

Spirituality in the Workplace: an investigation of chaplaincy experience in the UK

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Aims and Method

Aims

1. Are people more likely to seek answers on 'spirituality' and 'meaning in life' in today's climate of VUCA – Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity?
2. to explore the experience of chaplaincy in the workplace in dealing with issues of 'spirituality' and 'meaning in life'.

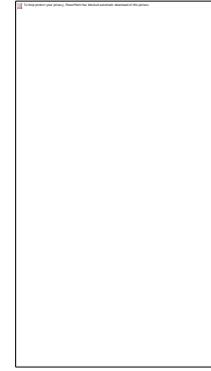
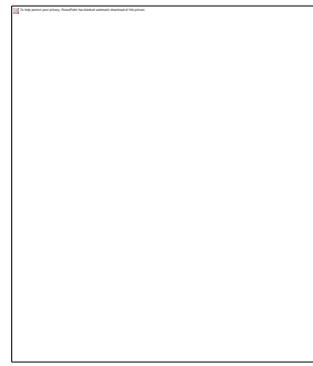
Method

- Phase 1 Questionnaire to workplace chaplains (25 returns)
- Phase 2 Structured interviews with 23 chaplains (7 in common with Ph 1)

Definitions:

- **Spirituality** – to have a sense of integration in life; connectedness with self, others, the natural world and the transcendent.
- **Meaning in Life** – search for a sense of belonging which gives shape and direction to life.

Why chaplains?



- Issues of 'spirituality' and 'meaning in life' most likely to come to the attention of workplace chaplains
- Chaplains are frequently engaged by employers in connection with 'the well-being agenda' and the employer's 'duty of care'
- Chaplains are seen as neutral, trusted persons in the workplace
- Chaplains, typically, have received training and accreditation in dealing with issues of spirituality in a counselling setting.

Findings and Conclusions – Phase 1

- Chaplains had long experience of workplace chaplaincy – 9.3 years on average
- 64% operate within multi-faith chaplaincies
- 45% of chaplains said that there was greater interest in ‘spirituality’ and 58% reported greater interest in ‘meaning in life’; however, several chaplains reported that personal crises provoke such questioning. With increasing uncertainty incidence could rise.

Findings and Conclusions – Phase 2

- Story of dedication to supporting staff and others through the crises in their lives: mostly their achievements and contributions are ‘hidden from view’
- Majority of chaplains saw the model of their work as focus on ‘well-being’ and ‘pastoral’ with a mode of ‘being there’ or ‘loitering with intent’! “Availability and Vulnerability” (Northumbria Community)
- Primary focus on individuals, but often integrated into organisational structures, having influence on policy, mediation and as ‘antennae’
- Chaplains almost universally feel energised and privileged to be involved and can see positive results of the pastoral counselling work.

Efforts to quantify the encounters:

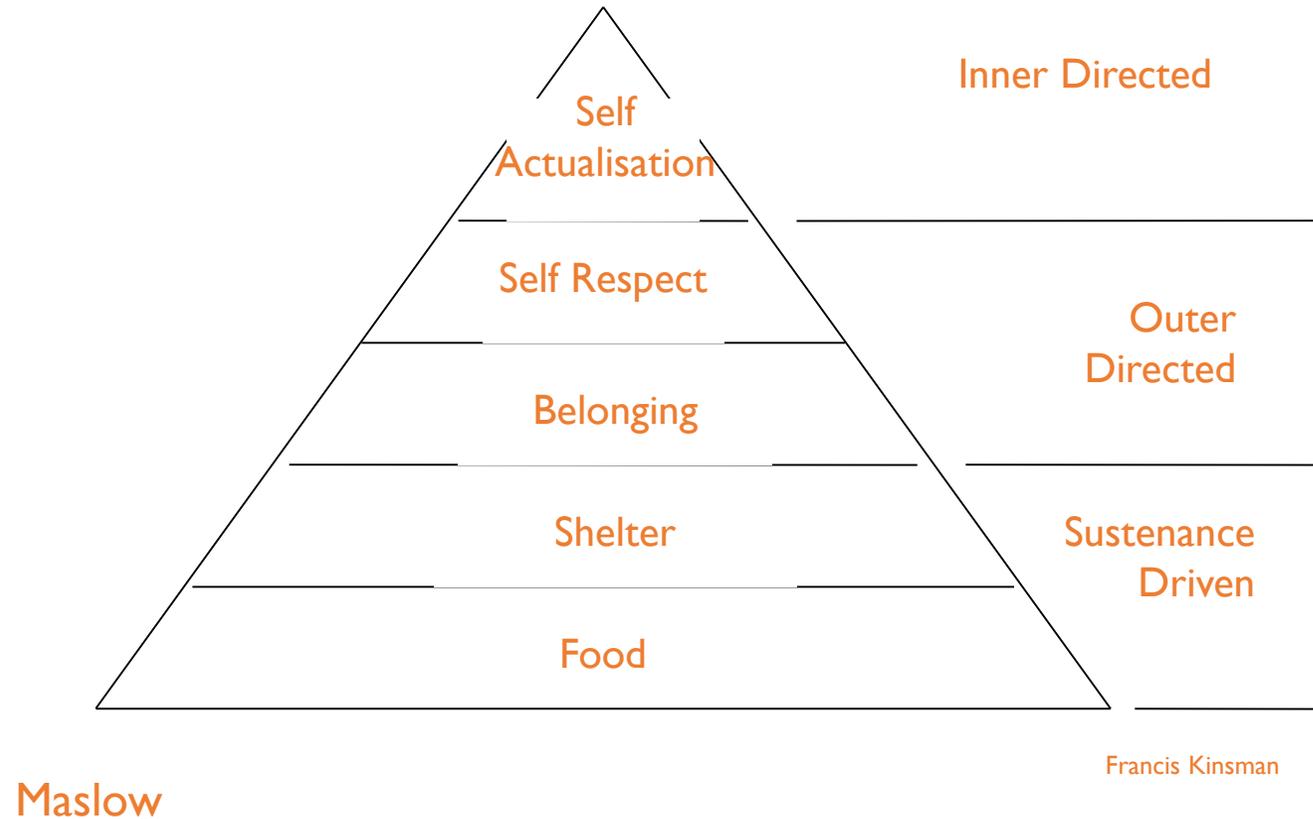
- At Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge in 2015, chaplains used a 'conversational content tool' (CCT) to capture outcome measures.
- Over 6 weeks 1042 encounters were studied and categorised according to belief system: in 63% 'no belief' system was identified: in 33% religious belief was declared.
- The CCT of 237 of the 'no belief' category encounters were captured yielding evidence of spiritual distress symptoms (anxiety, fear, isolation, anger, guilt, hopelessness, sadness, loss and grief, tears)
- Results of post-chaplaincy visit survey showed positive results: Helpful=62%; Supportive=76%; Brought comfort=52%

Connections of Individual Spirituality to Organisations and their Growth?

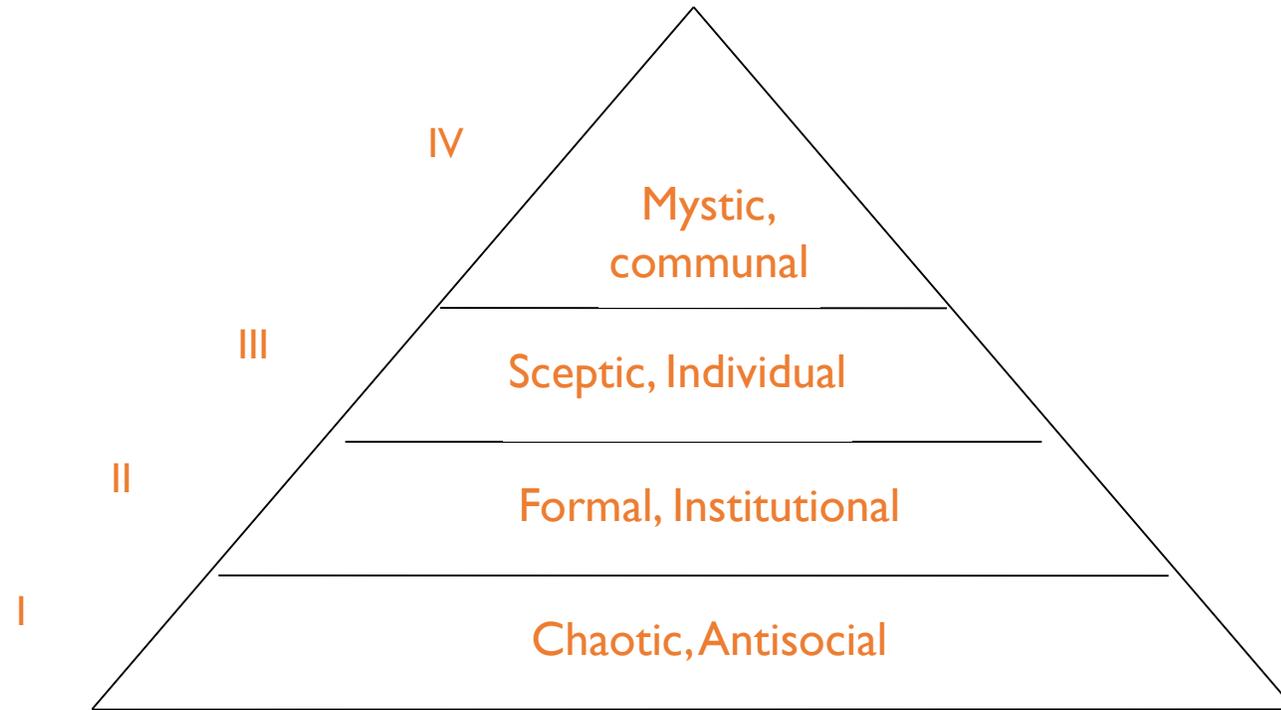
Linking with other research:

- Spirituality can be defined as: Connection with self : Connection with others: Connection with nature: Connection with higher power. (SaW)
- Aspirations of the individual can be defined as a hierarchy of needs (Maslow and Kinsman)
- Stages of spiritual growth for the individual (Scott Peck)
- A hierarchy of needs for the organisation (By the Skin of our Teeth)
- The link between individual spiritual growth; growth needs of organisations; and the role of leadership

Link Individual → Organisation

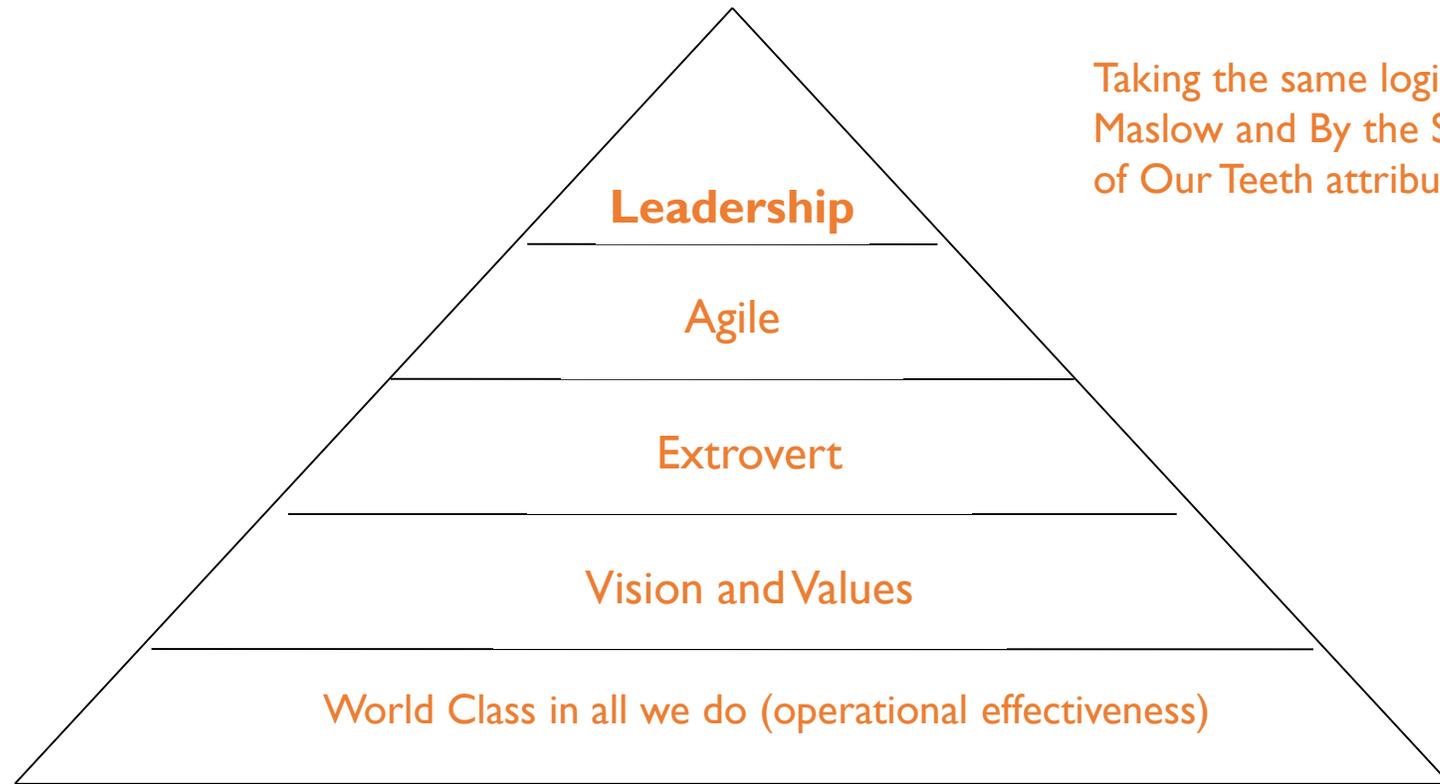


Four Stages of Spiritual Growth



Scott Peck

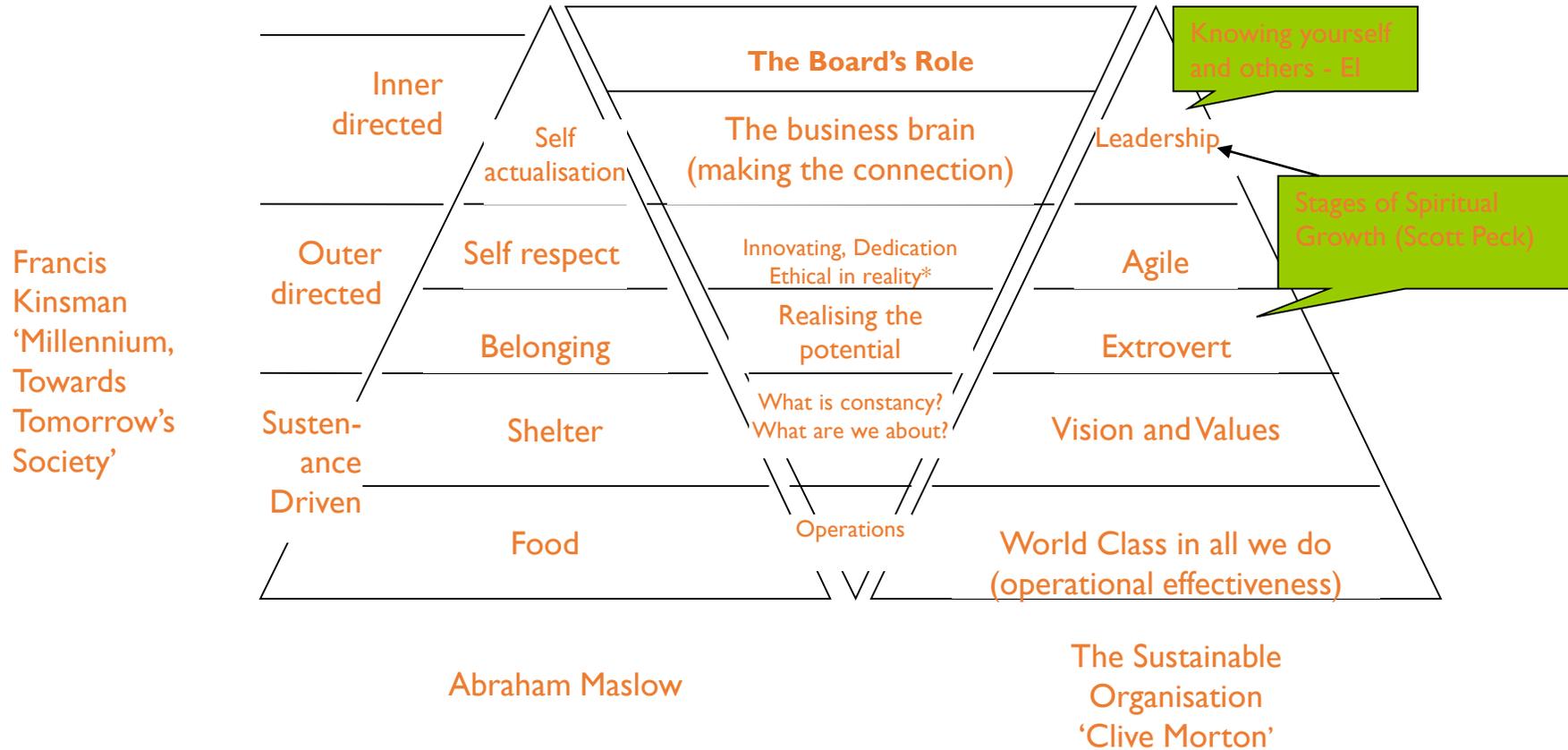
Hierarchy of Needs for the Organisation?



Taking the same logic as Maslow and By the Skin of Our Teeth attributes

The Link

Combination of Models!



*After Tom Boydell IPD 1996

Recommendations for change

- Gap in ownership and dialogue requires action by both churches and chaplains. The chaplain's entrepreneurial approach is a lesson.
- Chaplains need support both from peers, communities and employers
- Role of chaplains in culture of compassionate care should be properly valued by employers
- Employer policies on chaplaincy provision, spiritual and mental health needs should be integrated - 'well-being' and 'duty of care' agendas must focus on spiritual and mental health needs
- Service and new technology sectors need to embrace chaplaincy
- Spiritual growth in organisations aids leadership and connectivity