplistic. On the other hand, New Agers often do not like being identified with Neopagans, especially flamboyant gothic Witches and ceremonial magicians dressed entirely in black“ (p. 22). To sum up, in spite of the fact that New Age movement and Neopaganism share common history of origin they have slightly different beliefs.

Neopaganism is exactly an old pagan religion which honours beliefs and practices from pre-Christian times. Paganism was reborn approximately in the middle of the twentieth century under the name Neopaganism. It adapted Pagan beliefs and practices into this time period. Neopaganism is sometimes connected with a term Wicca. Wicca deals with sorcery. Followers of this mystery reportedly use white or black magic. Women are called witches and men are known as wizards. Fuller (2001) writes assumed purpose of using magic: “Neo-Pagans are strongly attracted to magic, which they define as “calling forth the power-from-within.” The purpose of magic is to make connection with the power within“ (p. 97). The group of Wicca people regularly arrange covens. They perform various rituals there for instance dance in full moon. Pike (2004) acknowledges that this circle of people sets up festivals: “They honor the cycles of nature with rituals at new and full moons and on eight seasonal festivals, including the solstices and equinoxes. Neopagan rituals are specific to each particular community and individual, but tend to be focused around the seasons and lunar cycles“ (p. 21). In summary, Neopaganism is such revival of old Paganism and is concerned with magic and magic rituals.

Famous Spiritual Personalities

This chapter is about famous American persons who were deeply interested in spirituality and transpersonal issues. There were Edgar Cayce, Abraham Harold Maslow and Stanislav Grof. The men Edgar Cayce, Abraham Harold Maslow and Stanislav Grof became famous in the twentieth century. Stanislav Grof is still alive. There are of course more and more people who are engaged in spirituality and metaphysical things but according to me, these ones are very important and interesting.

Edgar Cayce

Edgar Cayce was one of the most famous American prophets. He lived at the turn of the nineteenth and the twentieth century. Buckland (2005) agrees that Cayce was an important person in prophecy: “Known as “The Sleeping Prophet” from the fact that he delivered his predictions while in trance, Edgar Cayce is one of America’s most famous psychics and seers“ (p. 63). Edgar Cayce was a Christian when he was young but later he became a supporter of New Age. So Cayce believed in metaphysical world where God is the main universal and vital energy and all beings in the world possess this energy. He trusted in angels, archangels and other fairies from his childhood. Ellens (2008) acknowledges his connection with spiritual world: “Cayce was known as a man who lived his life open to the divine spirit from childhood to death“ (p. 110). Cayce was known for getting into a trance. During the trance he accepted his visions. Buckland (2005) describes how Edgar Cayce presumably found out his mission in life: “At the age of six, he told his parents that he was able to see visions and even talk with the spirits of dead relatives. His parents didn’t believe him. At thirteen he had a vision of being visited by a goddess type figure who asked him what he most wanted in life. He replied that he wanted to help others, and in particular he wanted to help sick children“ (p. 63). Briefly, Edgar Cayce was one of the desirables who got from God a prophet gift.

Edgar Cayce really became a healer in his adult age. He healed by means of his visions. The first patient was Edgar Cayce himself. Cayce did not know whether it was a gift from God or Devil. Pike (2004) writes about Cayces’s first beginnings with healing:

Psychic healer Edgar Cayce exemplified this pattern: he suffered from debilitating headaches for many years, and in a trance state he diagnosed and prescribed a treatment for his own illness. Like some New Age

healers, at first he did not take credit for his success. He saw himself as an instrument for energy or “God” to work through, just as channelers believe that they are the mouthpieces for other beings and that the information that comes through their mouths is not really theirs. At first Cayce was hesitant to help other people and to take responsibility for curing them because he did not trust himself. He consulted neighbouring physicians and had them compare his diagnoses to their own. And he occasionally wondered whether his gifts came from God or the devil. But people came to him as a last resort and over many years his confidence grew, in part because he had successfully treated his own health crisis (p. 110).

In short, Edgar Cayce had a vision about his mission of life as a healer which became true in his adult age.

Edgar Cayce was also interested in other things. Reincarnation was one of them. Edgar Cayce could reputedly see people’s past lives during his vision. He could explain the people some causes of their troubles. Cayce believed that karma influences our past even present life. Bender (2010) supports karmic connections: “Nonetheless, Cayce’s messages strongly suggested that knowing the details of karmic connections would result in more fruitful lives in the present and also suggested that it was not only the spiritually advanced who had to gain from interrogations of past lives“ (p. 137). As a result, Edgar Cayce also took interest in other things such as karma.

Abraham Harold Maslow, Transcendentalism

Abraham Harold Maslow was an American Transcendental psychologist living in the twentieth century. He was a founder of transcendental psychology. It is a type of psychology which posses psychological findings and spiritual aspects together. Hammer (2004) when writing about Transcendentalism shows when it originated: “Spirituality and psychology soon fused thoroughly. Transpersonal psychology became an established concept with the foundation in 1969 of the Journal of Transpersonal Psychology“ (p. 72). This psychology operates with human’s subconsciousness a state when a person is more closely to his true spiritual self. Human can achieve an altered state of consciousness by various practises. People often found out causes of their problems when their subconscious

appeared. These practises are for example meditation, psychological dreaming, etc.

Forman (2010) explains the transcendent theory:

The transpersonal approach holds that people have the ability to move beyond normal ego identifications with their body, personality, culture, or gender in both temporary (state) and stable (stage) ways. Transpersonal psychotherapy normalizes discussion of these spiritual experiences and also seeks to use spiritual practices (i.e., meditation, imagery, breath work) and facilitated altered states as a part of practice to help the healing of trauma, wounding, and for personal growth (p. 32).

One might say that Transcendental psychology and New Age movement have lots of common features. The most important one is the relevant metaphysical basis. The other one is the mentioned subconsciousness. Both tendencies heal people in altered state of mind so as to reveal hidden psychical blocks. Hammer (2004) emphasizes the continuity between Transcendental psychology and New Age tendency: “Spokepersons of the New Age would soon claim transpersonal psychology as a part of the ongoing consciousness revolution“(p. 72). On the other hand, there are also different features between Transcendental psychology and New Age. Transcendental psychology is focused on science more. It is because it is not religion or metaphysical direction it is just a psychological tendency. On the other side, New Age is more likely a spiritual movement which believe in supernatural things such as celestial beings. In summary, Transcendentalism is a psychological movement which combines spiritual elements with psychological science.

Abraham Harold Maslow is known for Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. The needs are pictured in a pyramid. Lower needs lie at the bottom of the pyramid thus higher needs are at the top. And there is a connection between the pyramid and human life. If someone possesses the lower need then he automatically wants the following higher need. The lowest needs are physiological (food, sleep) then safety need (employment, family) follows. The third need is love (friendship, partnership) followed by esteem (respect of others) and self-actualization (creativity, spirituality) shines at the top. If somebody is satisfied and has all physiological requirements, a good family and partnership where he is respected he or she will look for some higher mission. Maslow believed that the highest need is some kind of transcendent requirement. Fuller (2001) parallels the hierarchy of human needs:

Maslow is best known for his theory of the hierarchy of human needs. His basic hypothesis was that humans are motivated to meet their most pressing needs. The most potent of these are for food and shelter. If these basic needs are met, we will then be motivated to meet needs that are largely social in nature such as peer acceptance and self-esteem. Assuming these social needs are also satisfied, we are then motivated to pursue the “highest” needs that, according to Maslow, are for self-actualization. Self-actualization represents humanity’s drive to transcend biological and social determinisms and express ourselves in free and creative ways (p. 138).

Maslow’s hierarchy of needs consists mainly of psychological aspects, but there is also the spiritual one. It is the highest need called Self-actualization. The human who achieved it looks for some transcend limits. Lastly, Abraham Harold Maslow was interested in spiritual things on the basis of psychological science.

Stanislav Grof

Stanislav Grof is the other adherent and a co-founder of Transcendentalism. Grof is an American psychiatrist but he comes from Prague. Stanislav Grof deals with altered states of consciousness as other Transcendentalists. He invented Holotropic Breathwork by which he induced people to another state of mind. Mijares (2009) describes how some breathing techniques function: “Most breathing techniques induce a nonordinary state of consciousness. The research into holotropic states of consciousness (those nonordinary states’ experiences which occur during Holotropic Breathwork and other transpersonal healing techniques) shows us that these nonordinary states of consciousness have the capacity to touch core places in the psyche that want healing” (95, 96). Stanislav Grof used to use also different techniques. One of them was using LSD having similar effects as Holotropic Breathwork. Grof uses these techniques so as to cure people, especially their psychological blocks. People sometimes can not find out causes of their problems. So he wants them to try out his techniques such as Holotropic Breathwork because he believes that some blocks in mind are hidden in our subconsciousness. Bibee (2005) writes in details about process of Holotropic Breathwork in his work *The Deep Healing Process: A Quick Guide for Those Who Dare* and compares it with other methods:

Rebirthing/Holotropic Breathwork: In rebirthing and holotropic breathwork what you are mostly doing is hyperventilating yourself into an altered state of consciousness. When you get into an altered state, you will find yourself already in some kind of situation (not alike waking up inside a dream that is already going on). In many respects, these experiences are analogous to an LSD trip. The only problem with using breathwork for deep healing is that sometimes traumatic memories of the rich variety we have been talking about do not show up for resolution. Other things do show up regularly, however. For example, the main focus in rebirthing is to get back to your first breath and uncover what beliefs you created about life as you were being born. Those beliefs may still have the power of a grandfathered intention about life (e. g. life is hard, women are mean, etc.). Once these beliefs are brought into consciousness, they can be released or changed (p. 59).

In summary, Stanislav Grof is a person who is engaged with Transpersonal psychology and explores altered states of consciousness particularly by technique called Holotropic Breathwork.

Comparison

The aim of this last chapter is to describe and compare various points of view about spirituality in general. The first section addresses distinctions between spirituality and standard religion. The next one confronts atheists with believers and the last one tries to find out benefits and disadvantages of faith generally. There are many aspects about spirituality which could be compared.

Spirituality and Religion

There are many people in America who believe in some kind of God who takes control of the universe. So these people trust in things which overrun physical principles. They may be people who believe in some kind of religion or they may be the ones who acknowledge spiritual way of life. Datesman, Kearny, & Crandall (2005) support it in their work: “Ninety percent of Americans say that they believe in God, although not all of them participate in traditional religious organizations” (p. 52). The people receiving religion are governed by certain rules. There are a lot of religions and every religion has its own rules. Christians receive Jesus Christ and their sacred book is the Bible. The other well-known religion is Buddhism. Their God is called Buddha. Islam is a religion honouring the sacred book of Koran. Their God is known by the name Allah. These different kinds of religions prove that the religions are institutionalized because each one receives different rules, God, sacred book having different content, etc. On the other hand, there are people who believe in God but in a different way. These people do not attend church so as to pray. They receive freer way of believing. God is for them some kind of power who takes control of the world but do not order various rules. In summary, in spite of the fact that both religion and spirituality trust in God and other supernatural powers, they possess dissimilar aspects.

Atheists vs. Believers

Atheists are people who do not believe in any religion or spiritual life. Metaphysical world is taboo for them. They prefer science that deals with the physical and material world. God and other transcendental issues are minor for them. These things are fiction for Atheists because they do not believe in phenomena which are not scientifically proven. Baggini (2003) defines atheism in his book *Atheism: A Very Short Introduction*: “Atheism is in fact extremely simple to define: it is the belief that there is no God or

gods“(p. 3). Atheists use common sense when they find themselves in difficult situations and do not rely on higher powers. On the other side, religious or spiritual people rely on some kind of celestial potency. They pray to God for better times. People who believe give the weigh to both science and spirituality and can not imagine life without faith. Indeed, there are people who are materialistic and do not believe in any metaphysical things and on the other side there are people who believe in supernatural things.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Faith

Faith can possess advantages even disadvantages. Advantages include for example healing, hope, trust, etc. When people trust in God, they obtain a certain type of hope. It can happen in various situations for example when a mother prays for her son to be healthy. She obtains certain hope because she trusts in God that he would answer to her prayers. Some people believe faith healers who reportedly use some spiritual energy from the universe by which they cure people. Phineas Parkhurst Quimby who healed people with the help of vital universe power is the example. There are also disadvantages of belief. People receiving only material world can regard people believing in metaphysical world as reasonless. Scientists from the Enlightenment era confirmed their belief in merely physical things. There are also groups of people who derive benefit from belief in spiritual life. The groups are various sects which take control of people to do what they want. These sects could be for instance occultists, Jehova’s Witnesses, etc. In conclusion, there are many advantages and disadvantages of faith and it depends only on the individual person in what he or she wants to believe.

CONCLUSION

The main aim of my undergraduate thesis is to sum up the major aspects of spiritual life of Americans. This theme can include various viewpoints.

In the first chapter, there is described a division of faith in the U.S. American people honor mainly standard religion. Religion possesses some attributes of spirituality despite of the lack of all elements of spirituality. These attributes are for example belief in some kind of God, faith in metaphysical spheres and receiving both spiritual and material teachings of the world.

The spiritual life of Americans appears mainly in the second chapter. There are several movements dealing with spirituality such as Spiritualism, Transcendentalism and so on which were developed on the American continent. Each of the trends includes slightly diverse features. Thus the movements are variously compared in the background of the evolution of spirituality in America.

The third chapter is about famous American people who explored spirituality and spiritual life of Americans. There were well-known prophet Edgar Cayce, transcendental psychologist Abraham Harold Maslow and his colleague Stanislav Grof.

Comparison of various aspects of spiritual life of Americans appears in the last chapter. There are compared people belonging to religion with spiritual people there, then atheists with believers. In addition, there are advantages and disadvantages of spiritual belief.

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SHRNUTÍ

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá duchovním životem Američanů. Cílem práce je popsat jednotlivé aspekty víry. Nejprve se zabývá složením jednotlivých náboženství v Severní Americe, kde je nejvíce Křesťanů, kteří jsou rozděleni do jednotlivých podskupin. Působí tam také katolíci, muslimové a další. Existuje také skupina, do které patří lidé věřící v boha a nadpřirozeno, ale nejsou vedeni pod žádným náboženstvím. Jsou to lidé uznávající spiritualitu. Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá těmito lidmi nejvíce. Směry zabývající se spiritualitou jsou zde popsány od doby původních Amerických indiánů až to této doby. Práce jednotlivé směry porovnává a někdy dokonce zachycuje nepatrné rozdíly mezi nimi. Zabývá se také slavnými osobami z této oblasti. Na konci porovnává jednotlivé aspekty týkající se spirituality jako například rozdíly mezi lidmi zabývajícími se spiritualitou a lidmi vyznávajícími nějaké náboženství.

Appendix

Large Denominations and Protestant Religious Traditions

Family	Total Population	All Protestants	Evangelical Protestant Churches	Mainline Protestant Churches	Hist. Black Protestant Churches
	%	%	%	%	%
Baptist	17.2	33.5	41	10	64
Southern Baptist Convention	6.7	13.1	26	0	0
Independent Baptist in the Evangelical Trad.	2.5	4.9	10	0	0
National Baptist Convention	1.8	3.5	0	0	26
American Baptist Churches in the Hist. Black Trad.	1.2	2.4	0	7	0
Independent Baptist in the Hist. Black Trad.	0.5	0.9	0	0	7
Methodist	6.2	12.1	1	30	9
United Methodist Church	5.1	9.9	0	28	0
African Methodist Episcopal	0.4	0.7	0	0	6
Lutheran	4.6	9.0	7	16	0
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America	2.0	3.8	0	11	0
Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod	1.4	2.7	5	0	0
Nondenominational	4.5	8.9	13	5	3
Nondenominational evangelical churches	1.2	2.3	4	0	0
Nondenominational charismatic churches	0.5	1.0	2	0	0
Nondenominational fundamentalist churches	0.3	0.5	1	0	0
Pentecostal	4.4	8.5	13	0	14
Assemblies of God	1.4	2.8	5	0	0
Church of God in Christ	0.6	1.1	0	0	8
Church of God Cleveland, Tennessee	0.4	0.7	1	0	0
Presbyterian	2.7	5.2	3	10	0
Presbyterian Church USA	1.1	2.2	0	6	0
Presbyterian Church in America	0.4	0.8	2	0	0
Restorationist	2.1	4.0	6	2	0
Church of Christ	1.5	3.0	6	0	0
Disciples of Christ	0.3	0.6	0	2	0
Anglican/Episcopal	1.5	3.0	<0.5	8	0
Episcopal Church in the USA	1.0	2.0	0	6	0
Anglican Church	0.3	0.5	0	2	0
Holiness	1.2	2.2	4	0	2
Church of the Nazarene	0.3	0.5	1	0	0
Free Methodist Church	0.3	0.5	1	0	0
Congregationalist	0.8	1.5	<0.5	4	0
United Church of Christ	0.5	1.0	0	3	0
Adventist	0.5	0.9	2	0	0
Seventh-Day Adventist	0.4	0.8	2	0	0
Reformed	0.3	0.5	1	1	0
Anabaptist	<0.3	0.4	1	<0.5	0
Pietist	<0.3	<0.3	<0.5	0	0
Friends	<0.3	<0.3	0	1	0
Other Evangelical/Fundamentalist	0.3	0.5	1	0	0
Other/Protestant nonspecific	4.9	9.5	7	14	8
	51,3 %	100	100	100	100