Spirituality and the Celtic Tiger Period: Changes experienced by Senior Business Leaders in the South East of Ireland

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Declaration

This work has not previously been accepted for any degree, and is not concurrently submitted in consideration for any degree. This thesis is the result of my own investigations.

Signed…………………..

Date…………………..

Acknowledgements

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Abstract

This study explores changes experienced in the level and quality of spirituality among a representative group of business leaders from the South East region of Ireland, during the period of the 'Celtic Tiger', and the period since, a time of significant economic and cultural change.

A phenomenological approach was adopted for the research, using a qualitative method of data collection and analysis. Eighteen semi structured in-depth interviews were conducted with business leaders, with diversity in background, business involvement, age and gender.

The research found that Spirituality does have a role in work, and people cannot leave their Spirituality at home. Spirituality in work is mainly to do with values, and expressed most frequently in dealings with people. There was a change in the experience of spirituality during the Celtic Tiger period, manifested by a dilution in personal values, with an increased concentration on personal material gain.

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I Introduction

1.1 Aim of the Study

The 'Celtic Tiger' refers to the phenemon regarding the period of huge economic growth and development in Ireland, during the approximate period from the late 80's to 2007/8. During this period the economic growth in Ireland far outstripped that of its peers in other countries. At the same time as this economic prosperity change, significant cultural changes took place – globalisation, media intrusion, immigration, the decline both in the influence of the Catholic Hierarchy and the general involvement in Catholic practice and ritual, and an increase in self-confidence in the Irish people.

  Unfortunately, since 2008 has been an economic decline reversing much of the good fortune experienced during the Celtic Tiger period. When this study commenced, the Celtic Tiger was in full swing, but its decline has added a new dimension to the study as the country grapples to deal with the downturn, and business leaders have to deal with completely new issues.

The economic and cultural development of Ireland in the period has been well documented; **Chapter 2** outlines briefly how Ireland changed during the period. The South East of the country, as with all areas of Ireland, benefited hugely economically, and disposable income increased significantly for those in business in the area. It has also suffered as the downturn has taken hold.

The topic to be investigated in this qualitative Masters research project is whether there was a change experienced in the level and quality of spirituality, among a group of representative business leaders from the South East region, during the period of the 'Celtic Tiger' and thereafter.

I was myself a business leader in this period, and provided advisory services to other business leaders during the Celtic Tiger period, and became familiar with the increased prosperity enjoyed. However, my experience, from my own perspective, and from discussions with work colleagues before retirement and since, is that doing business was not as enjoyable as before – the culture was

different. Also, whilst the evidence of increased prosperity was everywhere, there appears to be a feeling that "we have lost something".

The aim of the research is to provide an overview of changes in spirituality experiences among a representative group of those who were at the forefront in the development of the increased prosperity, and who themselves, and their peers, benefited significantly economically during the period of the 'Celtic Tiger'.

1.2 How it will be achieved

This research project is a qualitative exploration of the experiences and opinions of a group of business leaders operating in the Southeast of Ireland, during a particularly interesting period, that of the Celtic Tiger Era, and beyond. A qualitative method involving interviews of a limited number of participants was chosen as it was considered to be particularly good at examining and developing theories that deal with the role of meanings and interpretations (Ezzy, 2002, p.3).

My prior role as a senior business leader in the region, including past Presidency of the Waterford Chamber of Commerce, gave me a standing with potential participants, and meant that I myself could act as a 'gatekeeper' to access suitable people for interview. The main criteria used to select subjects was that they would have operated in a senior management position during the period of the Celtic Tiger in a significant organisation operating in the Southeast area of Ireland. Within this population I was anxious to achieve a spread of age groups and gender.

The Southeast area of Ireland was chosen as it was an area that I was familiar with, and had worked there in business over a long number of years. I believe that as an area, it would have features of development within the Celtic Tiger period typical of Ireland as a whole. I could have achieved access to business leaders over a wider geographical spectrum, but this would have resulted in unmanageable numbers of interviewees.

Whilst the term 'spirituality' is widely used, it can also frequently be misused, and has different meanings for different people. I therefore had to focus initially on obtaining an understanding of the different interpretations of the word, and attempt to come up with a definition that could be easily understood by participants. My literature review focused on this, and also reviewed writings on spirituality and business, a relatively new area of study.

As I had lived and worked through the Celtic Tiger period I had experience of the changes, both economic and cultural, that had occurred, but it was an interesting exercise to research and codify the extent of the changes that had taken place.

I modelled my study on an earlier study carried out in the Liberties in Dublin (Flanagan, 1999), so my disposition was towards using interviews as the methodology to be followed. I did consider alternative methodologies including focus groups and questionnaires, but deemed these less appropriate. The subject matter, spirituality, is a very personal one, and I felt that focus groups would have involved unwillingness and /or inability of participants to express themselves. The use of questionnaires is often considered in similar studies, and would have the advantage of reaching larger audiences. However I felt that I would get much less personal responsiveness from this, and would also have to tackle the issue of a low response rate.

A schedule of questions was developed for the interviews, but was not rigidly adhered to, as I wanted to allow the conversations to flow. Eighteen interviews were conducted, rich material was collected, a data analysis programme NVivo was used which assisted me in codifying the responses. I obtained a significant amount of material regarding the experiences of the respondents with regard to spirituality, and changes which they felt had occurred.

1.3 Background

I retired in 2004, well before normal retirement age. Early retirement became possible during the Celtic Tiger period, because the country could afford it (or

thought it could then!), and as the hunger by younger business leaders for further and faster wealth creation promoted a culture where the retirement of their older peers was facilitated.

Throughout my business career, and since, I have been a practicing Catholic, with a developing interest in spirituality and related disciplines. As noted above, as the "Celtic Tiger" years advanced, I questioned whether our values had changed for the worse, were we concentrating on material wealth creation and were dealings in business less personal and more aggressive.

Retirement provided the opportunity to carry out a study as to whether these feelings (among those who had benefitted most from the economic boom of the Celtic Tiger period) were real, whether they in any way related to "spirituality", whether spirituality was an experienced factor in business, and whether any changes in the experience of spirituality had taken place in the period.

1.4 Outline of Subsequent Chapters

Chapter 2 briefly reviews how Ireland changed during the period of the Celtic Tiger, and thereafter. The economic growth of the country during the period is outlined; there is general agreement among most economic commentators that Ireland outstripped all its competitors during the period.

As a result of the economic boom disposable income increased hugely and to a great extent the people Ireland became a nation of consumers.

But there were huge social and cultural changes during the same period; the economic success meant the return of many emigrants to Ireland, and an increase in immigration from other countries, with an accompanying change in culture norms. Our population increased, our workforce numbers increased, females became involved much more significantly in the workforce, and generally their influenced increased.

The influence of the church declined, as a result secularisation increased and the Irish nation became confident and its people independent minded.

But unfortunately the boom had been based on the premise of never-ending growth, which could not be sustained, and it become apparent that the economic success had depended too much on the construction sector which had developed far beyond any sensible remit. By the end of 2008 the boom was well and truly over, and a general gloom had descended as tax cuts, declines in income and redundancy returned.

In Chapter 3 I summarise a review of literature relevant to an understanding of what spirituality means, and I initially recognize that there are numerous definitions, and numerous nuances to an understanding of, and use of, the word depending on a person's background or culture. It is apparent that as the decline in religious practice escalated in Ireland, it was replaced by secularism, and an increasing interest in spirituality. This change would have been illustrative of the difference between spirituality and religion, which previously in the Church dominated Ireland might have been regarded as the same thing. Any Irish bookstore now would have a section on "mind body and spirit", indicating the current interest in the topic.

The word originated as a Christian concept related to the aspects of transcendence and immanence. Other aspects of an understanding of people's interpretation of spirituality are reviewed, including values and priorities, how one's everyday living is conducted, energy, and desires.

There has been a significant increase in writings on workplace spirituality, particularly in the US, and a number of these are reviewed, and the potential relationship between a person's spirituality and the workplace are considered.

Chapter 4 reviews the philosophical debate regarding the methodology chosen. I initially outline my own philosophical background and position, and how this shaped the research design and method. The process of data collection, involving design of a schedule of questions, interviews and transcription is

described, and is followed by a description of the process of analysis which relied heavily on the use of data analysis software, Nvivo.

Chapter 5 reviews findings from the interviews, and initially gives some background information regarding the participants. As the interviews were semi structured, using a prepared schedule of questions, the responses can be summarised under five general headings. Initially I reviewed the values and the motivation of the interviewees and what seemed to drive them. Factors emerging included honesty and integrity, respect for people, a desire to achieve and to contribute, optimism and enthusiasm and support for family. Obviously achievement of a secure standard of living was a factor, but was not mentioned strongly.

I questioned the interviewees regarding their understanding of spirituality, and some interesting responses emerged. Many of the aspects of spirituality which I had looked at in my literature review were noted, some respondents were clearer than others regarding the difference between spirituality and religion. I attempted to tease out whether their own personal experience of spirituality had changed during the Celtic Tiger period, and thereafter since the recession.

The interviewees were asked whether they felt that spirituality had a role in work and whether they saw any conflict between spirituality and work. How they got through difficult times in work was also reviewed.

The role of spirituality in the organisation the interviewee was involved with was examined. This section looked at organisational values, achievements, restraints on the expression of spirituality and changes which had taken place during the Celtic Tiger and since then.

Participants were also asked what they saw as the greatest changes in the way business had been conducted during the Celtic Tiger period, with particular reference to things like interpersonal relationships, satisfaction from work and a general feeling of well being or spirituality.

Finally, individual spiritual practices were reviewed, it emerged that it was very important for most of the respondents that they were in a position to get into a place where they can reflect.

Chapter 6 pulls together the various strands of the research. The original question put as to whether a change had been experienced in the level and quality of spirituality experience among a group of representative business leaders from the South East region during the period of the Celtic Tiger, and thereafter, is reviewed in the light of the responses from the interviews and the analysis carried out. The relevance of spirituality to business and the question as whether a person's spirituality can be divorced from work is examined. I also look at whether the interviewees, each of whom had risen to a senior significant position within their own business, had any common attributes, or a type of spiritual intelligence enabling them to see the bigger picture.

In **Chapter 7** I outline some thoughts emerging from the study, essentially concluding that we travelled through an extraordinary period, which challenged people's ability to hold to their core values, and that there was a change in the experience of spirituality in the period

2. How Ireland changed 1980 – 2007, and after

The term "Celtic Tiger" refers to the spectacular economic growth that took place in Ireland between 1980 and 2007, but particularily in the period from the early 90s to 2007. Sometime in 2008 this spectacular growth came to a shuddering halt, and Ireland has now slipped into a recession, reversing much of the growth of the Celtic Tiger period.

 The name "Celtic Tiger" is attributed to an economist, Kevin Gardiner, working with Morgan Stanley Bank who compared it with the more commonly known Asian Tigers of the time -Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan. The Celtic and Asian tigers were viewed as Newly Industrialising Countries (NIC's) who overcame decades of backwardness through an 'export orientated strategy'.

Between 1987 and 2001 the annual growth rates of Gross National Product exceeded 7% and sometimes touched double figures. Sweeney (2008) notes that GDP growth 1994 to 2007 averaged 7.1%, and was way above virtually all other industrialised countries, where growth rates averaged 2 per cent in the EU, 3.2 per cent in the US, and 2.3 per cent in Japan. . In the 1990s, and early 2000s, Irish people seemed to be turning away from the Church, and instead were looking for another kind of miraculous intercession: the economy.

But it was not just the economic situation that had improved: in 2004 the Economist Intelligence Unit cheerfully ranked Ireland's *quality of life* as the best in the world; a conclusion arrived at by feeding economic statistics and family patterns into a computer along with such factors as life expectancy and divorce rates.   The result was a top score for Ireland at 8.33 out of 10, beating Switzerland and Norway into second and third place. Gratifyingly for many Irish people, the UK languished at 29th.
www.economist.com/media/pdf/QUALITY_OF_LIFE.PDF (*Accessed 23 February 2010)*

Undoubtedly a number of factors contributed to the economic success, while greater emphasis would be placed on certain factors by different political commentators, the following were important:

- The decision to join the single currency, at a time when we had huge structural deficits in the economy, massive unemployment, and a troubled situation in Northern Ireland, involved an acceptance of an economic rigour

- Ireland's membership of the European Union created a stable trading environment

- The fiscal consolidation in 1987, engineered by the Fianna Fail government, but with the crucial support of Fine Gael, was vital.

- Foreign direct investment, allied to a low corporate tax rate, was critical

- As a small country, Ireland had an advantage, with access to a huge market

- Ireland was able to move, without an intervening industrial revolution, straight to a modern economy

- Social partnership ensured a cohesion of aspirations as between the government, business interests, and the workforce

- Education provision and participation increased at the beginning of the period and throughout

Ireland changed in many ways in this period: it moved from being an impoverished, isolated, intensely Catholic state at the periphery of Europe, to a much more progressive and diverse society, and a symbol of economic success for all small states of Europe (Bacik, 2004).Unfortunately we blew it! We are now an example of how economic prosperity can be wasted.

2.1 Economic Growth

Foster (2007) notes that the early 1980s saw a falling growth rate, rising unemployment, polarising farming incomes and government borrowing at 14% of GNP – the unwelcome result of Fianna Fail's pump priming measures on the

basis of increased government borrowing and their propensity -- as one observer put it -- to spend their way out of a boom.

Foster (2007) also notes that in June 1980 the ESRI Forecast expected 20% inflation and soaring unemployment; a year later five leading Irish economists prophesied even worse figures. The balance of payments deficit was running at 13% of GNP and a budget deficit of IR£800 million was projected: the Irish pound itself effectively devalued by 14 per cent since Ireland entered the EMS. The workforce accordingly became restive. A second National Understanding collapsed in 1982 and collective-bargaining returned to a decentralised model for five years. However, reforms in educational provision and access were well in place by the early 1980s, although a gloomy point for the Irish economy, the seeds of recovery were being set.

It is relevant to note the values that gave rise to Ireland's economic failure to the mid-80s: a closed, inward looking, rigid authoritarianism (possibly influenced by the Church posture) that suppressed not only the free play of ideas but the emergence of a properly functioning market economy.

As Tansey suggests Ireland's more recent economic success has been wedded to its embracing a culture of openness -- openness to trade, openness to foreign investment, openness to immigration and openness to new and competing ideas. (Tansey, 2008, p28).

Irish living standards per capita, which were higher than many Western European countries at independence in 1922, fell relative to most of Europe over the next 45 years, as Ireland adopted protectionism and self-sufficiency. The country remained isolated in trade and in culture until the late 1950s, missing an important decade of the post-war boom. (Sweeney, 2008, p 6) The 1960s saw a resurgence in economic growth, averaging 4.4% a year between 1960 and 1973, well above most European countries. However the 1980s were a very bleak decade growth averaged only 1.5% of GDP between 1979 and 1986. (Sweeney, 2008, p 6).

Unemployment was 17.5% at the beginning of 1987, inflation was running at an average of 12% per annum in the 10 years to 1987, and real take-home pay had decreased by 7% in the seven years from 1980 to 1987. Emigration was at its highest level in 1986/87 since the late 1950s. On top of this public finances were in crisis- in 1987, we had a National Debt/GDP ratio of 125% whereas in 2007 it was at 25% (Sweeney, 2008, p 88).

The turnaround began in 1987, benefiting from the seeds sown in the 60s and 70s. An economic programme, The Programme for Economic Recovery (PNR) was put into place, involving the Government, employers and employees, and providing workplace stability Economic growth averaged over 7 per cent per annum between 1994 and 2007, as the economy became one of the most globalised in the world and became far more competitive. Bertie Ahearn, former Taoiseach, and an Economic Minister during much of the period, has been quoted as believing that 1993 was the year when the economy really took off, but certainly we can say that the Tiger was roaring from the early 90's.

There were three distinct periods in the following 20 year boom period:

	Take off- 1987-93	Celtic Tiger- 1994-2000	Domestic Boom- 2001-2007
Average % rise in GNP per annum	3.4%	8.9%	4.5%
Rise in jobs Total in period)	93,000	450,000	400,000

Source: CSO, ESRI, forecast for 2007(as quoted in Sweeney (2008,p2)

Ireland's economic growth in GDP terms exceeded all other countries in a table compiled by the OECD, covering the period of 10 years to 2005. The average annual real change in Ireland in the period was 7.5%, which compared with the US at 3.3%, the OECD Average at 2.5%. (*Source: OECD in Figures 2006, as quoted in Sweeney,p159)*

As an illustration of how well we had copied the success of those countries we were striving to emulate, in 2004, the GDP per head of population was $48,250. This was over $6,000 higher than the United States and almost $10,000 higher than the United Kingdom. (Inglis, 2008, p18).

Between 1996 and 2006, the Irish economy doubled in size, using Real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as the yardstick of economic performance. In 2006, the numbers at work in Ireland exceeded 2 million people for the first time. Between 1996 and 2006, total employment increased by 710,000 people or by more than one half. (Tansey, 2008, p 15)

The doubling of the economy in size over the decade to 2006 was the result of an increase of over 50% in numbers in employment, multiplied by an almost 30% increase in real output per person employed. In the same period the unemployment rate declined from 11.9% in 1996, to 4.4% in 2006. (Tansey,2008). (Unfortunately in 2009 and 2010 this rate is moving back towards double figures).

As Foster (2007) noted the opening of the economy created a situation where exports grew twentyfold in the 30 years from 1970 to 2000, and imports grew eightfold.
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The figures for the 1990s remained more or less unassailable: a growth rate outperforming that of other EU countries; numbers at work in increasing by 45% between 1987 and 2001; unemployment down from 17% to 4% over the same period; the standard of living going from two thirds the EU average to comfortably equalling it; the highest net immigration into the EU. (Clinch P.J, Convery F. J. and Walsh B.M. 2002).

Ireland was dramatically transformed in little more than a decade. Employment soared, incomes roared and economic growth reached world record levels. Unemployment collapsed, mass emigration turned into rapid immigration, the

population grew and a monoculture was transformed into diversity in no time.. Productivity boomed and exceeded the US and virtually all other countries. Most new jobs were higher skilled and better paid and there was a rapid increase in the number of women in the workforce. As Sweeney commented *for more than a decade now, Ireland has been the OECD's star performer* (Sweeney 2008, p1).

The Public finances of the country also improved dramatically: day-to-day public spending amounted to 50% of GNP from several years in the 1980s, but it fell to only 29% by 2000, and remained low until 2007, and was the lowest in the EU 15 advanced economies. (Sweeney,2008, p164). But unfortunately, that was the end of the boom –the figures for 2008 and 2009 showed an unfortunate and dramatic decline.

So- a lot more money around, more confidence, no shortage of work at good rates, emigration replaced by immigration, generally a 'feel good' factor in place. The setback in the situation from late 2008 was all the more difficult to face up to.

Perhaps an interesting proposition on the development of Ireland in the period, as suggested by Foster (2007) could be that Ireland, Catholic nation, achieved economic vibrancy by becoming more Protestant in the traditional trading sense. By opening up to ideas, trade and immigration, we not only took off, but overtook the traditional Protestant European powers.

Journalist Fintan O'Toole noted that Ireland had achieved no less than 'iconic status among the new Conservative champions of small government and despisers of the interventionist state', albeit, as he points out, that the Irish economic model has been developed through a significant state intervention (O'Toole, 2003)

2.2 Disposable Income

By the eve of the First World War, Irish living standards, while well below those of Britain, were comparable with the rest of Europe as suggested by Sweeney, (2008),this was largely due to the immigration of poorer people in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The 1980,s were a period of high unemployment, mass emigration, high inflation, fiscal crisis, soaring taxes on reducing incomes and falling profits Average incomes of industrial workers fell by 8% in the years to 1987 (Sweeney 2008, p8) So, no joy on the income front at this time.

However, real incomes rose substantially during the "Celtic Tiger" period. Average industrial earnings rose by 36% in real terms, but disposable incomes rose by a massive 80 per cent in real terms. This was in spite of fairly high inflation in some years, and the greater part of the increase in take-home earnings was due to large reductions in income tax. The real rise in incomes in Ireland was in stark contrast to low-income growth in the USA and most European countries (Sweeney, 2008, p10).

Average industrial workers real living standards, measured by earnings, rose by over 80% in 20 years up to 2005. As noted by Sweeney (2008) for some top earners and business owners, real incomes grew tenfold in 10 years.

The increasing numbers at work earned progressively higher wages as the decade to 2006 progressed. In 1996, an industrial worker in manufacturing industry earned an average of €343 a week. By 2006, gross weekly earnings had risen to €575, an increase of 67.5% over the decade. Public sector workers benefited to a similar extent. Adjusted for inflation, the real earnings of an average industrial worker increased by 21.6% over the 10 years (Tansey, P.2008, p16)

The spending power of real earnings was further boosted by reductions in effective rates of income tax over the period. It is safe therefore to conclude that

real disposable incomes of those of work -- their real purchasing power -- increased by approximately one third over the decade.

Total personal consumer spending on goods and services increased from €32 billion to €82 billion between 1996 and 2006. When adjusted for changes in prices over the decade, the quantum of goods and services purchased by households increased by 80%. (Almost double, and certainly so, and more, for a lot of people) (Tansey, P.2008.p19).

In the 20 years from 1987 to 2007, average industrial earnings rose from just over €13,000 to €33,000 a year before inflation. Taking account of inflation and the large reductions in income tax, single earners net income rose by a substantial 83% in real terms in the 20 years. Married persons saw their income rise by 73% in real terms in the 20 years.

Spending on consumer goods and services increased from €8,140 per capita in 1995, to €17,784 per capita in 2005 (Central Bank 2005).

Again the figures suggest a good reason for a 'feel good' factor- more jobs, more pay from these, lower taxes, more money to spend,. The Irish emigrants moved back, there were plenty of well paid, skilled jobs at home. Immigration of largely East Europeans who took up many of the less skilled work meant that the Irish could concentrate on the cream of the jobs. The consumer market increased dramatically due to the higher numbers at work, and the greater disposable income was targeted by the producers and distributors of consumer goods, who made heavy use of the media as a conduit to encourage consumerism.

One feature of our greater spending power was our greater propensity to travel - in 2006 Irish people made almost 7m trips abroad (at a cost of over €5bn), and 70% of these trips were holidays (CSO-Statistics; Household Travel ,2006) http://www.cso.ie/px/pxeirestat/Dialog/Saveshow.asp (accessed 21 April 2010).

Shopping become a serious preoccupation. Greater effort was required to read through advertisements, to determine what was 'in', and to find bargains.

Advertisements were no longer notices about the availability of goods and services, but became ethical, spiritual and aesthetic messages. As Oliver James stated in *Affluenza*- People no longer bought soap to make them clean: they bought the promise it would make them beautiful…toothpaste was not to kill bacteria, but to create white teeth, cars were for prestige, not travel, even foodstuffs such as oranges were for vitality, not nutrition. Needs were replaced by confected wants that people did not know they had. (James, 2007)

But also shopping became globalised, the same store opened on main street in all large shopping areas, and the shopping' malls' became the new temples of worship.
But this development also changed Ireland -people increasingly see and understand themselves and relate to each other in terms of consumption choice and volume.

2.3 Social & Cultural Changes

The economic misery of the 1980s- the economic stagnation, the unemployment, and the dreadful migration- left people hungry for change. Therefore in 1987 people welcomed any move forward by the incoming government, and a readiness for radical change. People wanted jobs created at home, rather than having to communicate with family members who had emigrated to other countries.

With growing pace the relatively closed Irish culture was gradually forced open by global cultural flows. The result has been a mixture of the old and the new, of traditional Irish ways of being becoming mixed with new global cultural elements. There was a new self-confidence, but there remains a commitment to a family, religion, and community.

The changing role of women in Irish society is amongst the most important social developments in the decade from the mid-90s to 2005.

Women moved out of the home and into the workforce in very large numbers in this 10 year period. Women now account for more than two out of every five people at work in Ireland. In 2006 there were 866,000 women working in paid employment in Ireland. This represents an increase of 358,000 on the 508,000 women working outside the home in 1996. (Tansey, P, 2008, p23)

Moreover proportionately more women than men fill high-status, high-income jobs. In 2005, almost 2 out of every 5 (38.5%) women at work held professional or associate professional positions or worked as managers or proprietors of businesses. Only 3 out of every 10 (30.3%) men at work held similar positions. (Tansey, P, 2008.p23)

There has also been a substantial growth in part time work (likely more prevalent with female workers) which has been a conscious choice for many. This choice was made far easier because the economy was close to full employment, though work - life balance was also a factor. Part time employment more than doubled from less than 7% of total employment in 1983 to over 17% in 2006(Sweeney,2008,p155).

The increased participation of women in the workforce, allied to the huge influx of immigrant workers, the move from the land, meant that the workforce was now an urban, homogenised .gathering of well educated and skilled workers ,far removed from the male, largely unskilled workforce of farm workers and industrialists of the 60's.

Non-nationals made up over 10.4% of the population in Ireland by 2002, compared to 6% in 1991. In early 2007, there were 320,000 foreigners aged 15 or over in Ireland who made up of 9.3% of that cohort. Foreign workers made up 11% (229,000) of those in employment in mid-2007. More Polish immigrants sought social insurance numbers (PPS numbers), than Irish in 2006(Sweeney,2008.p155) although widely quoted Government figures showed that in the last 6 months of 2008 there was a fall of 47% in the numbers of immigrants seeking PPS numbers compared to the same period in 2007.

In the late 20th century Irishness became fashionable on a level unknown since the cultural renaissance at the turn of the 20th century. Much of this cult status concerned, as it did a hundred years before, the theory that the Irish had access to special reserves of soul. Irish music and Irish performers became acclaimed worldwide. Musicians such as Bob Geldof and Bono trail blazed an Irish identification. Riverdance became an international spectacle and phenomenon. All of these aspects of the musical revolution, like other transformations over the last 30 years of the 20th century, are inseparably linked with the marketing of Irishness. Irish authors such as Maeve Binchy, and Cathy Kelly, among others, achieved international recognition.

In terms of the quality of life, in 2004 we were up there with the best!

Irishness was 'in' –as Bacik(2004,p14) suggested –"there is, for whatever reason, an international tendency to be well disposed towards Ireland -- a tendency that elevates us beyond our actual standing on the world stage -- and there would seem to be commentators and writers in every nation willing to collude in this. And while we as Irish people don't really buy it, nor do we strive to too hard to disabuse our international friends of their unfounded ideas".

Tansey (2008, p 25) noted that Ireland ranked fourth in the Human Development Index after Norway and Iceland and Australia. The HDI is compiled by the United Nations Development Programme: the variables it uses in assessing quality of life are: incomes per head; life expectancy; years of schooling; and adult literacy. And as noted already, in 2004 the Economist Intelligence Unit cheerfully ranked Ireland's quality of life as the best in the world.

However not all gained in the boom - the 'at risk of poverty' rate in Ireland in 2005 was 19.7%, the second highest rate in the EU 15(Sweeney, 2008, p163) Were we becoming more selfish? A Catholic priest, Fr. Harry Bohan, returning to Ireland from overseas in the late 1990's saw fit to establish an organisation, "Ceifin", the theme of the first conference being "Have we Forgotten Something?"

Recent research suggests that Irish society splits 80/20. Four out of every five members of the population were (up to 2008) insulated against income poverty, economic strain and subjective economic stress. Of the remaining 20% of the population, one half are economically vulnerable - they have low relative incomes, experience difficulty in making ends meet and are at risk to deprivation and income poverty. The other half is living in consistent poverty (Nolan & Maitre, 2007).

In Ireland family has been a very central feature of life; in fact the family was the major structuring principle in society However in recent times there has been more extensive diversity in family forms. The old model was often referred to as the 'nuclear' family; it consisted of a married heterosexual couple who had two or more children, in which the bread winner for the family was the adult male and the adult female serviced the family in the home and did not participate in paid employment.

There has been a significant increase in families which are neither extended nor nuclear, for example single-parent families and families consisting of cohabiting adults with or without children. It is clear that significant change is taking place in family formation, and that the rate of change is accelerating. Changes in family formation in recent times are addressed in detail by Fahey and Russell (2001). Perhaps the most striking aspect is the increase in numbers of cohabiting couples both with and without children - these were 4% of family unit types in 1996, but were 11.6% in 2006.

Another striking trend is the increase in non-marital births. As quoted by Hilliard(2007,p88) from the introduction of registration of births in 1864, this percentage remained at 3% for 100 years, but by 1998 it had quadrupled to 12%. From there on the rate increased sharply and in 2005 reached 31.4%.

Divorce in Ireland was only legalised in 1997. Although numbers have increased steadily since then, they are still relatively small, and appear to have reached a plateau in recent years.

In 1971 only 8% of married women were in the labour force; in 1981 this had more than doubled to 17%, and by 1991 it was 27%. By 1996 36.6% of married women were in the labour force. So they' abandoned' their previous role of servicing the family in the home. (Hilliard, B 2007.p90)

Since the 1960s there has been a popular belief in the growth of egalitarianism, combined with increased individualism and secularisation as features of modernisation in the western world. Attitudes to cohabitation, marriage, and divorce changed significantly between 1988 and 2002 as demonstrated by the International Social Survey Programme records. The idea that married people are generally happier than unmarried lost support, especially among the young, among women, among the married, and not surprisingly among the divorced. (Hilliard, B,2007, p92).

Like its economic development, Ireland's cultural situation became more open, adopting the norms of a world outside the traditional Christian ethos which had been a feature of the first half of the 20th century. Norms relating to the family unit changed, women became emancipated, and an influx of foreigners brought new cultures and interests. Quality of life improved to standards in other developed countries, for most, but there seems to be evidence that the largess was not shared equally, and those who had it did not care so much for those who had not.

The traditional Irish culture involved devotion to religion, family, and community but what binds Irish people more together now -- what creates a sense of bonding and belonging -- is a commitment to self-realisation through consumer choice. The Irish way of being in the world is now structured more by market and media forces which emphasise the importance of difference, self-realisation and continual self transformation and which rarely emphasised the importance of self-denial and self surrender. (Inglis 2008, p6)

What was, or is, the Irish culture? There was, and still is, a commitment to family, religion and community, although the strength of this commitment has

weakened, and may have become mechanistic. But our former self depreciating attitude, borne of oppression, has been replaced by a new confidence. Greater self belief has been central to the success of the Irish economy, but has been accompanied by greater self-indulgence leading to a substantial increase in the general standard of living. But self belief and self-indulgence may have also made the Irish more selfish. The Irish may have become rich, but there is not much evidence that Irish society has become more equal and caring (Inglis, 2008, p6).

Mulholland (2003) as quoted by Bacik(2004,p69)writing of 21st century Ireland suggested   that the social fabric had broken down, in the absence of old traditional values, customs and religious beliefs, there is a gaping void in which are pouring *me feinism*., irresponsibility, depression, loneliness, suicides. Bacik (2004 p 243) on the other hand believes that "far from regretting the loss of past values I believe that recent change has mostly been very positive. We are a much more public spirited, tolerant, community minded society now than we were then"

2.4 Demography – Numbers, Immigration, Families

Population in Ireland stagnated during the first half of the 20th century, and continued to fall during the depressed period in the 50's, when there was mass emigration, falling to a low of 2.82m in 1961.The trend turned around in the 70's onwards, supported by a return of 50,000 migrants between 1971 and 1981.These migrants brought a similar number of children back with them.

There was a strong upward movement from then on. The 1991 population stood at 3.53m, rose to 3.92m in the census 2002, and jumped to 4.23m in census 2006 http://www.cso.ie/statistics/Population1901-2006.htm (accessed 24 April2010)
 (It would undoubtedly have fallen since).

But the greatest achievement of the Celtic Tiger years was the staggering growth in employment. As quoted by Sweeney(2008,p153) in the 20 years from 1987,

the numbers at work in Ireland doubled from 1,090,000 to 2,120,000.This reflected the reversal of involuntary emigration, replaced by immigration, but also the increasing numbers of the population working – boosted by part time and former 'housewives'.

At the same time there was a fall in the dependency ratio, due to the reversal of the immigration trend, and increasing numbers at work from the middle age group.

1989 was the peak year of emigration when an estimated 70,000 fled Ireland. When the economy began to recover, inward and outward migration began to balance from around 1991. From 1994, when the jobs boom really took off, net immigration began and peaked in 2006 with an inflow of 87,000. (Sweeney,2008, p153).

The admission of 10 new member states into the E U in 2004 led to many central Europeans coming to Ireland. The 2006 Census registered approximately 10% of the population as non-Irish nationals, an increase of 88% on 2002 census figures. http://www.cso.ie/statistics/Population1901-2006.htm (accessed 24 April2010). Whilst the UK would continue to account for the largest number of non-Irish nationals, increasingly there were significant inflows from Central European countries, particularly Poland.

The shape of the household unit also changed. Households consist of one or more persons. The number of households in the country increased from 1.123 million to 1.470 million between 1996 and 2006, an increase of almost 31%. Between these period's average household size declined from 3.14 to 2.81 persons. Reflecting societal changes, just over one third of Irish households now represent a traditional family comprising a wife husband and children. Two-fifths of Irish households now comprise just one or two people (Tansey, P. 2008. p19).

We had a position of virtual full employment -as quoted by Sweeney (2008) unemployment which had been at 17% in the period 1985 to 1987 fell to 4.2% in 2002, where it hovered to the end of 2007.

Whereas in the early 60's almost 40% of all at work were in agriculture, in the late 2000's this was down to near 5% - a huge structural change.

Contrary to popular myth, most of the new jobs were higher skilled. The biggest increase in jobs was in services, where 1.4 million worked at the peak, double the level in 1994. There has been very strong growth in professionals and also in the less quality, but sometimes lucrative, personal services since the middle of 1990s.

2.5 Impact of Globalization, Media, Communication

Ireland's economic failure was for a long time blamed on its peripheral location as an island of an island off Europe. The revolution in communications and the reduction in transport costs were a significant factor in the boom. For three years running 2002 - 2004 a survey by A.T.Kearney/Foreign Policy Magazine ranked the Republic of Ireland as the most globalised country in the world (as quoted in Inglis, 2008.p16)

Globalisation involves daily flows of money, goods, services, media messages, knowledge and ideas around the world. What is new is the level intensity and rapidity of these flows in recent decades (Inglis, 2008.p85).

During the period the media became increasingly less inclined to be deferential in their relationship with politicians and other power holders including the church. A common strategy used by the media to get around the norm of interaction politeness and deference to powerful people, and to get around the risk of being accused of being biased, was to align these themselves with the public *the public are entitled to know*.

Changes in attitudes from the 1960s onwards stemmed to an extent from culture shifts abroad, but a huge factor in Ireland was a questioning of the position of women in the world.

The traditional image of the Irish Catholic mother began to be affected from the early 60's by a gathering change in Catholic devotions. Foster (2007.p 40) remarked that in 1967 the *Irish Catholic* magazine noted that the nightly rosary was slowly being displaced by the impact of television on family life, even in the countryside. He quoted Garret FitzGerald, the former Taoiseach, as recognizing that from the 1960s Irish Catholic intellectuals were more and more inclined to 'do their own theology'.

Another impact was the increasing influence of feminine journalists, by far the most dominant group in the original women's liberation movement in Ireland. Their move into positions of media power over the next decade would be of great importance in the battles to overcome the abortion amendment and the on/off divorce campaign.

The gradual rise in the standard of living from the 60s, together with increased confidence to challenge the 'status quo' meant that people could gain regular access to the media.

The expansion of the media and the market ushered in a new habitus that was based on liberal individualism, materialism and consumerism, the very things against which the church had preached so vehemently for generations.

As noted above, the rosary was replaced by the TV as the evening entertainment focus, and from a start of 2 Irish channels we have developed in to the world of multi channel, continuously being bombarded by English and American programmes. British newspapers also established a strong foothold in Ireland.

The improvement in communication, particularily internet access, brought the world into our houses and offices, and ensured that Irish culture had to adapt to openness to norms from around the world.

The Irish developed common worldwide norms, of working and living, presenting oneself, operating within public and organisational spaces,

communicating, working, travelling, eating and behaving generally. This global way of being was supported and led by discourse developed and promoted by corporations through advertising and marketing. At the centre of this habitus was a belief in liberal individualism and the freedom to choose. People increasingly see and understand themselves and relate to each other in terms of consumption and similar/different tastes preferences and lifestyles.(Inglis,2008.p7) As Friedman predicted, everyone everywhere is increasingly looking like everyone everywhere else. (Friedman, 2000)

This new emphasis on choice and individual self-realisation has diminished Irish difference and made us more like the rest of the West. Differentiation is sought through consumption. (Inglis, 2008.p 38)

2.6 Church Influence, Secularization, Confidence and Independence

Contemporary Ireland is a far cry from the days of a culture filled with prayers for everything from the day's weather to passing somebody on the road.

From a high point of 1975, the statistics of mass attendance and religious vocations slid downwards, slowly at first but snowballing from the late 1980s. As late as 1990 it could be claimed that 85% of the Irish adult population attended church once weekly but by 1997 even the most optimistic survey showed this had fallen to 65%, and far lower than that among the urban young. Between 1970 and 1995 the total number of religious in Ireland decreased by over a third (Foster (2007, p 57).

 In 1998 deaths and departures from the religious life outnumbered ordinations by five to one. (Foster (2007, p57).

The popularity of the Catholic Church probably peaked in 1979 at the time of the Pope's visit, when 2.7 million Irish people turned out to see him (1.2 million alone on one day in the Phoenix Park). Not long afterwards we had the

revelations about the secret families of Bishop Casey (1992) and father Michael Cleary (1995), and the more horrific exposures of sexual abuse by Brendan Smith (1994) and Sean Fortune (1999).

With these upheavals from the early 90s, and the non-conforming significance of the Robinson presidency since 1990, there was a different atmosphere when divorce returned to the political arena in 1995. In the run up to the referendum, Church interventions were far more muted than a decade before, and their tone was far less threatening.

In the climate of rapid and social and cultural change, and the emancipation of women, Pope Paul VI's encyclical *Humanae Vitae* in 1968,which reemphasised the Church's non-acceptance of "artificial" contraception was to act like a final straw that broke the back of devotion to the Church.

There were major changes in the nature of the Irish Catholic religiosity in the next 40 years. By the end of the century, religious practice had declined significantly. As quoted by Inglis (Inglis,T. 2008.p73). results from the 1998 International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) indicated that attendance at church services had declined by almost 30 points to 62% -- at which level it seems, as revealed by European Social Survey results, to have stayed on to the 2004. The 1999 European Values Study showed that the level of daily prayer had fallen to 49%.

The Catholic sexual abuse scandal in Ireland is a major chapter in the worldwide Catholic sexual abuse scandal.. The scandal in Ireland included cases of high-profile Catholic clerics involved in illicit heterosexual relations as well as widespread physical abuse of children in the Catholic-run childcare network.

Starting in the 1990s, and stirred up by media coverage,a series of criminal cases and Irish government enquiries established that hundreds of priests had abused thousands of children in previous decades. In many cases, the abusing priests were moved to other parishes to avoid embarrassment or a scandal, assisted by

senior clergy. By 2010 a number of in-depth judicial reports had been published, but with relatively few prosecutions.

In 2009 the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse issued a 2,500-page report which said children had been the victims of sexual, emotional and physical abuse at orphanages and industrial schools now closed, during a 60 year period.

In March 2010, Pope Benedict XVI wrote a pastoral letter of apology to address all of the abuse that was carried out by Catholic clergy.

The question then is what caused the demise of Catholic Ireland? The simple answer is that the rising tide of materialism and consumerism, and with them the individualisation and secularisation of social life, eventually broke through the sand castle walls which the church built to keep Ireland holy and catholic (Whyte 1981: p 116: Garvin 2004, p 825).

From the establishment of the State the interests of the Church and State were in confluence:secularism meant that the Irish people felt that religion was a private matter,and that the influence of the Church should be limited.

Politically there was a real attempt to establish a Society where church and state were separate. No longer did the Catholic Church have its traditional stranglehold on public debate on matters such as divorce, abortion and contraception.

The development of confidence was a significant factor during this period. This manifested in a greater respect for a professional approach, more openness, greater participation, accountability and more democratic institutions, equality for women and greater inclusiveness. From a sporting point of view the country was fired up, initially by the sporting success of Ireland's soccer team led by Jack Charlton and later individual successes in other sports including, athletics and also that of the Irish rugby team.

Attitudes to religion changed, people may have thought that religion had passed its sell by date, but may have accepted that it could be beneficial in a private,

unobtrusive way for those who need it.   Religion may be viewed benignly, provided it does not intrude embarrassingly into the real world.

What is now going on in our society is not a conflict between religion and the secular, but between those who think there are areas of life where God is irrelevant and those who believe that such a position contradicts the very meaning of faith -- and of secular reality as well.(Murray,D.2008 .p 59).

A feature in the development of individualistic thinking was the emotional debate regarding contraception in the early 70s. Again this was an indication of the increasing recognition of the female voice.

Although most Catholics still see and understand themselves as Catholics, and aim to go to Mass on Sundays, they have become more emotionally detached from the institutional church. They have become more worldly, rational and materialistic, and less oriented to the supernatural, transcendental and magically. Moreover, like the younger generation, older Catholics are no longer afraid of what priests and bishops might do to them. (Inglis, T.2008, p 68) It is not that as Catholics are leaving the church to join other Christian churches and sects. It is more that in becoming detached from the institutional church, in developing their own relationship with God, and in deciding more for themselves what is right and wrong, they are, in terms of their religiosity, becoming more like Protestants (Hervieu-Leger 2003).

At this stage it may well be that for an increasing number of people, being Catholic in Ireland may have more to do with belonging to an inherited social identity, than to a strong belief system. Witness the mind boggling excesses at first holy communion and confirmation 'ceremonies' where the clothing for the ceremony, and the 'take' from gifts is given greater prominence than the meaning of the ceremony itself.

It has been speculated that the era of western secularism may have been overtaken by a post secularism period,it is difficult to be clear as to what stage Ireland is at, but certainly there has been significant growth in "alternative"

religions such as the muslim faith,and bible and evangelical groups, whose members are enthusiastic and passionate.

The change in the population structure, compounded by mass immigration has also had an impact. Increasing numbers of Catholic schools are being forced to take in children from different ethnic and religious backgrounds. As quoted by Inglis(2008,p78) in 2005, one school in West Dublin was reported to have 40 nationalities while in another primary school in the same area, non-Irish nationals account of 40% of enrolments .

So- certainly during the Celtic Tiger, and before, the influences of the Catholic Church declined, and as it did, people's dependence on their faith became less important, and secularisation became popular (pick and choose religion). The Church had been taken on; it was wounded, and had lost its hold over individuals. People had the confidence, boosted by our economic success, and success in sporting and cultural fields, to be independent and decide for themselves, not held back by compliance with a particular code of behaviour.

2.7 Business Changes- Compliance, Globalization, Bottom line focus

From the early years of the 'Celtic Tiger' the economy became one of the most globalised in the world and far more competitive. Trade and exports soared and the share of foreign direct investment coming to Ireland greatly increased. The move towards stability in Northern Ireland (because of the efforts in bringing about a peace process) meant that for once Ireland was a good news story in the media in the US. This was important in getting American investment into Ireland.

This globalisation leads to huge interdependence on the rest of the world, as demonstrated by how the recent downturn in the US economy has reflected on the island. A large and important part of the Irish economy is controlled outside the state, and the Irish economy is inexorably entwined with the world economy.

This little island with its relatively low costs, burgeoning population of relatively well-educated young people, with its low company taxes, grants, active state agencies and membership of the EU, and latterly the single market, was a huge beneficiary of foreign direct investment and of the process of globalisation.

Because of the arrival of multinationals manufacturing and trading in Ireland, work and management practices were adopted which were of a global nature, in particular the American management practices like transparency and involvement became prevalent. But also focus on the 'bottom line' became the mantra, and remuneration systems became designed to ensure this goal was achieved.

Improvements in worldwide communications greatly assisted this process of homogenisation of global ways of doing business. This effectively meant that a customer doing business in Ireland, could expect to receive the same standards of product presentation, design and specification, after sales service and warranty, as someone in another European country or the U.S. Manufacturers and distributors on the other hand were following common standards of doing business worldwide.

This meant much more codification and classification of business behaviour into standards, and acceptance of greater compliance.

Between 2000 and 2008, over 200 Acts of the Oireactas were enacted. These were bolstered by numerous Statutory Instruments, implementing parts of these Acts (over 300 in 2006,177 in 2007). While not all related to the operation of business, most had to be considered.

Commissions were established for Energy, Communications, each industry had a regulator or code of ethics, form filling became an art form.

There was a huge effort to improve and regulate the code of conduct in financial dealings. There are 10 Companies Acts in force, most enacted since 1980, supported by thousands of Statutory Instruments. 17 EU Directives on Financial

affairs are in place, enacted since 1992. The office of Director of Corporate Enforcement was established, and the Accountancy bodies published 29 accounting standards in the period 1975 – 2008. Increased tax transparency came into being, Revenue officials being granted more and more access to information. For the larger companies, with a share listing, the oversight body of the Stock Exchange had the 'Combined Code' – a coding of recommended standards of behaviour. This was not mandatory compliance, but non compliance was to be noted and justified.

So certainly we had increased legislation and regulation. But recent financial scandals in Ireland suggest that standards of practice and adherence to core principles of transparency and independence were lacking. Even back in 2008, in response to an Institute of Directors survey on the question "do you think standards of corporate governance are high in Ireland?' 79 per cent of respondents answered No, with 21 per cent giving a positive response. So from a jury of their peers, this comes as a damning indictment of the then perceived status of corporate governance in Ireland. (Irish Times March 12 2009 http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/opinion/2009/0312/1224242729211.html (accessed 23/3/ 2009)

Writing in the same paper two days later, Breda O'Brien noted –"An economic system that made an idol of maximising profits for shareholders was morally bankrupt long before the consequences began to unfold before our horrified eyes. It still is. No society is devoid of selfishness, but few societies have made a virtue of it as western society has. There has been an ethical rupture, and until that rupture is healed, no real progress will be made."

She went on to say – "Greed is one obvious cause of the current crisis, but far more important is the erosion of trust, truth, responsibility, compassion and solidarity. These vital virtues were hollowed out even further because people kept on using the words, but acting in a way diametrically opposed to them". http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/opinion/2009/0314/1224242847083.html (accessed 23/3/2009).

Late 2008 and 2009 saw a global meltdown, with stock and property prices plummeting and confidence in investment shattered. Ireland got the backlash, but we probably set our own higher standard for excesses and misbehaviour. Long before the meltdown the Irish seemed to have their own peculiar culture of business behaviour, which required tribunals, tax amnesties and nod and wink procedures of doing business. Our leaders, both political and business, unfortunately were found to be deficient in moral fibre, and showed a sad lack of culpability, or recognition of wrongdoings. To what extent did this culture represent the typical Irish way of doing business, borne out of a 'cute hoor' mentality, forged from our perceived unjust repression of the early century?

2.8 And then?

Even as far back as 2004, certain economic commentators, particularly McWilliams, were sounding warnings about overheating in the Irish economy. They argued that the economy was too dependent on the construction sector, and that personal borrowing had been allowed to get out of control. The Government however strongly made the argument that there would be a 'soft landing' and a gradual decline rather than the sudden shock we did in fact experience.

The scale of borrowings was easy to recognize afterwards, but there was an obvious lack of control by regulators. The lending spree was led by Anglo Irish Bank who was the early player in funding property and development, to the point where all the other financial institutions felt that they had to match Anglo's lending policies. Prudence in the provision of mortgages was abandoned, hundred percent mortgages (and more) became obtainable and ridiculous prices were being paid for development property.

Although huge volumes of apartments, built during the boom period (many supported by tax reliefs) remained unoccupied, still developers lavished extraordinary prices on development potential property. Particularly in central Dublin areas prices were paid in expectation of development of high rise apartment complexes at unsustainable prices. The excesses were not confined to

the capital– in a recent anecdotal conversation with a prominent local auctioneer, he instanced a development property, on the periphery of Waterford city, sold at a frenzied auction for €45m, but now valued for €9m.

With the benefit of hindsight in 2010 it is easier to recognize the extent of the unwise lendings advanced in support of development property. These borrowings will now be transferred into the National Asset Management Agency (NAMA) and the figure of toxic loans to be transferred has been speculated as to being a figure between 40 billion, and 70 billion.

 In 2006 AIB Bank added 10 billion of loans to its property portfolio in that year. At the end of 2008 it had 33 billion in loans for property and construction, dwarfing its capital base. In 2008 it's lending to property developers for sites and construction was 10 times the size of its loans to the manufacturing sector.

Anybody who was anybody had at least one second property for rent, and quite likely also had an overseas property for personal use. Many of these were funded by almost, or more than 100% mortgages.

Not content with making gambles on property, people with access to borrowings felt the time was right to make a killing, and gambles on the stock markets were made using financial instruments known as Contracts for Difference (CFD's) which essentially enabled people to gamble on the stock market without having to put up funds. When the market collapsed, many of these CFD's came home to roost, which resulted in many investors losing many millions of euros. In April 2010 Sean Quinn, at one stage reputedly worth over four billion, lost control of his empire, which incorporated insurance, hotels, and cement and glass manufacturing, because of extensive borrowings, reportedly swollen by losses on CFD's.

The stock markets worldwide started to drop from mid-2007, probably the first sign that things were not well, initially the problem was first recognized in the US, where sub prime lending had expanded out of control, fuelling construction and borrowings.

The collapse of Lehman Brothers, a highly regarded US financial institution, in September 2008 caused an enormous shudder in the financial markets.

Things then started to move very quickly -in the same month the Irish Banks realised that they were exposed to a run on their deposits, and the Government had to step in and guarantee deposits of certain Irish banks, giving the State and the taxpayers an exposure of over 400 billion.

At this point it was obvious that the party was over and the extent of excess lending began to be recognized. The worldwide slowdown, particularly in the US, had a knock-on effect on Ireland. Government finances, which had benefited hugely from tax revenue from the construction sector, were in tatters. The rise in property prices not alone stopped, but reversed, putting many people in to negative equity.

By the end of 2008, we were shell-shocked, the Budget introduced at that time was harsh, but worse was to come as a Supplementary Budget had to be implemented in April 2009, when the extent of the problems with the Government finances became apparent. At this time the Government sought to raise an extra 1.8 billion from taxation, and sought savings from current expenditure of a similar amount. However these were only steps towards a gradual effort to shore up the Government deficit, which was acknowledged as being in excess of 20 billion on the current account.

The Supplementary budget was also an effort to reassure international financial markets, and multinational corporations, that Ireland was serious about tackling its financial problems. At this point the problems with the Irish banks would have been flagged, and this, together with the deterioration in the Public Finances, and allied to a number of financial scandals meant that the credibility of Ireland was in question.

Unfortunately however the momentum could not be stopped and a spate of job losses occurred. In early 2009 Dell announced the loss of 1900 jobs in Limerick, ironically lost to lower wage cost Poland.

There was no activity in the construction sector, which suffered huge job losses as did many allied industries and professions. Any sector which was supplying non-essential goods, such as the car industry, also suffered hugely. There was a significant increase in the number of insolvencies; an unfortunate side-effect was a number of high-profile suicides of people who were unable to deal with the downturn.

In the private sector, apart from redundancies, employees were required to accept lower wages, and accepted this, the alternative being loss of employment. This would have been unheard-of during the Celtic Tiger period.

It was not so easy to address problems in the public sector, where salaries had 'piggybacked' on the strength of increases in the private sector during the boom periods. Public sector employees argued that they were not responsible for the recession which had come and did not choose to recognize that they had in fact benefited during the good times, by comparison with their peers in the private sector. Both the level of pay and the numbers in the public sector had to be addressed, and this has been, and will continue to be a painful exercise for the Country. The first significant step in this regard was made in the 2010 budget when pay cuts for the public service were announced.

Inflation, which had never been high, but might have risen to over 5% in the boom years, now became negative.

Unemployment, which had effectively disappeared, raised its ugly head again, and is back at over 10%, and estimated to rise to up to 17%. Job opportunities in 2010 were very scarce, and emigration again on the agenda- for those who can leave the country. Unfortunately many are caught in a negative equity trap, severe hardship is being experienced by many households where previously there were two income earners, and one, or even two, has become unemployed.

Generally an air of gloom has replaced the optimism of the Celtic Tiger period, and unfortunately, but understandably the media presentation each day continues to focus on negativity. The Celtic Tiger period is well and truly dead, there is recognition that much of the gain was wasted, and that a painful period of slow recovery is ahead.

2.9 Conclusion

What a ride! The Celtic Tiger period, the exact extent of which cannot be determined, but the core of which lasted a good 15 years from the early 90s to the mid-2000's, was an exciting time, and for those involved in business it was a very remunerative time.

As noted above disposable income increased hugely, we became a nation of consumers. We left the gloomy, Church dominated early years of the State behind us, we became a confident self-fulfilled Nation, recognized internationally as a model for economic development.

It was mostly about money. But at the same time because of the economic success greater numbers were attracted into the workforce, coming from immigrants and previously housebound females. Cultures changed because of the immigrants, and because of the greater globalisation and communication.

The church shot itself in the foot: its hard-line stance on contraception and divorce alienated it from the populace, and facilitated a rise in secularism, a reduction in religious attendance, and an increase in interest in spirituality, as an alternative to religion.

The crash, when it came, was hard to take, particularly for the younger generation who had never been through bad times. At this point the construction sector is decimated, the financial sector is in crisis, and the government finances are at very low ebb. But people are surviving-what else can you do? There is

resilience, and a recognition, that we are in general, much better off than we were 20 years ago, and that perhaps there was need for a dose of reality to humble us.

2.10 What Questions Arise?

This extraordinary period saw Ireland emerging from the post independence, post war, gloom period where there had been an understandable and necessary dependence on devotion to the rituals and requirements of Catholic Church teachings.

As our self-confidence developed we were open to cultures and ideas from beyond our shores, and we did not feel restrained by the norms or standards of behaviour that our parents had to comply with. We had the money - and boy were we going to spend it! Like children let loose in a sweet shop we did not want any restraint on our consumption, and did not want anyone to be reminding us of what should be our core sense of values. The Church was suitably discredited, and not in a position to rap us on the fingers.

So – a fertile feeding ground for a change in people's attitude to religion, and spirituality? Certainly compliance with Church rituals such as mass attendance declined, but to what extent was this replaced by secularism, or spiritual enquiry?

3 Review of Literature

3.1 Working Definition of Spirituality

'When **I** *use a word,' Humpty Dumpty said, in a rather scornful tone, 'it means just what I choose it to mean, neither more nor less.*

'The question is,' said Alice, 'whether you can *make words mean so many different things.'*

'The question is,' said Humpty Dumpty, '*which is to be master – that's all.'*

It is very clear from the review of literature, that there are numerous definitions of spirituality. This is not surprising, given the many different perspectives of the authors. Nowadays the word is used in a variety of contexts, finding its way into the columns of popular magazines and newspapers, used by such diverse disciplines as architects of buildings, health gurus, and healers.

At the outset, it is desirable to move forward with a working definition of spirituality, and to refine it later to reflect the purpose of the study being carried out. Whilst it is clear that the origin of the word is from a Christian background coming from *spirit*, from the Greek word pneuma meaning *breath, wind,* it nowadays is used to cover both the academic discipline, and a range of attitudes and actions.

Sandra M. Schneiders IHM is respected   as one of the most significant and influential figures in the study of Christian spirituality in recent times. Having considered the topic at length, and reviewed definitions offered by other contemporary authors, she summarized that:

spirituality refers to the experience of consciously striving to integrate one's life in terms not of isolation and self absorption but of self transcendence towards the ultimate values one perceives (Schneiders, 1989, p 684).

Many of the components of this definition are examined in a more detailed review of the meaning of spirituality later in this chapter including:

Experience, striving –an everyday effort at the core of ones being, the way

Not self absorption- Love of others, connectedness, balancing desires

Values one perceives – personal values, priorities

Not of isolation, Self transcendence – Immanence and transcendence

Whilst the definition is acknowledged as being that of a Christian author, it is not in itself specific to Christianity, and is useful as background understanding in the initial review of literature on the topic.

3.1.1 Why the Current Interest

Spirituality, certainly in Ireland, up to the late 70's was essentially synonymous with religion, dominated at that time by the Catholic Church. As the Economic prosperity of Ireland developed, and as the country started to mature after its independence, so did the confidence and independence of spirit of its people develop. Improvements in communication, particularly the availability of American and English television meant that Irish people were exposed to cultures different to the traditional Irish one.

As the influence of the Church began to wane, people no longer accepted doctrines and practices without question. A similar shift had happened in earlier developed economies such as the U.S. and U.K., so the Irish experience was not unexpected.

But people still searched for other indicators. . From the early 80's onwards a proliferation of "self help" books emerged, as people started to seek answers to life, outside the traditional constraints of religious practices. Early authors included Norman Vincent Peale (1953) *The Power of Positive Thinking*,

followed by more eclectic authors, covering all areas of New Age spirituality. Currently no self respecting bookstore does not have a *Mind, Body, and Spirit* section, incorporating sections on *Personal Development* or *spirituality.*

Dyer (2001,p10) is an American author, popular on these topics; his understanding of spiritual practice is that it is a way of making his life work at a higher level, of receiving guidance for handling problems, involving seven basic practices:

Surrender -- to a higher force.

Love -- substitute love for anguish or frustration, relax

Infinite -- accept without doubt that life is indestructible. Life can change form but cannot be destroyed.

Empty mind -- be quiet and allow oneself to be guided in the direction of resolution.

Generosity and gratefulness -- we came into this world with nothing and we will exit the same way. I get back from that world precisely what I put out to the world

Connectedness -- nurture your sense of connection to everyone and to god as well

Cheerfulness -- man is the only animal that can be bored, that can be discontented, and that can be evicted from paradise.

3.2. Characteristics of Spirituality in the 80's

3.2.1 Christian based

Rolheiser (1998,p32) suggests that a strange thing has been happening in the Western world -as the number of persons participating in our churches is dramatically decreasing the number of persons interested in spirituality is proportionately increasing. He also noted that until recently, you were considered a practicing Catholic if you went regularly to church, prayed privately, tried to live the Commandments, were not publicly at odds with the Church's teaching on marriage and sexuality. You should also contribute to the support of the church,

and be compliant on a number of other things: you did not eat meat on Fridays, you fasted during Lent, and you gave some money to the poor.

De Valera's ideal for the Irish people, expressed in his St Patrick's Day address in 1943, was   *The Ireland that we dreamed of would be the home of a people who valued material wealth only as a basis for right living, of a people who, satisfied with frugal comfort, devoted their leisure to the things of the spirit...*
The Constitution which he promoted and which was promulgated in 1937 was liberal and democratic with a number of Catholic emphases grounded in a Catholic world.

The census of 1991 showed that over 93% of the population regarded themselves as Roman Catholic, only 66,270 of almost 3.5 million said they had no religion. By 2006 the RC percent had dropped to 87%, 186,318 now stated they had no religion (CSO), suggesting both an increase in the number of those not practicing, and in the number with the courage to say so.

The 1999 European Values Survey showed that over 8% of the Irish population could be loosely categorized as *secularists,* in other words they rejected any denominational label, Christian or otherwise. Although the numbers of those who denominate themselves as Catholics is still huge, there is a significant minority movement.

This growth in a secularist mindset is more starkly demonstrated by changes in figures for attendance at religious services, again taken from the European Values Survey. In 1981 83% of the Irish population attended a religious service at least once a week; by 1999 the percentage had dropped to 59%. The movement in the figure for the age group 18-26 is much more dramatic, dropping from 75% to 23%. This has to be viewed in the context of the decline world wide, an International Social Survey Programme in 1998 shows Irish attendance of two or three times or more a month at 73%, still exceptionally high as compared to say Poland at 62%, USA at 44%, and many European countries below 10%.

Both surveys also recorded the frequency of prayer in people's lives, and recorded similar results, the 1999 EVS survey, and the 1998 ISSP survey showing that 70% of all Catholics prayed at least once a week. The ISSP survey would put Ireland in the top third of countries surveyed, but seems to be lower than countries such as the Philippines (80%) and the USA (60%).

When the continual high figures for those stating themselves to be Catholic, and drawing strength from prayer are compared with the declining figures for attendance at religious services, a picture emerges that suggests an increasing privatization of religious belief in Ireland, during the "Celtic Tiger period.

3.2.2 How is Spirituality Expressed?

Spirituality as expressed in Ireland up to the last 30 years would have been heavily impacted by the dominant influence of the Catholic Church. This would have meant a programmatic type of spirituality as suggested by Collins (1999) - the Christian life is a matter of obediently following a programme of living which has been laid down in an authoritative way by the church.

As noted above, attendance at religious services, and prayer, would have been a significant part of how spirituality was expressed, the line between spirituality and Catholicism being drawn thinly at the commencement of the period.

Flanagan (1999), who interviewed people in Dublin's Liberties to get them to talk about their spirituality, found that modes of mediation of their spirituality included religious practices such as mass and the devotions, also things such as pilgrimages, holy pictures, hymns, conversations, sickness, death, relationships, and solitude. Prayer had (and still has) an important place in the lives of many, but the form, content, and structure of prayer varied enormously- often addressee to a favourite saint (intercession), in various places. People felt spirituality was many sided, a lot to do with your interactions with people, a community of support.

3.3 What is Spirituality?

3.3.1 History of the Word and Use

The word spirituality originates from the noun *spirit* having its roots in the Latin *spiritus*, in turn originating from the Greek *pneuma* meaning *breath, wind* .The word itself does not appear in Scriptures, but Paul (1Cor 2.14-15) uses the word *spiritual* to differentiate those who can discern all things from those who are *natural* who do not receive the gifts of the Spirit of God…..

Christians therefore can lay claim to the origin of the word, but O'Murchu (1997) would suggest that

> *our spiritual story as a human species is at least 70,000 years old; by comparison the formal religions have existed for a mere 4500 years. Religions refer to those formally institutionalized structures, rituals and beliefs which belonged to one or other of the official religious systems. spirituality concerns an ancient and primal search for meaning that is as old and as humanity itself and, belongs as an inherent energy to the evolutionary enfolding of creation itself.*

The use of the word nowadays covers far more than Christian spirituality, however that is defined. It covers a broad spectrum of beliefs, attitudes, and practices geared towards that search for meaning and self improvement. It would now include what would come under the umbrella of New Age spirituality which is characterized by an eclectic and individual approach to spiritual exploration as part of a general evolution in human consciousness.

3.3.2 Immanence and Transcendence

Although transcendence is often defined as the opposite of immanence, the two are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Most attempts to define spirituality include both immanence and transcendence. Transcendence means that God is completely outside of and beyond the world, as contrasted with the notion that God is manifested in the world.

In Christianity, the belief is that the transcendent, almighty, and holy God, who cannot be seen or approached in essence or being, has become immanent through Jesus Christ, god and man. As noted by Macquarrie (1982) Christian theologians

say God is transcendent (above us) and immanent (in us) .Transcendence is a continuing process of creativity and development flowing from freedom.

The editors of World Spirituality(1985) take such a view of the matter of the definition of spirituality covering both immanence and transcendence– (a) spirituality is conceived as a polar structure: the relation of the human person (inner dimension, spirit, spiritual core, deepest centre) to a transcendent dimension (ultimate reality, ultimate goal) (b) this relation is not a static structure, but a dynamic process (discovery, development, journey, spiritual ascent) (c) this spiritual process is fostered by specific means (prayer, spiritual direction, maps, methods).

O'Donohue (1997) suggests that for too long, we have believed that the divine is outside us. This belief has strained our longing disastrously. This is so lonely since it is human longing that makes us holy. The most beautiful thing about us is our longing; this longing is spiritual and has great depth and wisdom.

To philosophers the term "immanence" is usually understood to mean that the divine force, or the divine being, pervades through all things that exist, and is able to influence them.

The intrinsic-origin view of spirituality is that which argues that spirituality is a concept or a principle that originates from the inside of an individual. Guillory's (2000, p. 33) definition falls within this perspective as he defines spirituality as *our inner consciousness* and *that which is spiritual comes from within-beyond our programmed beliefs and values.*

3.3.3 Different to Religion

The Ireland of the 60's and 70's would not have differentiated to any significant extent between Religion and spirituality – indeed it is unlikely that the term spirituality would have been in regular use.

As suggested by Rolheiser(1998),and noted above, recognition as a practicing Catholic required visible evidence of compliance with a number of rules as set down by the Church. Spirituality is more about whether or not we can sleep at night than about whether or not we go to Church.

Moberg (1984) clearly states that spiritual well-being is neither synonymous, nor coterminous with religion. Religion, according to Steiger and Lipson (1985) is a social institution in which a group of people participate rather than an individual search for meaning. As such, religion is more about systems of practices and beliefs within which the social group engage.

Nash & McLennan (2001) who researched the attitudes of workers to bringing spirituality into work, contrasted secular spirituality with what they described as an authentic religious perspective:

> *Religions make claims on their believers. They assert an authority beyond human will and reasoning that demands commitment from individuals to see that life is lived in the certain way. The required aspect of religion is precisely what secular spirituality avoids. In this free market, exercising choice concerning the soul's expression does not institutionalize its teaching into social and political demands.*

Spirituality avoids the formal and ceremonial connotations of religion; it is nondenominational, non-hierarchical, and non-ecclesiastical. Spirituality implies an inner search for meaning or fulfilment that may be undertaken by anyone regardless of religion. As Von Balthazar (1965) suggests spirituality is that basic practical or existential attitude of the person which is the consequence and expression of the way in which they understand and live their religious or more generally their ethically committed existence- the way in which one acts and reacts habitually throughout life according to one's objective and ultimate insights and decisions.
.
We could therefore explain spirituality as something we all carry within us. Religions in contrast are often intolerant of contrary views and prone to demeaning the basic tenets of underlying spirituality in their attempts to present a finite and limited interpretation of the infinite. Spirituality on the other hand

usually entails a far deeper personal experience associated with an individuals personal quest to rediscover his or hers essence.

The mantra of many Irish in the present day that they are spiritual but not religious may suggest a rejection of institutionalized and organized religion, involving compliance with numerous practices, in favour of a 'pick and choose' approach to a secular spirituality based on personal experience and choice. But, a word of warning - when only a few authentic dimensions of Christian life are thus developed, the result may be a dangerous privatization of spirituality (Gutierrez, 1983).

3.4 Experiencing Spirituality

In this section I will explore how spirituality might be experienced, in its many dimensions. It means different things to different people, yet people appear to have no problem discussing how they experience spirituality-as if there is some form of common thread in how it is experienced in every day living. Can it be experienced in our every day work and relationship with others, as Ignatius suggests? Is it some form of love, a primal recognition of a need to care for somebody other than ourselves? Is it a sort of fire or desire burning within us, a search for meaning? Although we acknowledge is that it is different from religion, many religions have a *path* or *Way* or a set of values to follow –is this how we experience spirituality? Can it be manifested in creativity, or energy?

3.4.1 Love

Has spirituality anything to do with love? I have a few friends who claim to be atheists, although each would have been brought up in a Christian environment, but who are most charitable towards their neighbours – considerate and of great integrity in their business dealings, giving generously to charitable causes, and heavily involved in projects of benefit to the community. Whilst accepting entirely that they are not religious, it is harder to say they are not spiritual-clearly they are 'giving' to others, loving.

Rogers & Love (2004,p2) believe that some atheists are spiritual and quote William Teasdale's understanding of spirituality as *at once a contemplative attitude, a disposition to a life of depth, and the search for ultimate meaning, direction, and belonging.*

According to Marmion (1998) Rahner did not define spirituality. There are themes in his writing –a piety associated with the pursuit of Christian perfection – a personal   experience of God - simply a question of coping with our life's work in the Christian way. Rahner suggests that love of one's neighbour is not simply the commandment to be obeyed but represents the complete actualization of Christian existence. Only in transcending boundaries (of immediate corporeal experience) in faith and hope does such love of neighbour reach fulfilment.

Gutierrez (1983) suggests that authentic love tries to start with the concrete needs of the other and not with the duty of practicing love. Love is respectful of others and therefore feels obliged to base its action on an analysis of their situation and needs.

This idea of respect is also taken up by McGeachy(2001) who suggests that love in the workplace is expressed by genuine compassion for one's colleagues; allowing that love to permeate all of one's activities as an act of love of God and Colleague ; it is the exchange of love, energy, kindness and caring. She quotes the consulting group 'It's Time Solutions' which promotes that spirituality is respect: respect of others and self; respect for the environment; other people's personal privacy, their physical space and belongings; different viewpoints, philosophies, religion, gender, lifestyle, ethnic origin, physical ability, beliefs and personality rather than criticizing the other for being different, we can learn how different people see the world.

Waaijman (2002) talks about mercy in mutual relations. Mercy is a spontaneous act of kindness motivated by the distress of the other. It is a giving love, spontaneous kindness, abundance, to be favourably disposed to another, to allow the other his or her freedom, charitableness, receiving.

Dorr (1984) takes love as referring to a second major area of Christian spirituality, the inter-personnel aspect, concerned with face to face relationships with other people -- including friendships, family life, community living and even our more casual relationships. He says that to love tenderly we need to be morally converted. This means that the person has been given the gift of being other -centred, genuinely interested in other people.

As Mother Theresa is quoted as saying – *in this life we cannot do great things: we can only do small things with great love.*

3.4.2 Everyday living

Robinson (2004), an experienced missionary priest and academic suggests that applied spirituality is founded on the premise that we meet and come to know God in every day existence. De Mello (1990) says spirituality means *waking up* - most people never understand the loveliness and the beauty of this thing that we call human existence.

Von Balthasar, H (1965) quoted by Marmion (1998) defines spirituality as *that basic practical or existential attitude of the person which is the consequence and expression of the way in which they understand and **live** their religious or more generally their ethically committed existence*. His definition – *The way in which one acts and reacts habitually throughout life according to one's objective and ultimate insights and decisions*

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Autogenic spirituality is a term coined by Haughey (1973) meaning originating in the Self. Devotees are selective in what they take seriously. They are motivated by conviction. The focus is on the immanence rather than the transcendence of God. Autogenics do not spend much time praising and worshipping God. They glorify God by using their talents and graces working for others. They would be in tune with the sentiments of St Vincent de Paul *Let us love God, but let it be in the strength of our arm , and the sweat of our brow.* In his book *New Paths in Spirituality* Macquarrie (1982) has a chapter on *Prayer as Thinking* ,again emphasing the lived experience of spirituality. The Ignation

philosophy is to find God in all things, St Ignatius, as explained by Aquilina and Stubna (2007) found practical ways to bring Christ into the work day, and wrote letters full of good advice about getting things done but with care, about getting along with co-workers, and about the challenge of keeping your eye on the goal, which should be not worldly success, but godly glory.

This idea of spirituality existing in everyday life also comes through in studies of spirituality being brought into the workplace As the growth and success of secular spirituality programmes in business demonstrate, many business people are increasingly dissatisfied with this kind of jumping back and forth - *Church on Sunday , Work on Monday* (Nash & McLennan(2001).

People aspire to live integrated, meaningful, and balanced lives. They are looking for ways to incorporate spirituality into business in order to satisfy not only material needs, but also higher level needs. According to Nash and McLennan (2001) then these needs include - emergent awareness of their sacred self, harmony with an ultimate order, connectedness with community, and a religiously consistent morality.

3.4.3 Values, Priorities

Dorr (1984) writes about a balanced Christian spirituality modelled on a passage from the book of Micah (6:8). In this text God makes three requests: act justly, love tenderly, and walk humbly with God. Dorr refers to spirituality as not just a set of theological ideas but more outlooks and attitudes that are revealed by the way we act and react. He says that when he thinks of spirituality, what he has in mind is the outlook, the approach, and the set of attitudes and values which are the expression of this 'me' at his most authentic.

Spirituality can be an enormously significant factor in helping people to manage their lives better, as it is about seeing life from a certain perspective .Spirituality brings a fundamental change of mind in which individuals see themselves as capable of creating the world they want rather than reacting to circumstances beyond their control (Senge 1994).We begin to look differently at the set of

alternatives facing us. We become more contemplative, intuitive and foresightful. We become free of normal constraints, access a higher level of awareness, and begin to work out more appropriately how we should perform (Howard, 2002).

Rahner, quoted by Marmion (1998) does not restrict this intimate movement to Christians alone, but acknowledges that it occurs wherever someone is faithful to the dictates of his or her conscience.

Stoll (1979) provides a useful definition when she states that whatever a person takes to be the highest value in life can be regarded as his God.

The key element in this broader definition is that whatever the God may be, it provides a force which activates the individual is an essential principle influencing him/her (Vaillot 1977). Clark (1987) also supports this broader view by suggesting that spirituality is essentially based upon the life principle of the person.

Jean Vannier (1991) of L'Arche (a community movement to support people with intellectual disabilities) speaks of spirituality as the way of life that implies choice and a particular ordering of priorities. This spirituality could be called a 'spirituality of littleness' since through the reality of being with the little ones we are learning from them and discovering our own littleness.

Eric Fromm (1950) – German author and psychoanalyst provides this definition of spirituality - *a shared system of thought and action that gives adherence; a frame of orientation and devotion.*

Wayne Dyer, a modern popular author has an understanding of spiritual practice that it is a way of making his life work at a higher level and of receiving guidance for handling problems (Dyer, 2001).

In relation to business McGeachy (2001) says that values shape behaviour informing employees as to what is acceptable and unacceptable practice in the organization, and informing clients about how business will be done for them

and what kinds of behaviour they can expect to experience during their transactions with the company. Shared values create a sense of community because shared values build trust.

This relationship with business also comes through in Garcia –Zamor (2003), who reviewed literature on workplace spirituality and noted that a growing body of literature dealing with spirituality in the work place has been emerging and has become part of some Ethics course syllabi. He noted that spirituality encompasses the same topic which is so important in ethics- character, and the giving of one's self for the benefit of others i.e. morally good behaviour. An individual's spirituality will determine his or her understanding and interpretation of ethical behaviour.

3.4.4 Christian Spirituality Essentials

Rolheiser (1998) puts forward four non-negotiable pillars of the Christian spiritual life

- private prayer and private morality;
- social justice;
- mellowness of heart and spirit;
- community as a constitutive element of true worship

For Jesus, these four elements comprise the essentials, the non-negotiables, of Christian discipleship. These are not elements we may choose or not choose to incorporate within our spiritual lives. They comprise the essence of the spiritual life. They also supply its balance. Only when all four of these are present in our lives are we healthy, as Christians and as human beings.

Rahner, as quoted by Marmion (1998) suggests that love of one's neighbour is not simply the commandment to be obeyed but represents the complete actualization of Christian existence. Only in transcending boundaries (of immediate corporeal experience) in faith and hope does such love of neighbour reach fulfilment. Gutierrez (1983) obviously influenced by his experience of dealing with marginalized poor, states that authentic love tries to start with the

concrete needs of the other and not with the duty of practicing love. Love is respectful of others and therefore feels obliged to base its action on an analysis of their situation and needs. Commitment to the poor is an indispensable requirement for truly living in detachment from material goods.

Flanagan (1999) identifies three aspects of Christian spiritual experience, the mystical, the interpersonal and the social, which are given special attention. The mystical element means that part of Christianity's belief and practices that concerns the preparation for, the consciousness of, and reaction to what can be described as the immediate direct presence of God.

The usual approach to the interpersonal dimension of spirituality is to explore how one is drawn to serve God in the neighbour because of the felt conviction of God's presence in the other. The social dimension involves a sense of solidarity with strangers and the community.

3.4.5 The Way

In a religious or spiritual context, the word "way" has rich overtones. It can suggest norms to be followed in one's daily living, progress to be made in one's spiritual journey, decisions to be taken at various crossroads or critical points in life, and a goal to reach at the end of the journey.

Waaijman (2002) says that when schools of spirituality characterize themselves, they as a rule make use of the fundamental metaphor of *The Way.*

Jewish spirituality describes itself with words like *Torah* (instruction in the way of life) and *Halacha* (the course of life). Christians saw in Jesus the true way of life ("I am the way"). Buddhist spirituality views itself as a vehicle (*Yana)* on the road to enlightenment Taoism revolves around the *Tao* a word which means *Way.* .In Islam the form of life adopted by mystics is described by the term *Tariqa*, which means path.

The Buddhist way to salvation is contained for all Buddhists in the four Noble truths which Buddha proclaimed after his enlightenment (1) everything is permeated by transience (suffering, decay, unfreedom) (2) this transience is caused by yearning (desire, thirst, the drive to live) (3) transience is ended by detachment from the thirst for existence (detachment, annihilation, liberation); (4) *there is a way* which leads to the termination of thirst and transience (attitudes virtues exercises and the like).

There is also the term Conscience. Everyone has within him or her the principle of right, what we call Tao, the road along which we ought to walk. This is found in classical Chinese philosophy. Paul introduced the term conscience into the Christian vocabulary (Romans 2 14-150).

Whatever religious background one may have , or even if there is none , or it has been abandoned, as one makes a journey through life there are signposts on the way, indicating guidelines for making decisions , choosing between one option or another, adopting moral standards , and committing oneself to certain duties and obligations.

Smith (2006) notes:

> *If we use spirituality as a metaphor for the life journey we are on, then religion is the way or set of directions for many people, but it is only the way, not the destination. Laws, doctrines, dogmas, and rituals are our human attempt to give direction to the journey. Faith is the map, pointing the way, looking beyond religion, seeing beyond where we are at present. God, spirit, mystery, the source of transcendence- is our destination.*

3.4.6 Desires, Having, Materiality

Ronald Rolheiser (1998) states that:

> *Everyone has to have a spirituality and everyone one does have one, either a life-giving one or a destructive one. We do not wake up in this world calm and serene, having the luxury of choosing to act or not act. We wake up crying, on fire with desire, with madness. What we do with that madness is spirituality. Spirituality is more about whether or not we can sleep at night than about whether or not we go to church. It is about being integrated, or falling apart, about being within community or being lonely,*

about being in harmony with mother earth or being alienated from her. What shapes our actions is spirituality. And what shapes our actions is basically what shapes our desire. Desire makes us act.

O'Donohue (1997) says that the most beautiful thing about us is our longing; this longing is spiritual and has great depth and wisdom. de Mello (1990) is also of the same mind, saying: *spirituality means waking up....Most people never understand the loveliness and the beauty of this thing that we call human existence.* He also states *having a lot of money has nothing to do with being a success in life. You are a success in life when you wake up! Then you do not have to apologize to anyone, you do not have to explain anything to anyone, you do not give a damn what anybody thinks about you, what anybody says about you. You have no worries; you are happy.* He goes on to quote the great Meister Eckhart who said very beautifully, *God is not attained by a process of addition to any thing in their soul, but by a process of subtraction. You do not do anything to be free, you drop something. Then you are free.*

This restlessness of heart - a notion traditionally associated with Augustine in his Confessions has as its counterpart in Rahner's theology that questioning which Rahner sees at the root of the human search for meaning and fulfilment

Frankl (1959) perceived that man's primary concern is not to gain pleasure and avoid pain but rather to see the meaning in life. Howard (2002) discusses this, and quotes Maslow who she believes recognized this when he stated: *Man's inherent design or inner nature seems to be not only in his anatomy and physiology, but also his most basic need, yearnings and psychological capacity. This inner nature is usually not obvious and easily seen, but is rather hidden.*

3.4.7 Energy

Rolheiser (1998) suggests that spirituality is about what we do with our spirits, our souls. He feels that a healthy spirit or healthy soul must do two jobs: on the one hand it has to give us energy, fire, so that we do not ossify, lose our vitality, fall into paralyzing depression, and lose all sense of the beauty and joy of living.

The opposite side of being spiritual is to have no energy, to have lost all the zest for living.

O'Murchu (1997) proposes that spirituality is an innate quality of human life and existence; it is something we are born with, something essentially dynamic that forever seeks articulation and expression in human living. Spirituality is essentially a co creative gift; we are partially, but not wholly, responsible for its development. Spiritual energy is at least as powerful as, and probably more powerful than, our strongest instinctual drives and desires. Spirituality cannot be absent in the human life, but it can be misguided and misplaced to a degree that ensues in horrendous destruction -- personally, socially and culturally.

Hay (1989) proposes that spiritual well-being results in enhancement of one's inner resources, supported by Moberg (1984) who also suggests that the health of a person's inner resources is largely related to spirituality. Inner strength is also identified as a result of spiritual well-being. Burckhardt (1989) and Howden (1992) claim innerness, or inner resources, and the discovery of wholeness to be critical attributes of spirituality

Dyer (2001) adds a scientific proposition to the notion of spirituality as energy: everything in our universe is nothing more than energy. That is, at the very core of its being, every thing is vibrating to a certain frequency. Slower frequencies appear more solid, faster frequencies such as light and thought are less visible. The fastest frequencies are what he calls spirit. When the highest / fastest frequencies of spirit are brought to the presence of lower/slower frequencies, they nullify and dissipate those things we call problems.

He believes that everyone has the ability and the power to increase his/her energy and access the highest/fastest energies for the purpose of eradicating any problems in your life. There are some basic foundations and principles that one needs to understand and practice in order to access a spiritual solution to any problems that one may be experiencing .A person's ultimate choice, once these principles are understood, is whether to align ones self with a higher energy field or a lower energy field.

Going back to Rolheiser(1998,p26) *-The balance we are all searching for lies in a proper relationship to energy, especially creative, erotic, spiritual energy -- and these are one and the same thing. Spirituality is about finding the proper ways, disciplines, by which to both access that energy and contain it.*

3.4.8 Spirituality and Creativity

Is there a link between spirituality and creativity? The internet search engine Google produces over 2 million results when these two words are linked.
 Just as the word *spirit* comes from the ancient Greek language, so the origin of creativity is from another old language Latin creo meaning to *create, make*. Originally in the Christian period the word had a divine connotation related to the concept of *making from nothing*. In more recent times, in the Western world, the word has become more related to the concept of discovery or imagination.

Christian Koontz (1986) an American nun who has written extensively on spirituality, explored the connection between spirituality and creativity and suggests that they are co extensive and synonymous with a life flowing with integrity.

 It does seem to be difficult to separate spirituality from creativity, as both appear to be related to the idea of self-actualisation, stepping beyond oneself, transcendence..Macquarrie (1982) talks of transcendence as a continuing process of creativity and development. O'Donoghue (1997, p17) notes that *when you cease to fear your solitude, a new creativity awakens in you. Your forgotten or neglected inner wealth begins to reveal itself.*

Zohar and Marshall (2001), looking at the issue from a business perspective suggest that a spiritual intelligence allows humans beings to be creative, to change the rules and to alter situations.

McGeachy (2001) noted that the spiritually intelligent organisation will have employees who are less fearful of the organisation, are far less likely to compromise their basic beliefs and values in the workplace, and can bring significantly more of their complete selves to work, specifically their creativity and intelligence. They are hungry not only to express their souls, but also to further the development of their innermost selves. Guillory (2000) in his book on Spirituality in the Workplace has a fundamental premise that to be creative and innovative in today's workplace requires the whole person-body, mind and spirit. A Living Organisation, required for today's business world, is one that adapts to accelerated change by continual recreation.

3.4.9 How do Writers see Spirituality being experienced?

It was a daunting issue for me at the commencement of the literature review to realise the volume of writings on spirituality and the multiplicity of suggestions as to how it was experienced. It is no harm to revert back to the origin of the word from the Greek *pneuma,* or *breath*, and think of it as some form of life force or energy, an explanation that is put forward by many of the writers. Dyer goes so far as to add a scientific proposition to this notion of spirituality as energy. Most of the writers identify the immanence of spirituality - something within us, a restlessness or hidden yearning, a search for meaning. It is identified as a form of conscience, some primal recognition of values to be adhered to, including respect and care for others. It seems to be related to a way of living a life of meaning and maximising one's potential.

3.5 Spirituality in Business

3.5.1 Current Interest

In the 1990s more than 300 titles on workplace spirituality flooded the bookstores in the U.S. The events of September 11, 2001 further contributed to a re-examination of the nature and meaning of work. . There are now 30 MBA programmes offering courses on the subject.

Many of the books on spirituality and work argue that one can bring one's spiritual self to work. What is much more, they strongly suggest that in the cut and thrust of work one can find the spiritual. (Heylin, 2007).

Garcia -Zamor (2003) suggests that there has been ample empirical evidence that spirituality in the workplace creates a new organizational culture in which employees feel happier and perform better.

There has been a strong growth in secular spirituality programmes in business, run by "self help" gurus of the modern age, such as Ken Blanchard, Steven Covey, Deepak Chopra, and Peter Senge demonstrating that many business people are dissatisfied with the jumping back and forth between their personal beliefs, and the requirements of performing in business.

Nash & McLennan examined this phenonomen in *Church on Sunday, Work on Monday: The Challenge of Fusing Christian Values with Business Life (2001).*
Spurred on by years of downsizing and job insecurity, employees in the United States are at their forefront of a grass roots movement that is quietly creating a spiritual revival in the workplace. This seems to be a reaction to the corporate greed of the 1980s. People were unhappy, they were making money but their personal values had to be checked at the door**.** Spirituality now seems to be working well where the motivation industry has failed

McGeachy (2001), an Irish author, outlines reasons why is there is an interest in spiritual intelligence in the workplace at the present time. Factors include

downsizing, bottom-line focus, current business philosophy, corporate cultures, less time, and the waning influence of the church.

But apart from reacting to a need of employees, there appear to be sound business reasons why spirituality in the work place should be accommodated.

Garcia -Zamor (2003) noted that a Harvard Business School study examined 10 companies with strong corporate cultures and 10 with weak corporate cultures. In an 11 year period, the researchers found a dramatic correlation between the strength of an organization's corporate culture and its profitability. In some cases, the more spirited companies out performed the others by 400% -- 500% in terms of net earnings, return on investment, and shareholder values. A Vanderbilt University Business School study resulted in similar findings.

Visionary companies actually outperformed their comparison companies in economic terms by at least three times and in some cases by up to 16 times (Collins & Porras 2002).Thompson (cited in Krishnakumar & Neck 2002, p159) reveals that some studies show all the more spirited companies out performed the others by 400 to 500% in terms of net earnings, return on investment and shareholders value.

There would therefore appear to be benefits to an organization for encouraging spirituality in the workplace. Evidence exists that suggests a link between workplace spirituality and enhanced individual creativity and practice (Freshman, 1999) increased honesty and trust within the organisation (Wagner-Marsh and Conley,1999), enhanced sense of personal fulfilment of employees (Burack,1999) and increased commitment to organisational goals(Delbecq,1999:Leigh,1997).

The other side of the coin - workplace without spirituality can ultimately result in a high absenteeism, high turnover rates, high stress associated with work deadlines, and depression (Thompson, 2000).

Marques, Dhiman, and King (2007) suggest that spirituality is the new competitive edge.

Ian Mitroff, professor of management and author on this topic, in Mitroff and Denton (1999), spoke of spirituality as the desire to find ultimate purpose in life, and to live accordingly.

People hunger for more human connection and a deeper sense of meaning at work.

Ashmos and Duchon (2000) listed five reasons for corporate America's growing interest in spirituality at work:

1. The downsizing, re-engineering, and the layoffs of the past decade, have turned the American workplace into an environment where employees are demoralized;

2. The fact that the workplace is increasingly seen as a primary source of community for many people because of the decline of neighbourhoods, churches, civic groups, and extended families as principal places for feeling connected;

3. The increased access to and enhanced curiosity about Pacific Rim cultures and Eastern philosophies. Philosophies such as Zen Buddhism, Taoism, and Sufism encourage meditation and emphasize values such as group loyalty and finding one's spiritual centre in every activity;

4. The fact that ageing baby boomers are moving ever closer to life's great uncertainty -- death -- and thereby develop a growing interest in contemplating life's meaning;

5. The fact that there is increasing pressure of global competition, which has led organisational leaders to realize that employee creativity needs nurturing.

Giacalone & Jurkiewicz (2003) believe that where there is a workplace environment wherein the beliefs of people are respected and they are encouraged to perform to their best, there is a positive impact on the bottom line. They assert that organisations high in workplace spirituality outperformed those without it by 86%, and that such organisations reportedly grown faster, increase efficiencies, and produce higher returns on investments.

McLaughlin, C (1998) is clear that when employees are encouraged to express their creativity, the result is a more fulfilled and sustained workforce. She stated that a study of business performance by the highly respected Wilson Learning Company found that 39% of the variability in corporate performance is attributable to the personal satisfaction of the staff. She goes on to emphasise that, in today's highly competitive environment the best talent seeks out organisations that reflect their inner values and provide opportunities for personal development and community service, not just bigger salaries.

3.5.2 Values, Priorities

If Schneider's definition is again reviewed *...striving to integrate one's life in terms not of isolation...towards the values one perceives...* it is apparent that ones values must be honoured in one's business dealings. Simply expressed this means giving value for money in our work for our employer, serving our customer, and honouring our commitment to the wider community. As a manager it also incorporates treating our employees fairly.

Thompson (2001) says that spirituality has to do with that part of us that can't be weighed or measured. It is more than what we know or what we can do. It comes into play when we decide to do what's right. Spirituality gives support to the values that make you watch for who you are. Ritz- Carlton may have got it right - take good care of your employees and they will take good care of the guests. Reflect on who you are and how you might take your personal values through the office door.

Collins & Porras (2002, p73) state that values are the company's essential and enduring tenets and principles which are not to be compromised for financial gain or short term expediency. Spirituality in the workplace entails more focus on the personal and spiritual connectedness between the organisation and employees goals.

McGeachy (2001) quotes from the Mitroff and Denton (1999) study, and talks about the values-based organisation, which must have a comprehensive set of

values in order to embrace spiritual intelligence. The spiritually intelligent organisation will have employees who are far less fearful of the organisation, are far less likely to compromise their basic beliefs and values in the workplace, perceive the organisation as significantly more profitable, report that they can bring significantly more of their complete selves to work, specifically their creativity and intelligence, and are hungry for models of practice in spirituality in the workplace without offending their core workers or causing acrimony. They are hungry not only to express their souls, but also to further the development of the innermost selves.

She goes on to state that for the individual, love in the workplace is expressed by genuine compassion for one's colleagues; allowing that love to permeate all of one's activities as an act of love of God and Colleague ; it is the exchange of love, energy, kindness and caring.

Wigglesworth (2004b) asserts that spirituality can lead to the ability to always act with compassion and wisdom regardless of the circumstances

Carter (2003) cited Sangster (2003) who opined that spiritual workers are those who:

> *… think cooperatively and/or altruistically; have a balanced objective view of the world; listen as much as (or more than) they speak; apply three-dimensional bigger picture thinking; believe in some higher driving force and purpose beyond humankind; find the time to think things through objectively; think laterally in order to promote realistic solutions; encourage and empower others selflessly; work open-mindedly with a wide range of people; consistently display integrity and trust, and; expect the best from people without being a soft touch.*

Marques, Dhiman, and King (2007) list the themes vital to a spirited workplace which were culled from interviews including truth, ethics, respect, belief in a higher power, understanding, openness, trust, and kindness (bonding, conviviality, compassion).These are similar to characteristics of personal or individual expressions of spirituality at work as identified by McGeachy (2001) who concludes that shared values create a sense of community because shared values build trust.

Collins (2001) concludes that if you recruit people who share your values, there is no need to motivate them.

3.5.3 Leadership Attributes

Clearly a spiritual business will have a leader or leaders who will themselves have recognition of their spiritual selves. What sort of qualities will such a person have?

Collinson (1999) says the responsibility of leaders is not to develop people but to develop the climate and opportunities for self development. Spiritual leadership encourages others to ask questions. As a result of employees being given empowerment, they can have a better vision of their own personal destiny and to take more responsibility for their actions and personal growth (Howard, 2002).

A number of writers (Korac-Kakabadse et al,2002), (Collins& Porras, 2002),and Collins(2001) see spiritual leaders as having the ability to foster all the spiritual indicators in a company, who will exhibit a sustained ability to build consensus and enthuse their workers with a worthwhile purpose. They inspire a sense of shared community values. They will also work to develop community within the business, and to be conscious of the organisation's obligation to the wider community. According to these authors the spiritual leader has qualities including

- an ability to listen, ponder and contemplate
- they see things as they really are and are self-aware
- they look at problems differently and are not afraid to introduce real change regardless of the risk
- they allow employees to empower themselves, and develop their self-respect to accomplish work of their own accord
- they see themselves as in service for the organisation and employees, and not for themselves

As a result of employees becoming empowered they believe they can make a change, be a source of creativity, behave in a self managing way, and have an impact into corporate policy development. They become great team players with the sense of community, and with a sense of being part of something larger than themselves (Milliman, Ferguson et al., 1999). A typical comment found in a survey carried out by these authors was: *working here is truly an unbelievable experience. They treat you with respect, pay you well, and empower you. They used your ideas to solve problems. They encourage you to be yourself. I love going to work.*

3.5.4 Ideology

Successful organisations will have a mission statement, or stated form of ideology expressing their values and ambitions.

For Collins & Porras (2002, p 73) core ideology is a combination of purpose and values. Purpose is the company's fundamental reasons for existence beyond just making money -- a perpetual guiding star on the horizon. Finlay (2000, p57) advises that this purpose should be written down in a "mission statement" which is an enduring declaration of the broad directions that the organisation wishes to follow.

If employees are convinced of the mission and values of the company they will readily give their total selves to produce great results.

Collins & Porras (2001,p73) studied 18 mainly American companies that were founded before 1950 and that had attained extraordinary long-term performance, becoming in the process truly great enduring institutions regarded as the premier companies in their industry. Although they do not use the term spiritual these visionary companies display to a high degree all the indicators of a spiritual company.

Giacalone & Jurkiewicz(2004) spoke of   a spiritual work place in terms of a framework of organisational values evidenced in the culture that promote

employees experience of transcendence through the work process, facilitating their sense of being connected to others in a way that provides feelings of completeness and joy.

Waaijman (2002, p166) notes the 1990 International project *Art Meets Science and Spirituality in a Changing Economy* which views spirituality as a key cultural factor, and recognised the growing interest in spirituality in business and industry. Five factors mark the spiritual calibre of a business enterprise

1. a sound business accord in which the central values of an enterprise are defined and strategies for reaching these goals are indicated
2. attention to product quality and taking proper steps to test and guard this quality internally
3. appreciation for the person of one's fellow worker and attention to mutual relations
4. the social outlook of the business- does this company cut itself off from or to make a contribution to the common interest?
5. responsibility for the quality of the environment

Carter (2003) stated that the ethics or morals of our organisations are becoming increasingly important to employees.

3.5.5 Connectedness

Dyson et al (1999) believe that one's relationship with others is pivotal to spirituality. Hay (1989) suggests that spirituality occurs in the context of communities in which one is a part. This gives a broader social view and alerts the reader to the notion that spirituality can acquire different perspectives according to the context of the individual.

Clearly the workplace is a community, and a community in which an individual spends a significant amount of time and develops many relationships. The quality of such relationships may be determined by the spirituality of the participants.

O'Murchu (1997) believes that a pivotal shift in spirituality's meaning for the 20th century resides in the birth of a world view of interdependence or

relationality.In its broadest sense spirituality centres on our awareness and experience of relationality. Our whole understanding of what life is all about is centred on the capacity to relate, and the need to do so in mutually and spiritually beneficial ways.

Neal (1999) thinks that developments in the past few years -- with 9/11, the market crash, the fall of Enron, and the lack of integrity in organisations -- have caused people to hunger for more human connection and a deeper sense of meaning at work.

Marques et al (2007) were clear from information gathered from their studies that spirituality in the workplace is an experience that can only exist if all essential factors are in harmony with each other. The majority of their sources (literature and interviews) seemed to be in agreement with the need for collaboration by all stakeholders at all levels in creating a spiritual workplace. The main term used to express this need is interconnectedness.

Marques et al (2007, p89) definition of spirituality in the workplace placed heavy emphasis on this interconnectedness *spirituality in the workplace is an experience of interconnectedness among those involved in a work process; initiated by authenticity, reciprocity, and personal goodwill; engendered by a deep sense of meaning that is inherent in the organisation's work; and resulting in greater motivation and organisational excellence.*

3.5.6 Changes Happening?

Judging by the number of books on the subject, the number of courses, and the interest being shown currently, it is clear that recognition of spirituality in the workplace has emerged, certainly in the U.S. It may well be that people brought their spiritual self to work before, but only in recent times has it been acknowledged that a recognition of a person's spirituality is valid, and indeed that it can be a positive development for the growth of individuals and the organisation.

But what stage of the cycle is this country at? The U.S has known sophistication in organisational development and wealth generation for a longer period than Ireland, we have traditionally learned much from the U.S., and have adopted many of their practices and beliefs. Our economic slowdown is of recent origin, lack of growth and a diminution of economic well being are unknown to some of our *Celtic Cubs.*

Writing when the Celtic Tiger was in full swing, McGeachy (2001) questioned whether Irish business values had deteriorated ,because performance management systems (introduced into U.S. multinationals working here) were based less on traditional Irish values of cooperation, community ,and team, but more on individualism and self realisation..

I found it very difficult to source any writings, or material, on spirituality in business in Ireland. I did find one research study on spirituality in Sligo Institute of Technology, which was interesting, but not seemingly part of a new wave writings recognising the role of spirituality in business in Ireland. A search of Amazon,the world's largest online bookstore revealed over 900 books under the genre of *spirituality + Business* but I could not find one which concentrated on Ireland.

Margaret Benefiel (2005, p76), published in New York, has written about spirituality in work, and her books incorporate case studies of Irish operations. One of these case studies identifies Document Management Group, a family business focused on high quality service, which was named one of the best companies to work for in Ireland in 2003 and 2004..The managing director, Tom Hefferon, attempts to integrate spirituality and values throughout the company, believing that ultimately only the spirituality and values based company will survive...His vision statement for the company:

> *Our vision is to build a new business model profitable and productive, where our people can find meaning, significance and success through their work, and where personal and workplace values align to achieve greater outward harmony and inner spiritual life.*

The other case studies that Benefiel uses are in the healthcare and charity areas, not directly relevant to profit motivated organisations. But certainly she had discovered that spirituality did exist in certain Irish businesses at the point of the ascendency of the Celtic Tiger.

But we seem to be still in the mode of blame –Lehman Brothers, The Government, The Financial Regulators, and The Church – and not spending enough time on thinking of solutions, or indeed research into factors which can improve our fortunes, as recognition of the role of spirituality in business can.

3.6 Tensions between Spirituality and Materialism?

For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. **Romans 8.5-6.**

There are a number of warnings in the writings of many of the authors cited in this section that the requirements of spirituality may involve sacrifices, and a requirement to think of others before ourselves. O'Donoghue (1997, p29) notes that it is strangely ironic that the world loves power and possessions:

You can be very successful in this world, be admired by everyone, have endless possessions, have a lovely family, success in your work and have everything the world can give, but behind it all you can be completely lost and miserable. If you have everything the world has to offer you, but you do not have love, then you are the poorest of the poorest of the poor -every human heart hungers for love.. If you do not have the warmth of love in your heart, there is no possibility of real celebration and enjoyment.

De Mello (1990) also warns of the dangers of attachment, which he says destroys your capacity to love. The moment you become attached you are blocking out many other things, your heart has hardened.

Oliver James in his book Affluenza (2007) suggests that the Affluenza Virus is a set of values which increases our vulnerability to emotional distress. It entails placing a high value on acquiring money and possessions, looking good in the

eyes of others and wanting to be famous. He suggests that much of the western world has become afflicted. His thoughts are echoed by Lane (2000) who notes that despite the fact that citizens of advanced market democracies are satisfied with their material progress, many are haunted by the spirit of unhappiness. There is evidence of the rising tide of clinical depression in most advanced societies, and in the United States studies have documented a decline in the number of people who regard themselves as happy. Although our political and economic systems are based on the utilitarian philosophy of happiness -- the greatest good for the greatest number -- they seem to have contributed to our dissatisfaction with life. He suggests that the main source of well-being in advanced economies are friendships and a good family life, and once one is beyond a reasonable poverty level, further possessions contributes little to one's happiness.

Stephen Green is a well-known and a prominent figure in international business and media. He has been Chairman of HSBC following his time as a CEO from 2003 to 2006. He is chairman of the British Bankers Association; also Chair of the Prime Minister's business Council of Britain, and has been an ordained priest in the Church of England since 1988. In his book, *Good Value: Reflections on Money, Morality, and an Uncertain World (2009)* he talks of our leaning towards the Faustian Option: the bargain that grants immediate and undiluted pleasure/power/sex/money in exchange for acceptance of the consequences whatever they are. We take this option in many small ways all the time, and sometimes we justify it because we can't accept the ambiguity of imperfection: why struggle with a difficult and obdurate challenge that is never really going to be solved, when we could forget all about it and go shopping instead. Yet the bargain is illusionary. It turns out that we don't get satisfaction that way either. The pleasure of it just melts in our hands.

So will we need to commit to the challenge, for all the ambiguity is involves. And, as we do so, we will learn that we can avoid the Faustian risk and keep a path to fulfilment if *and only if* we are prepared to follow certain guiding principles-integrity, treating others (colleagues or customers) as ends not means,

ambition (to contribute the most not to get the most), having balance, leadership, but most important- how is what I am doing contributing to human welfare?

3.7 Conclusion –What is Spirituality?

With the benefit of a substantial review of literature, and having conducted interviews with 18 individuals, can I come up with a better definition or description of spirituality than say Sandra Schneiders?

One thing we can get out of the way is that spirituality is not religion- religion is more about systems of practices and beliefs within which the particular religious social group engage. Religions make demands on followers-there is a set of rules to follow in order to belong. spirituality can operate within religions, but can be practised independently of religions. Neither Budhism nor Taoism would classify themselves as a religion, but more a philosophy of life and a search for enlightenment, but there need not be any conflict between spirituality and Buddhism or Taoism. I also believe that there is no conflict between Atheism and spirituality.

Mankind seems to have an inbuilt requirement to search for meaning –initially this may be directed towards a search for happiness, and can be sought in the pursuit of material assets, but with enlightenment, this may develop into a search for the meaning of life, and can be best satisfied through an expression of spirituality.

In the simplest terms the "hidden yearning" within us is an indicator of our spirituality. We each need to find meaning and purpose and develop our potential, to live an integrated, fulfilled life. spirituality encompasses the way an individual lives out his or her sense of interconnectedness with the world through an ability to tap into deep resources. It encompasses such terms as truth, love, service, wisdom, joy, peace and wholeness. It is about self-awareness and about unity with others. It combines our basic philosophy towards life, and our values,

with our conduct and practice. Hence the difficulty with definition - spirituality is highly individual and intensely personal, as well as inclusive and universal.

I have to say then that I cannot come up with a better definition of spirituality than that of Schneiders:

> *spirituality refers to the experience of consciously striving to integrate one's life in terms not of isolation and self absorption but of self transcendence towards the ultimate values one perceives* (Schneiders, 1989, p 684).

- which to my mind incorporates the essential elements of the word: *Experience, striving* –an everyday effort at the core of ones being, the way, *Not self absorption-* Love of others, connectedness, balancing desires, *Values one perceives* – personal values, priorities *Not of isolation, Self transcendence* – Immanence and transcendence.

4 Methodology

4.1 Introduction

Research methodology refers to the approach or paradigm that underpins the research (Blaxter et al., 2001). A paradigm may be viewed as a set of basic beliefs that define for the holder, the nature of the world, and how to enquire into it (Guba and Lincoln, 1989: Denzin and Lincoln, 1994)

4.1.1 What this Chapter covers

This chapter covers the background regarding the enquiry by the researcher into the research question, the research question emerging, the aims and objectives of the project, the philosophical debate regarding the methodology chosen, data collection methods and issues, and the process of analysis.

4.1.2 Background

As noted earlier, I retired in 2004, before normal retirement age. This was a not uncommon feature of the so called "Celtic Tiger" period, where the economic welfare of the Country improved dramatically, as Ireland outpaced most other countries in the Developed World. Although the "Celtic Tiger" expired in mid 2008, this does not invalidate the research, but rather provides a most interesting "sting in the tail" in the story.

I was myself a business leader in the South East of Ireland in this period, and provided advisory services to businesses from the early 70's to 2004. As such I was familiar with the increased prosperity enjoyed by clients I was dealing with, and their associates.

At the same time as this economic prosperity change in the country, significant cultural changes were taking place – globalisation, media intrusion, immigration, the decline both in the influence of the Catholic Hierarchy and the general uptake/involvement in Catholic practice and ritual, and an increase in self-confidence in the Irish people.

Throughout the period I was a practicing Catholic, with a developing interest in spirituality and related disciplines. From time to time, and particularily as the "Celtic Tiger" years advanced, I sensed a feeling (from my own experiences and from colleagues in business) that doing business was not as enjoyable as before – the culture was different. There seemed to be a feeling that "we have lost something ".

Research had been carried out by Flanagan (1999) on changes in spirituality during the relevant period, among a group from a deprived area, the Liberties in Dublin, which identified that the nature of spirituality had changed, but was not extinguished. This grouping would not have benefited from the increased prosperity of the 'Celtic Tiger' Ireland, but would in contrast have seen a widening of the have/ have not divide. This research was a model in certain ways for the research the subject of this study.

I commenced the project in autumn 2007; the main part of the first year involved a Literature review, and preparation for interviews. In mid 2008 it became apparent that economic growth had stalled, and by end of the year a recession had taken hold. This had huge economic impact on many of those who had benefited most from the "boom years" particularily those in the Construction and Financial sector. This provided a most interesting development in the project, as attitudes changed dramatically in a short period of time. The research also attempts to review the impact of this on the experiences and attitudes of the group interviewed.

4.1.3 Aims and Objectives of the Project

The research aims to explore the perceptions, attitudes, and experiences of a small (but representative) group of Business leaders from the South East of Ireland, who enjoyed the economic prosperity of the period, to spirituality, its place, if any, in business, and changes which have taken place.

4.1.4 The Research Question

In order to achieve this aim, Qualitative research methods were utilised to gather, analyse, and synthesise the experiences and perspectives of 18 business leaders.

The topic investigated was whether there was a change experienced in the level and quality of spirituality, among a group of representative business leaders from the South East region during the period of the 'Celtic Tiger', a period of significant cultural and economic change, and the subsequent downturn. The study also examined related areas including:

- the participants understanding of spirituality and its relationship to religion and religious practices

- their views on the role of spirituality in work and organisations, and potential conflicts between spirituality and business objectives

- the relationship between spirituality and business values

4.1.5 Stages of the Process

Stage 1 involved the Literature Review
- This covered and set out definitions and experience of spirituality , across a diverse selection of writers, Christian, non Christian, Irish, European, American

- Writings regarding spirituality in business were reviewed, the U.S. has a proliferation of these, particularily post "9/11"

- Previous studies or research available were reviewed

- Economic and Cultural developments during the period were reviewed

- Changes in religious practice in the period were examined.

Stage 2 involved firming up on the Data Collection Methodology

- Writings on Methodology were reviewed, particularily the Philosophical debate regarding the nature of human science and the analysis framework

- Methodology chosen in previous studies or research available was examined

Stage 3 involved framing the Interview Questions, selecting Candidates, and carrying out the interviews

- Information from previous studies was reviewed

- The aims of the research were revisited

- Discussions with my tutor led to refinement of a questionnaire

- Candidates were selected for interview, to achieve a cross section of interests

- Semi structured Interviews were carried out to discipline of questions chosen

- All interviews were recorded for subsequent transcribing

Stage 4 involved Analysis of the Data, drawing conclusions, recommending further research implications

- NVivo, a Data Analysis package was utilised to codify the interviews

- Following careful analysis of the interviews, themes arising were summarised

- The ultimate outcome is this thesis presentation, summarising the process and findings

4.2 The Philosophical Debate

4.2.1 Understanding Philosophical Positions

A starting point in research really should be a review by the researcher of his own philosophical position. There may be many practical reasons why a researcher has chosen to engage in research, and at an early point the researcher

may have already decided upon the methodology. However as researchers review the literature on methodology, they will quickly appreciate that choosing a research methodology that is, the "how" of research, involves something much deeper than practicalities.

Knowledge of philosophy enables the researcher:
 - To recognize the design that best fits the researcher:
 -To identify and even create new designs, which may not be based on past experiences
 -To clarify the overall configuration of a piece of research: what kind of evidence is   gathered from where, and how such evidence is interpreted in order to provide good answers to the basic research question.

<div align="center">(Easterby Smith et al.1991)</div>

Developing a philosophical perspective requires that the researcher make several core assumptions concerning two dimensions: the nature of society and the nature of science. (Burrell and Morgan 1979). The sociological dimension involves a choice between two views of society: regulatory or radical change. The regulatory view suggests that society can be viewed as unified and cohesive, whereas the radical view sees society as in constant conflict as humans struggle to free themselves from the domination of societal structures.

The other dimension, science, involves either a subjective or an objective approach to research, and these two major philosophical approaches are delineated by several core assumptions concerning ontology(reality), epistemology(knowledge), human nature(predetermined or not) and methodology. Whatever his philosophical persuasion, what the researcher will find is that these assumptions are consequential to each other, that is, their view of ontology affects their epistemological persuasion, which in turn affects their view of human nature, consequently choice of methodology logically follows the assumptions the researcher has already made (Holden and Lynch, 2004).

Burrell and Morgan (1979) suggest that the assumptions about the nature of human or social science can be viewed as two polarised views ranging from

objective to subjective. The following table developed by them outlines the two major philosophical perspectives and the assumptions relating to ontology, epistemology, and human nature and methodology.

Table 4.1 Nature of Social Science- Analysis Framework

The Subjectivist Approach	<<<<<<<< >>>>>>>>>	The Objectivist Approach
Nominalism	Ontology	Realism
Anti-positivism	Epistemology	Positivism
Voluntarism	Human Nature	Determinism
Ideographic	Methodology	Nomothetic

Source: Burrell G. and Morgan, M.1979 Sociological Paradigms and Organisational Analysis, p3

Whilst positivists (objectivists) claim that the world consist of phenomena, which are real and concrete and that knowledge exists solely as a result of directly observing the phenomena, subjectivists on the other hand view the world as being socially constructed and subjective in nature (Gill and Johnson,1997).

Remenyi et al (1998) suggest that the purpose of the continuum is to enable basic assumptions about research activity to be distinguished. Wilmott et al (1993) contend that Burrell and Morgan's model is helpful both in illuminating the role of assumptions in the production of knowledge and in identifying the comparatively narrow set of theoretical postulations upon which organisational analysis is based. However Wilmott et al (1993) criticised the central argument of the subjective - objective dimension as it was felt to unnecessarily constrain the process of theory development within polarised sets of assumptions about science and society. Wilmott et al (1993) argue that the model's division of social and organisational analysis into four mutually exclusive paradigms lacks

credibility. However I feel that the model is useful in illustrating the different philosophical views underpinning research.

4.2.2 Ontology

Jankowicz (2000) describes ontology as an individual's fundamental belief about the nature of being-whether reality is of an objective nature or the product of an individual's mind (Burrell and Morgan 1979, p1.) Ontology deals with the form and nature of reality and asks what can be known about it (Denzin and Lincoln 1994). These assumptions deal with the question of whether the reality to be investigated is external to the individual or the product of individual consciousness (Burrell and Morgan 1979.)

The nominalist position revolves around the idea that the social world is made up of nothing more than names, concepts and labels, which are used to structure reality (De Burca, 1995). Nominalists do not admit to there being any real structure to the world and De Burca (1995, p118) reinforces this idea by stating that the external world is a social process created by the individuals concerned

Realism on the other hand postulates that the social world external to individual cognition is made up of tangible immutable structures, which exist as empirical entities regardless of whether or not we label and perceive these structures (Burrell and Morgan 1979.)

4.2.3 Epistemological Assumptions

Epistemology deals with the relationship between the researcher and what can be known (Denzin and Lincoln 1994). Brannick and Roche (1997) purport that the researcher's epistemological perspective determines what they consider as a valid, legitimate contribution to theory development or generation. At the general level Bernerd (2000) describes epistemology as the study of how we know things.

Easterby- Smith et al (1991) noted that one of the most important choices in research design is whether the researcher should remain distant from or get

involved with the material that is being researched. This choice stems from the researcher's philosophical view about whether or not it is possible for the observer to remain independent from the phenomena being observed (Easterby-Smith et al 1991). Epistemological assumptions determine extreme positions on the issue of whether knowledge is something which can be acquired on one hand, or is something which has to be personally experienced on the other (Burrell and Morgan 1979). This has led to some division between researchers on the basis of methodological orientation, or a positivist/interpretivist split (Goulding, 1999). Bernerd (2000) notes that this split between the positivistic approach and the interpretive approach pervades in the human sciences.

The debate therefore is essentially whether or not knowledge can be transmitted to others, or has to be gained from personal experience. The following table provides a summary of the key differences between each of the epistemological standpoints.

Table 4.2 Features of Positivist and Phenomenological Paradigms

	Phenomenological Paradigm	Positivist Paradigm
Basic Beliefs:	The world is socially constructed and subjective Observer is part of what is being observed Science is driven by human interests	The world is external and objective Observer is independent Science is value free
Researcher should:	Focus on meanings Try to understand what is happening Look at the totality of each situation Develop ideas through induction from data	Focus on facts Look for causality and fundamental laws Reduce phenomena to simplest elements Formulate hypotheses and then test them
Preferred Methods include:	Using multiple methods to establish different views of phenomena Small samples investigated in depth or over time	Operationalising concepts so that they can be measured Taking large samples

Source: Key features of positivist) and phenomenological paradigms ((Easterby-Smith et al (1991)

Burrell and Morgan (1979, p.5) use the phrase "positivism" "to characterise epistemologies which seek to explain and predict what happens in the social world by searching for regularities and causal relationships between its constituent elements."

Some positivists claim that an adequate experimental research programme can verify hypotheses, whereas others would argue that hypotheses can only be falsified and never demonstrated to be true. The main feature of positivism is the belief that the social world exists externally and should be measured by using objective methods (Easterby- Smith (2002): De Burca, 1995). The researcher is independent of the research phenomena and so *neither affects nor is affected by the subject of the research* (Remenyi et al, 1998, p33).

The interpretive approach seeks to understand and explain why people have different experiences, rather than search for external laws and fundamental laws to explain their behaviour (Easterby- Smith et al (1991). The interpretive approach implies that every event studied is a unique incident in its own right. (Remenyi et al, 1998, p33). Interpretive research does not predefine dependent and independent variables but focuses on the complexity of human sense making as the situation emerges (Klein and Myers, 1999).

Interpretivism has many variants (Blaxter et al., 2001).The terms interpretivism, anti positivism, and phenomenology routinely appear in studies on research methodologies. Schwandt, in Denzin & Lincoln (2000) refers to these terms as a 'family of methodological and philosophical persuasions'.

The following table (Saunders et al., 1997) lists the advantages and disadvantages associated with the positivist and phenomenological paradigms:

Table 4.3 Advantages and Disadvantages of Positivist and Phenomenoligical Paradigms

	Positivism	Phenomenology
Advantages	Economical collection of large amounts of data Clear theoretical focus for the research at the outset Greater opportunity for researcher to retain control of the research process Easily comparable data	Facilitates understanding of how and why Enables researcher to be alive to changes which occur during the research process Good at understanding social processes
Disadvantages	Inflexible- direction often cannot be changed once data collection process has started Weak at understanding social processes Often does not discover the meanings people attach to social phenomena	Data collection can be time consuming Data analysis is difficult Researcher has to live with the uncertainty that clear patterns may not arise Generally perceived as less credible by non researchers

Source: Advantages and disadvantages of positivism and phenomenology (Saunders et al., 1997)

4.2.4 Human Nature Assumptions

This concerns the relationship between human beings and their environment: whether or not the researcher perceives human beings as the controller or the controlled. Burrell and Morgan (1979) noted that the voluntarist view is that human beings are completely autonomous and free willed. Human beings shape the world within the realm of their own experience (Morgan and Smircich, 1980).

The determinist view regards human beings and their activities as being completely determined by their situation and environment (Burrell and Morgan 1979). This view purports that human beings are the product of the external forces in the environment to which they are exposed (Morgan and Smircich, 1980).

4.2.5 Methodology

The choices made by the researcher in relation to each of the assumptions as outlined earlier have a direct implication on the method chosen to investigate and obtain knowledge about the human and social world and the research question. Different views of ontology, epistemology, and models of human nature are likely to influence researchers towards the use of different methodologies. The methodological debate is divided in two separate approaches, the ideographic approach and the nomothetic approach,

The ideographic approach to social science is based on the view is that one can only understand the social world by obtaining first-hand knowledge of the subject under investigation (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). The nomothetic approach on the other hand puts emphasis on the importance of basing research on systematic protocol and techniques make and focus on testing hypotheses in accordance with the principles of scientific rigour (Burrell and Morgan, 1979).

If the subjective orientation as explained above is accepted, then it is likely that an ideographic approach would be adopted. This approach states that in order to understand the social world one must first get first-hand knowledge of the subject

under investigation. The emphasis is placed on the analysis of subjective accounts which are generated by 'getting inside' situations and allowing one's subject unfold its nature and characteristics during the process of investigation (Burrell and Morgan,1979). Researchers who follow this approach tend to use qualitative techniques for analysis such as case studies and focus groups.

On the other hand, if we accept an objective orientation we would be biased to follow a nomothetic approach. This approach emphasises the use of methodological procedures and techniques and is dominated by the construction of systematic techniques and the use of quantitative methods for data analysis, for example surveys and questionnaires

However, Easterby-Smyth et al (2002) claimed that a researcher does not have to choose one approach over the other and can in fact combine both methodologies in order to improve the inherent weaknesses of the individual methods. Lee(1999,p11) states, *the main focus of a researcher should be to ensure that the most appropriate methods has been applied to the study rather than focusing on whether or not qualitative or quantitative designs are used.*

4.2.6 Selecting the Research Method

Figure 4.4 below sets out the major research implications arising from the extreme subjectivist and objectivist perspectives:

Figure 4.4: Key Research Implications of the Subjective and Objective Perspectives

Positivist Perspective		Subjectivist Perspective	
Independence	The observer is independent of what is being observed	The observer interacts with what is being observed	**Interaction**

Value-freedom	The choice of what to study, and how to study it, can be determined by objective criteria rather than by human beliefs and interests	Inherent biasness in the choice of what to study, and how to study it as researchers are driven by their own interests, beliefs, skills, and values	Value- laden
Causality	The aim of social science should be to identify causal explanations and fundamental laws that explain regularities in human social behaviour	The aim of social science is to try to understand what is happening	No Cause or Effect
Hypothetico-deductive	Science proceeds through a process of hypothesising fundamental laws and then deducing what kind of observations will demonstrate truth or falsity of these hypotheses	Develop ideas through induction from evidence; mutual simultaneous shaping of factors	No Hypothetico-deductive Reasoning
Operationalisation	Concepts need to be operationalised in a way which enables facts to measured quantitatively; static design -- categories isolated before study	Qualitative methods - small samples investigated in depth or over time ; emerging design categories identified during research process	Operationalisation
Reductionism	Problems as a whole are better understood if they are reduced into the simplest possible elements	Problems as a whole are better understood if the totality of the situation is looked at	No Reductionism
Generalisation	In order to be able to generalise about regularities in human and social and behavioural it is necessary to select samples of sufficient size; aim of	Everything is contextual; patterns identified; theories then developed for understanding	Generalisation

			Research Language
Research Language	Formal, based on set definitions: impersonal voice; use of accepted quantitative words.	Informal, evolving decisions: personal voice; use of accepted qualitative words.	**Research Language**

Compiled by Holden and Lynch (2004) from Easterby–Smith et al.(1991), Hussey and Hussey(1997),Creswell (1994),Remenyi et al (2000)

As the aims of this study involve an attempt to explore and understand the experiences and perspectives of individuals, it is appropriate that it is rooted in an interpretative theoretical perspective. One of the key ideas within interpretativism is the importance of capturing and interpreting the viewpoints of individuals. Weber (1864-1920), a founding father within the interpretative movement, emphasised that unlike the 'natural' world, human action involves a reciprocal process of interpretation and meaning.

The quest to understand social life must focus on understanding the way that interpretation and meaning occurs for individuals (Hughes and Sharrock, 1997). Although interpretivism has evolved since Weber's early contribution (Crotty, 1998), this quest to understand and interpret the experience of individuals has remained a central principle. Given the strong links between interpretivism and qualitative research it is consistent that a qualitative approach was adopted for this study.

Denzin and Lincoln's (2000) description of what qualitative research aims to do support the use of the interpretative perspective in this study:

Qualitative research involves an interpretative, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Denzin and Lincoln,2000,p3)

Qualitative research would also be characterised by the design and methods used to meet these aims. Snape and Spencer (2003) have identified a number of essential elements within qualitative research which describes the nature of design and method:

- Qualitative research uses methods which are flexible, developmental and facilitate close contact with research participants
- small samples of research participants are used and selected to represent significant criteria
- qualitative research uses interactive and flexible data gathering methods that generate rich, and detailed responses
- that analysis within qualitative research is concerned with description, classification and the identification of emergent concepts and themes (Snape and Spencer,2003)

These essential elements are important features which are reflected within the design, methods and outputs of this research exercise. Relating back to Figure 4.4 above, the approach will incorporate:

- the researcher will interact with the interviewees through the choice of questions, and through the rapport developed from business relationships
- There is a bias in the choice of the study, driven by the researchers own background as outlined above.
- The exercise is to attempt to understand experiences of business people through a defined period
- from the evidence arising from interviews, ideas will be developed
- a relatively small sample of interviewees will be involved, themes arising will be identified during the research process
- the research issue will be reviewed in the context of the economic development and changes during the relevant period
- Patterns will be identified, and theories developed in an effort to understand the bigger picture.
- The research language will use accepted qualitative words.

The attraction of a qualitative approach in applied spirituality research is outlined by Flanagan(2005,p88) in her article *Trailing the spirit: An Approach to Applied Spirituality Research*.(As previously noted that author, who has written extensively on spirituality, had carried out research in the Liberties in Dublin on changes occurring during the Celtic Tiger period) who explains that a qualitative approach offers the opportunity to explore in some depth and detail the sensibilities, hopes, values, beliefs or lived practice of a smaller number of people.

4.2.7 Reasons for choosing Research Method

This research project is a qualitative exploration of the experiences and opinions of a group of business leaders operating in the Southeast of Ireland, during a particularly interesting period, that of the Celtic Tiger Era, and beyond. A qualitative method involving interviews of a limited number of participants was chosen as it was considered to be particularly good at examining and developing theories that deal with the role of meanings and interpretations (Ezzy, 2002, p.3).

My prior role as a senior business leader in the region, including past Presidency of the Waterford Chamber of Commerce gave me a standing with potential participants, and meant that I myself could act as a 'gatekeeper' to access suitable people for interview. The only other 'gatekeeper' that I used to help was the CEO of the Chamber body.

The main criteria used to select subjects was that they would have operated in a senior management position during the period of the Celtic Tiger in a significant organisation operating in the southeast area of Ireland. Within this population I was anxious to achieve a spread of age groups and gender..

The southeast area of Ireland was chosen as it was an area that I was familiar with, and had worked there in business over a long number of years. I believe that as an area, it would have features of development within the Celtic Tiger period typical of Ireland as a whole. I could have achieved access to business

leaders over a wider geographical spectrum, but this would have resulted in unmanageable numbers of interviewees for the purposes of this study.

Having modelled my study on an earlier study carried out in the Liberties in Dublin (Flanagan, 1999), my disposition was towards using interviews as the methodology to be followed. I did consider alternative methodologies including focus groups and questionnaires, but deemed these less appropriate.

The logistics of using focus groups would have been a major problem - I was dealing with busy business people, and attempting to arrange a focus group meeting for a number of them, would not have been practical. Additionally, the subject matter, spirituality, is a very personal one, and focus groups would have involved unwillingness and /or inability of participants to express themselves. It was my view that if gathered together in a group, the interviewees might be reluctant to talk at all, particularly about personal issues and feelings, or that I could find that one strong personality dominated and I did not get the opinions of others.

The use of questionnaires is often considered in similar studies, and would have the advantage of reaching larger audiences. However I felt that I would get much less personal responsiveness from this. And I also would have to tackle the issue of a low response rate.

The subject matter for discussion is spirituality, which would be regarded as a personal, sensitive topic for discussion. Although Ritchie and Lewis (2003, p58) accept that such sensitive areas can be explored in group settings, they do note that if the topic is perceived to be confidential, or an area predominated by social norms, then it is better explored through interviews.

4.2.8 Ethical Considerations

It was recognised that ethical issues were very important, particularily in the context of the sensitivity of the subject matter.

Initially these had been considered at the beginning of the study, in the submission to the Ethics Committee of Waterford Institute of Technology. Although I was dealing with experienced mature adults, normal requirements regarding access, consent, interview conduct, identity of participants, and storage of data were complied with.

My initial contact with interviewees incorporated an explanation of what the study was about,what would be involved in the interview,and the whole issue of confidentiality. Each participant therefore understood the use to which the information gathered would be used,and acknowledged and signed the Consent Form. Each of the interviewees was an experience business person,familiar with interviews,and in most cases with recording techniques.The identity of participants (other than Nicky Fewer) was not revealed,and I do not believe that any quote could identify any participant.

Nicky Fewer was aware that he was suffering from a terminal illness,and actually managed the format of his burial ceremony,including my address regarding his comments on his own spirituality.

All requirements regarding storage of data were complied with.

4.3 Collection of Data

My early identification of candidates for interview was based on a detailed examination of the membership list of the Waterford Chamber of Commerce, allied to a review of significant businesses in the region including Wexford, Co Waterford, and Kilkenny. I had a discussion with the CEO of the Waterford Chamber of Commerce, who made suggestions concerning other potential interviewees.

My initial ambition was to have 20 interviews, contact was made with in excess of this number, and initially the contact in each case would have been by telephone or in person. There were a small number who declined, another other small number initially indicated they would become involved but subsequently declined or became unavailable. I believe that with the 18 interviews conducted I have achieved the desirable spread across age group and sex, and all the interviewees achieved the requirements of having operated in a very senior position in business in the South East area of Ireland.

The use of a small number of interviewees was appropriate as this was a qualitative research project, to gather an in-depth understanding of human behavior and the reasons that govern such behavior, of a limited social grouping. The qualitative method investigates the why and how of decision making, not just what, where, and when. Hence, smaller but focused samples are more often needed, rather than large samples. (Denzin & Lincoln (2000).

Some background information on the participants is set out in Section 5.1 which also explains how the candidates were selected:whist there was concentration of selection from a particular grouping (senior business leaders from the South East),and some effort to obtain cross sections(by age,gender,business activity),it is clearly not a grouping from which statistical sampling conclusions can be drawn. However the selection may be beyond convenience or accidental sampling.

Following the initial contact, I sent an Introductory letter (Appendix A) which outlined the background to my study, and what I hoped to achieve through the interview. In most instances this went by e-mail. I accompanied this with an Explanatory letter, what I called an "Interview Summary Form" which gave a brief suggestion as to what I meant by spirituality (Appendix B), and also outlined a schedule of questions that would be asked during the interview. Additionally a consent form was attached, in each case this was subsequently signed at the interview and retained by me. (Appendix C).

The interviews were conducted in all cases at the premises of the interviewee; my only stipulation was that it would be a quiet location without interruptions for approximately 1 hour. Each interview was conducted in biographical style, initially asking the interviewees questions regarding their background, and moving on to deal with the more particular questions in the questionnaire. This followed the qualitative methodologies as suggested by Crotty (1998) and Denzin & Lincoln (1994).

I did not follow rigidly to the schedule of questions so the interview was effectively a semi structured one. In certain cases I had difficulty getting the interviewees to concentrate on the particular question I would have been seeking an answer from, in other cases I had to prod to get them to open up more on the topic. I attempted to ensure that all times the atmosphere was relaxed, prior to each interview there would have been a period of social intercourse involving discussions on topics and people of common interest - in doing so I believe I was following the recommended approach of Snape and Spencer (2003), who described qualitative research as being flexible, developmental and facilitating close contact with the interviewee, thereby leading to rich and detailed responses.

Each interview was recorded using a miniature digital recorder. The consent of each participant to this was received. All the participants were experienced business people, and showed no concern regarding the recording. All the recordings were then transferred to my laptop, which is password protected, and security labelled, to prevent access by unauthorised users. I secured the consent of the interviewees to allowing my daughter to be involved in the transcription of the interviews into Word documents. She herself is a past research Masters Student, and consequently would be familiar with the requirements of confidentiality in regard to such documents.

4.4 Process of Analysis

Having completed 18 interviews, and transcribed them, I had a mass of information to digest, and analyse in order to present cohesive findings. I used a template analysis approach, which is considered suitable for use with interview transcripts. The steps of template analysis are outlined by Robson (2002, p.458)

- Key codes are determined either on a priori (derived from theory or research questions) or from an initial read of the data

- These codes then serve as a template (or bins) for data analysis; the template may be changed as analysis continues

- Text segments which are empirical evidence for template categories are identified

- Typified by matrix analysis, where descriptive summaries of the text segments are supplemented by matrices, network maps, flow charts and diagrams.

King (1998) notes that template analysis involves analysis of qualitative data based on a hierarchical allocation of codes to text that begins with some guideline codes that form a framework (the initial template) and then proceeds through coding changes as the analysis proceeds until all text has being coded and carefully reviewed..

From an early point, and given my background as an accountant, I was attracted to the use of a computer program for the analysis of the interview data. I arranged for attendance at lectures and seminars on NVivo, and recognized that this was a process that could aid my template analysis of the interview transcripts. I was conscious of the potential limitations, as noted by Auerbach and Silverstein (2003, p132)

> .. we must warn you, however, that the use of QDA programmes are a mixed blessing. On the positive side they extend the range of what you can do by hand. But on the negative side they distance you from the text: you lose the total immersion that you get from analysing your text by hand.

Essentially NVivo does two things, it supports the storing and manipulation of text or documents, and it supports the storing and manipulation of codes, known in NVivo as 'nodes'. (Gibbs, 2002)

An NVivo file titled "Spirituality" was set up, and I imported into this all documentation relevant to the project including:

- the research proposal

- draft thesis chapters on the literature reviews of spirituality, and How Ireland changed
- documents relating to interview contacts
- the interview questionnaire
- transcripts of each of 18 interviews

The initial coding structure related to the questions used in the Interview Summary Form (Appendix B), which had six sections

1. Background Information (1 Question)
2. Your outlook on life (7 questions)
3. Spirituality, You and Work (10 questions)
4. Spirituality You and your Organisation (7 questions)
5. Spirituality and the Market Place (8 questions)
6. Spiritual Practices(3 questions)

The transcribed interviews were conversational in nature, the first requirement was to review each of them, and to superimpose therein the relevant question which had produced the recorded response, if that was not obvious.. This effectively meant that I could identify the response to any particular question, for example question five in section 3 for each of the 18 interviewees. By using the facilities within NVivo, I was therefore in a position to review, in one area, the responses of all interviewees to each of the 36 questions posed.

The next process of analysis involved, for each question, an analysis of codes, themes, or 'nodes', in the responses to each individual question. For example an early question asked was what the respondents understanding of spirituality was. Appendix D shows a screen presentation of how this can be reviewed in Nvivo.
On the left hand side of the screen one can see that the presentation is of 'Nodes', I initially set up each of the 36 questions as a node, so the responses from the 18 interviews can be reviewed under each question.

In the main section on the right hand side, under 'Tree Nodes' it can be seen that the question "Participants Understanding (of spirituality and religion) is being

examined. I reviewed each of the 18 potential responses to this question, and identified a number of important and recurring themes (nodes), including detachment or the bigger picture, getting outside oneself, lifestyle, values, and people relationships. It can be seen that 4 respondents talked about 'detachment', 5 about 'people relationships'.

These were then set up as 'tree nodes',' children to the 'parent' question, and the interviewee's answers to this question were then analysed and sorted appropriately. In setting out the responses to the question in my analysis, priority of reference was given to the 'tree nodes' mentioned most frequently. There were 9 responses (in 4 interviews) dealing with 'detachment', 5 mentions of 'people relationships' were made in 5 interviews.

The findings from the interviews, reported in Chapter 5, in many instances quote references by interviewees. Each of these can be identified, through the Tree node system in Nvivo, to the specific interviewee.

My summary of the responses is set out in Chapter 5, and emerged from this process. The importance of ensuring that the research method was reliable, and the conclusions drawn were valid was recognised. Denzin and Lincoln (as cited in Silverman, 2005 p91) defines reliability as" the extent to which findings can be replicated or reproduced by another enquirer". For reliability to be ascertained, the researcher has to document his or her procedure adequately so that another researcher would be able to follow them and still produce the same findings (Silverman, 2005). I believe that the procedures as outlined here, augmented by the trail retained through the use of NVivo, meet these requirements.

The information as analysed in the manner described above is set out in Chapter 5 –Findings from the Interviews.

In summary, my approach to the analysis of the data involved a template analysis, using a hierarchical structure of coding, assisted by the computer programme Nvivo. The essence of template analysis is that the researcher

produces a list of codes (the template) representing themes identified in the textual data. In my case most of these would have been identified in advance (the questions used in the Interview Summary Form (Appendix B)), but were refined as the data was analysed and scrutinised. The template is organised in a way which represents the relationship between themes, involving a hierarchical structure.

The hierarchical structure means that broad themes are initially identified e.g. "Your understanding of spirituality", and sub-themes are then identified and coded , representing examples, types, causes etc, e.g. "people relationships"," values". Nvivo is not a data analysis method, but a tool to assist the structuring of the hierarchical coding in the template analysis of the data.

5 Findings from the Interviews

5.1Background Information on Participants

Interviews were conducted with a total of 18 people, over a period from mid-2008, to November 2009.

To assist in an understanding of the process, I initially propose to give a short description of my own situation including my background and work career.

I was born in 1946, the youngest of four surviving children (an elder brother died at a few months old), so I would have likely benefited from the youngest child "spoiling" syndrome. My parents would have been reasonably well off, sufficient to enable each of the children to attend a fee paying school; my father was a professional man, originally from Dublin, of a not well-to-do family.

Home life was very happy; my parents ensured there was a discipline, having been through war years themselves I was taught the value of money from an early age. I finished schooling at just over 16 years old, too young to have a clear career idea, and was receptive to a suggestion from my father to come into the practice and commence training as an accountant.

I came from a family of high achievers, and although I obtained merit places in examinations, I found that I achieved nothing that had not been achieved beforehand by one of my siblings.

Having qualified in the late 1960s, there were then more opportunities in the UK, and I worked there until the mid-70s. At this stage, returning to Ireland, I was in a comparatively well-paid role, but Irish incomes would have paled in comparison to the UK, the US, or indeed other European countries. At this stage Ireland suffered from rampant inflation, I believe people of my age group were generally happy and content, but our aspirations were modest. We had a good

house, good but second-hand cars, and one annual holiday. All expenses had to be budgeted.

Financially, things would have started getting better from the late 80s, at this time however third level education for the children was the priority, and the cost of this would have used up much of any discretionary income. However undoubtedly our standard of living improved significantly, my role as a partner in a very successful practice ensured that my income was better than most of my peers.

I had a successful business career from the early 70s, until 2004 when I retired, heading up a professional practice in the area of over 100 people, dealing with clients ranging from small indigenous companies to multinationals and PLCs. I participated in community and business groupings, I was on the board of the Chamber of Commerce for over 10 years, serving as President for one year.

Certainly for the 10 years prior to my retirement there was evidence of escalating wealth creation, bigger cars, bigger houses, more holidays became the norm. Personally however I felt that enjoyment of business was not as good as before, that people had become more aggressive or confrontational, and had less time to "smell the roses".

My family background was very much a Christian ethos, my father had been in the priesthood for some time, it would have been a very religious household, with daily mass during Lent, and a strong emphasis on integrity and honesty. During my early work years I found it hard to relate the practicalities of living and working with what seemed then to be a programmatic requirement of the Catholic faith. My interest in spirituality, and work/ life balance was sparked off in the early 70s when I read Norman Vincent Peale's book "The Power of Positive Thinking". I have since had an ongoing interest in spirituality and similar disciplines.

My period in business in the South East therefore covered the 1970s, when there was reasonable growth, the depressed years of the 80s, the period from 1987 to

the mid-90s when economic improvements commenced, and the boom period from then through to 2007. There were huge cultural changes during this period also as explained in Chapter 2 "How Ireland Changed".

Obviously people I interviewed who were of my age group or above would have been in business during the same period of huge economic turbulence. Younger managers in a lot of instances are experiencing a recession but for the first time at present. I did not ask the interviewees their age, but would have an approximate idea, and believe maybe one third would have experienced the last recession, and a further one third definitely came on stream in management only when the Celtic Tiger was starting to roar.

Each of the 18 people interviewed was a senior manager in the South East area, either running their own substantial business, or a professional manager of a large company. Most of them would have been acquainted to me through my business involvement, and I am sure that I would have been known to them, and this facilitated access to them for the interview. In the case of two of those interviewed, their names were suggested to me from the Chamber of Commerce, and I had met neither previously. Several others, although known to me from my business career, would not have dealt with me personally, or have been known intimately to me.

Given my long-term involvement in business in the Southeast, it would not be surprising that I would have been familiar with most of the people interviewed, and I do not believe that this would bias selection in any way. In the majority of cases I would not have had any idea as to the depth of spirituality in those to be interviewed.

 I do believe that my standing as a well-known business figure operating in the southeast assisted in my credibility as an interviewer on the particular topic, and in providing access to the people involved, all senior positions in business.

Approximately half of those interviewed would have been self-employed, whether on their own account, as principal of a family business, the remainder would have been professionally employed managers of large operations.

The interviewees would be have been drawn from a mix of manufacturing construction and service industries, and I believe would have been a typical representation of business mix in the South East area. Areas of business involvement would include: Service/Advisory, Manufacturing, Retail, Distribution, Finance, Construction, Property Development and Management, Motor, Public Service, and Communications.

Thirteen male and five females were interviewed. Although this is an imbalance in favour of male interviewees, in practice business managers in the South East area, and indeed in the whole of Ireland, were, and still are, predominately male. Four of those interviewed were former Presidents of the Waterford Chamber of Commerce; at least half of the interviewees would have been involved in the Chamber of Commerce, as directors or on sub-committees.

At the start of each interview I asked each person to give me an outline of their background, suggesting that they might talk about their family background, schooling, and influences.

As would be expected from the age profile of the people involved, in general family background was quite religious. This was the feature even among those who were in the younger age group, as the decline in the influence of the Catholic Church in Ireland would not have been significant before the late 70s. Daily devotion, mass or the rosary, and a prominent picture of the Sacred Heart were a common feature of home life. In more than one instance the father was the more religious person, possibly related to the more favourite status of the male by the Church.

All those interviewed came from a Christian background; however it was apparent that many are not longer practising. Apart from one who had Jesuit schooling, none seemed to have had their beliefs challenged in their childhood,

and in so far as they were still practising, it was not initially clearer as to whether this was from development of a belief system, or conformity to original practices.

Most of the families involved were from a reasonably well-to-do background, however in at least two cases there were significant home economic hardships, and I have to state that the products of these homes were more passionate about their role in life.

Most interviewees stated that home life was happy, one interviewee suggested that *happiness in part was determined on the Shavian principles of never having too much leisure to bother about whether you are happy or not*.

As expected of families where the parents had been through the war years, discipline, respect, and a clear understanding of the value of money, would have been handed down to the children.

Several of the people involved came from large families, five or more, probably indicative of the family sizes of the time, but there were also instances of a lone child, lone boy or lone girl.

Most interviewees would have suggested their parents as being the main influence on their development, an entrepreneurial spirit generally came from one alone of the parents. Teachers were much less frequently mentioned as being influential, the Jesuital influence of challenging beliefs was noted by one interviewee- *the Jesuits all worked in asking "why" questions all the time, so if you said you believed you in God they would say –Why?*

There were certain family issues that would have been an influence, including early death of a parent, conflict at home, or separation of parents, drink and depression. A number of the interviewees had suffered from personal tragedy including loss of a child.

A strong work ethic would have been instilled in all the interviewees, and a number mentioned that they would have been encouraged to achieve and to fulfil

their potential by their parents Most of their parents would have been conscious of a requirement to invest in education for their children, a number of the interviewees had attended fee-paying, private or boarding schools.

Most parents also would have been conscious of making a contribution to the community; many parents would have been involved in community organisations and would have encouraged their children to do likewise.

Most of the interviewees had third level education; a number had worked out of the country either for experience, or because of the economic climate at home at the time.

So - probably a mixed bag of people, typical of children of the era involved, but with a common thread of values handed down from parents that would have had a heavy bias towards hard work, discipline, respect for the value of money, and making a contribution. Individual characteristics of the participants could have been shaped by factors such as a parental entrepreneurial streak, or family circumstances.

5.2 Participants Values and Motivation

The opening discussion about background provided much valuable information about the participants, whilst also giving them a chance to relax into the interview.

The first question on the topic was also general in nature, but was the start of a focus on the meaning of life for them. The interviewees were asked- *what basic values do you hold or what gives you purpose or drive?*

5.2.1 Honesty and Integrity

Honesty and integrity were values that would be high on a list which interviewees would relate to… *Honesty, integrity, honouring what you think you*

should be doing. So the honesty factor would be big and the integrity bit would be very big. You'd be straight.

 This was also expressed in relation to dealings with people …*you wouldn't want to do anything wrong on anybody else. You don't do anything to anybody that you wouldn't want done to you basically. And I think if you go by that you can't go too far wrong. I found that in life, you know, most of the time if you are reasonable with people they will be reasonable with you.*

Another interviewee suggested that …*I suppose I get up every morning in the hope that I could do things right every day. I don't mean just right for myself I mean right for who I'm working with and what I'm doing. Absolutely fair.*

As business people honesty and integrity obviously related to business dealings, being straight and honest in a deal, and keeping your word. - ensuring your business had a reputation for dealing straight.

5.2.2 Respect for People

Respect for people was also reflected in a code of conduct relating to business dealings. It was felt that the dignity of people had to be respected, also it was felt that an effort should be made …*not to judge people you are dealing with but to be aware of where they are coming from.* A sense of responsibility towards others was also recognized manifesting itself in trying to treat people decently.

The responsibility of managers to contribute to the development of employees was also recognized. The ambition of one of those interviewed was to create a company that would be successful, but was also be enjoyable to work in. This was felt to be a significant strand of a leadership role, which was all about trying to unlock people's ability to be the best that they can.

A number of people mentioned the attraction to them of working with people, engaging with them, and being responsible for the development of the team ethos. In larger companies mission statements would normally relate to the

responsibility of managers for development of people and engagement with them,

5.2.3 To Contribute

As noted above parents of the interviewees had instilled in most of them a responsibility to contribute both to the community, and to the world at large. As one interviewees said …*the target I set myself after I qualified was to make a contribution and to achieve.* The same interviewee suggested that …*if it is given to you try to give back -this gives you a balance in life and basically then you are making a contribution.*

Another instance was recognition that having achieved success it was important to give back…*You know I would be comfortably off and I do believe it's important to give back to people, it's important that we contribute to our communities in some form or another and that would be important to me.*

Another manifestation of this sentiment is the statement …*you have to step outside of your career and make time for things that may be of benefit to the community.*

A much stronger statement was made by one interviewee who suggested that the basic value to be followed is service - that is service of others: *Well I think that the basic value I think is service really when I look at it. Service of others*.

5.2.4 Achievement

All of those interviewed seemed to reflect in their comments a recognition that they had to maximise the use of the talents which had been given to them. People had no problem working long hours and by and large got extreme satisfaction from work. But all seemed to be driven by a requirement to achieve. Being conscious of time and making sure time was not wasted was also noted.

One manager recognized that he never had a conscious plan to be in the position he was, but was there because he was ambitious and he had been anxious to do the best he could in whatever role that was in. Another had achieved huge success with the operation he was involved because of his huge passion to deal with the issues which he saw as important in the world.

Achievement for work colleagues was also recognized as a responsibility of professional managers that achieved through development of their talents to the maximum extent.

5.2.5 Money

Money and the benefits from earning significant income was not mentioned normally, but obviously there would have been an underlying satisfaction from this. In one instance, the interviewee was disenchanted with the development of the business he was involved in, and was close to the end of his work career, he did mention that money was a significant factor in getting him to work each day.

5.2.6 Family

Most mentioned family values as being very important…. *you know I get a great buzz from the fact that I have children and you know supporting them through their education I love to see how well they are doing and see them develop and growing their interests in life.* And…*Family would be a huge value, and I suppose a sense of balance. Family values would be very strong.*

Personal purpose for me is very tied in with the family; I want them (children) to have a life that suits them that they love, that they enjoy, and that they get value out of.

A conflict between the time demands of work and contribution to family was recognized, it was questioned whether … *do I have as much time for family as I would like with the current job that I have. Probably not.* In another case it was

recognized that marital difficulties likely had arisen because of preoccupation with the demands of work.

5.2.7 Enthusiasm, Optimism

The respondents generally seem to be happy and content in their current roles…*I enjoy living on this planet, I love, you know, nature, beaches and so on.   I just love it. I do all kinds of bits and pieces so I just love being alive, you know. I'm happy out.*

The participants seem to love new challenges, solving problems, dealing with and discussing issues with employees.

A sense of optimism and enthusiasm was often cited as a background factor in enabling the manager is to cope with the day-to-day pressures and achieve.

A sense of balance was also regarded as important , not letting one get carried away with successes, being grounded, looking at the bigger picture. Setbacks had helped make people more resilient.

5.2.8 Driving Forces

Living the values they felt they stood for was an obvious driving force, fuelled by enthusiasm and ambition to achieve. A number referred to their Catholic ethos, and volunteered that they believed in God, that they believed in a Higher Authority or Higher Being.

A number felt that they had an obligation of stewardship, and had an obligation to leave the world a better place after their departure... *I see myself fundamentally as a steward of creation.*

Certain of the respondents recognized their role in helping humanity and having an opportunity to influence development in Ireland for the better. This would seem to be recognition of the bigger picture. Participants who were involved in the construction industry felt a responsibility that the buildings they were

responsible for should last well when they were long gone. A professional manager felt a responsibility to deliver for his employers. One got satisfaction from the creation of a Company that was successful and where people enjoyed working.

5.3 Participants Understanding of Spirituality and Religion

Having obtained agreement from Interviewees to meet and do an interview, I wrote to them (normally by email), explaining what my study was about, and giving details of the interview process (See Appendix A). I also gave them a document (See Appendix B –Interview Summary Form) which set out the questions which I would be asking, preceded by a very brief personal explanation of what I understood by spirituality.

I felt that it was important to have some guidance given on the subject for discussion, rather than to potentially be operating in a vacuum. Personally I had come from a point where the difference between spirituality and Religion was not clear, and where the different aspects of spirituality had not been clarified.

The following extract from that document outlines what was given to each interviewee:

"What is spirituality? –   In less than 100 words!

Spirituality is a much used/abused word, and means different things to different people. Having spent a year reading about the subject, I realize I have only scratched the surface of writings on the topic, and new writings appear weekly.

I like a definition by Sandra M. Schneiders, respected   as one of the most significant and influential figures in the study of Christian spirituality in recent times. *"spirituality refers to the experience of consciously striving to integrate one's life in terms not of isolation and self absorption but of self transcendence towards the ultimate values one perceives"* Schneiders (1989, p 684). Components of this definition include:

Experience, striving –an everyday effort at the core of ones being, the way

Not self absorption- Love of others, connectedness, balancing desires

Values one perceives – personal values, priorities

Not of isolation, Self transcendence – Immanence (spirit within) and transcendence (reaching to a spirit without).

I hope the above pointers may help my interviewees relate to my understanding of the word, and the changes in peoples experience of this phenomenon"

Some interviewees stated that they had not had much time to read my document beforehand –this I believe could either have been true, or have been a "cover" for a feeling of inadequacy for not understanding the subject as well as they understood how to run their businesses.

The interviews produced a wealth of material on how these senior business managers felt about spirituality, and how the Celtic Tiger (and beyond) had impacted their sensation of it. It was obvious that there was a wide range of knowledge and experience among the interviewees, some had thought deeply

about it, and had read widely about it, others hardly at all, females probably more than males.

5.3.1 Spirituality – what is it?

All the interviewees had been brought up in a Christian background (mostly Catholic), so their outlook on spirituality would have been coloured by this. However several were no longer practising, or were selective Catholics.   I believe that all interviewees believed in a God or a higher being.

This was expressed in some responses:

> *you have a sense that God is within you and is part of you and that somewhere in the human being, in every human being, there is a.. How would I put it? There is the opportunity for connection with God.*

Or

> *Yes I would aspire, or not aspire really, but identify, with a higher being, a kind of entity somewhere.*

The aspect of the two sides of transcendence and immanence were expressed by one interviewee in his thoughts on spirituality:

> *My attitude to spirituality... I mean I think that there's em...there's a being which is inside of me which is more than my physical nature you know and I believe that the entire nature on the planet that we're all connected you know, that there's one kind of cosmic spore? There and we're all part of that and our manifestation at the moment is physical you know, that we're in this body but I believe when we die we will go to another manifestation of that you know?*

Another interviewee –

> *you have a sense that God is within you and is part of you and that somewhere in the human being, in every human being, there is a.. How would I put it? There is the opportunity for connection with god.*

Another two sided view of spirituality was expresses in how one's relationship with God was manifested in one's behaviour –

> *… two opposites of spirituality. One is where one goes into oneself and one, as it were, goes off on retreats and reflects on God above and*

internally. And the other one is where one goes out and serves the poor and takes the risk of never getting back to the former. And I think that's the way to go.

The transcendence aspect was expressed:

- *I think there is a transpersonal self which is...outside and above and yet achievable.*

- *...that feeling that there is something missing, I think it's that... it's tapping into that...*

- *for me it is that transpersonal self, that thing that's outside of me*

This was expressed also as an ability to grasp the bigger picture:

- *And the opportunity to sit and reflect on those things and just to observe them but not have to necessarily participate in them.*

- *spirituality I think is pointing to the opportunity to get that wider perspective.*

- *I think to me spirituality is about eternity and being part of the whole – being connected*

A theme that came through very strongly was that spirituality was related by a lot of interviewees with their core values. One of the interviewees, Nicky Fewer, a wonderful good living person who contributed so much to the development of Waterford was very strong on this. Unfortunately he lost his long struggle with cancer in March 2009. I was honoured to be asked to speak at his funeral service on his attitude to spirituality. Conscious of his immanent demise he had asked me to do this a few days prior to his death, and his widow also approved that aspects of his interview with me should be made public. I summarised his thoughts on spirituality, which were essentially centred on his values, in a short address made to the funeral service, see Appendix E. His views on spirituality were clear and profound:

I believe that spirituality …..Is basically about how you live your life, how you treat your fellow being. Your integrity, your honesty with people. And the respect and the values that you bring in terms of, I suppose, of being a role model or giving example.

...To define spirituality is, I suppose to define your lifestyle. The way you deal with others and the way you deal with, I suppose your own inner peace. You know, I don't believe that there's anybody today who doesn't sit down at some stage in their life and consider spirituality in either the broad sense or in a very definitive sense.

The fact that values came from one's upbringing were outlined by another interviewee:

It's something deep within you but actually at other times I think your spirituality is just whatever you've evolved as. A combination of your upbringing, your parenting, your parents influence, and just your normal experience of life. And those values, that compendium of values that you get is your spirituality really.

Living to a sense of values was also expressed as acting correctly in accordance with your conscience, being honest, fair, your integrity, being honest with people, a feeling of fair play.

Consciousness of being a role model for employees and business colleagues was also recognised. The obligation to others was expressed:

My feeling is that there is always, there always has to be some substantive belief under spirituality, beyond the self. Otherwise.... its romantic feelings of one kind or another or emotional feelings but if its real spirituality, there has to be a value calling oneself from oneself, to others.

Living to one's values should be reflected in lifestyle-*its basically the way you live your life* and *the way you deal with others and the way you deal with, I suppose your own inner peace,* only by being true to one's values in living a lifestyle can one be grounded ,be comfortable with oneself, have balance, and have contentment. This was found by some of the female interviewees to be reflected in family, and example given to children.

Another reflection of fulfilling values was in the way in which you treat your fellow man –in the workplace, showing respect, in contributing to the community, and in our attitude to those less well off.

Not all the interviewees had a deep or profound understanding of spirituality. At least one found it hard to differentiate from religion; in fact one stated *I would associate spirituality I suppose with Church and with praying.* Also, in a number of cases it was not on top of the agenda, respondents suggesting they would not give themselves too much time to think, and would not worry about it.

Where spirituality was experienced is covered later, but a number of interviewees found a relational aspect or comfort in water, nicely expressed in two quotes:

> *You are sitting at the head of a river and there are strong currents going either side that at times you have an opportunity to literally be sitting at the end of an island and out of the strong currents. Equally, the river, that river represents something else to me. -that the strong currents go either way. You could be so headlong into your own life at times that you are actually picking up on the wrong stuff and getting carried away with it and it happens all the time and it happens a lot*

> *spirituality- as an ocean if you like, and each wave a ripple- its kind of represented by each and everyone of us and some of us can make a thundering noise and land on the shore but at the end of the day whether we are a ripple or a great big tsunami we actually land on the shore eventually and you know you kind of end up fading back part into the ocean so that kind of sense of eternity, you know, you play your part but you know you are just a very small part in greater thing.*

5.3.2 Different to Religion

Most of the respondents understood that there was a difference between spirituality and religion, although in some cases this was clouded, and in one case observation of Christian rituals was put forward as an experience of spirituality.

One of the more cogent responses was to identify religion as an organised set of beliefs, or a framework that one operated in. It was also identified as a set of disciplines, more charitably perhaps as, an organised way to encourage spiritual development, an organised way to get people to an inner sense of peace or

spirituality. What this meant in terms of personal action was a belief that we are all loved by God, and are expected to share that love with everybody we meet.

Disenchantment with the Catholic religion as practised in Ireland was expressed by a number of respondents, and was manifested by a reduction in attendance at church ceremonies and religious practices. Certain of the respondents indicated that their attendance at mass was predicated by a requirement to give example to their children.

One respondent, himself extremely spiritual and religious, stated that religion could be very damaging, and currently in Ireland was damaging. On the other hand it was felt by many that there was a requirement for discipline, that religion was a kind of anchor that would stop you from drifting

People were asked to identify what for them was the difference between spirituality and religion. The responses to this ranged from the profound, to a suggestion that *"spirituality and religion to me would be two sides of the same coin"*.

Practising a religion involved membership of a club, following certain rules or directives, and benefiting from involvement in a community of worshippers. spirituality was a code of behaviour, or code of ethics, whereas religion was going through the motions, attending services etc. It was acknowledged that religion could help one towards a better spirituality, but not necessarily so *–my experience of it is that an awful lot of people who are involved formally in religion aren't necessarily displaying spirituality.* This seemed to demonstrate the need to have a proper grounding or spirituality to benefit from the practice of a religion.

To a significant degree the respondents recognized that religion or spirituality was very important to them. People felt it was necessary to have a belief system to hang on to, relating back again to a set of values, and the requirement to have a clear conscience and be comfortable with oneself. It was not something that occupied the entire waking time of everybody, but given the association of living

one's values with spirituality it certainly seemed to be a way of living for many. I believe that most of the people interviewed had a well-developed sense of values which had been tested and were believed in.

One respondent, not a particularly overt religious person, noted *I don't think I could go through a day without tapping into something spiritual.*

I would conclude that generally the interviewees had an understanding of spirituality; in all cases when the topic for the interview was brought up there was an element of enthusiasm in agreeing to participate. The degree of understanding of the difference between spirituality and religion depended on the extent to which parent instilled Christian beliefs had been challenged by the individual.

5.3.3 Did your Personal Experience change during the Celtic Tiger period, and after?

The changes that took place during the Celtic Tiger period are outlined in Chapter 2, undoubtedly in so far as business people would have been concerned the factors most influencing their lives would have been the huge increase in economic activity and wealth, and improvements in communication.

However it was also in apparent from the interviews that in the number of cases changes in personal circumstances, not related to the Celtic Tiger, would have affected spiritual leanings. Apart from the obvious growth in experience and wisdom, personal circumstances affecting the development could have included family issues such as the birth of children, or loss of a child or close relative. As one interviewee suggested in response to the question, *that's very hard to answer, we change as we get older.* In another instance it was suggested that the responsibility of parenthood to an extent balanced a potential loss in spirituality from exposure to external factors.

A significant majority of the interviewees identified an increase in materialism, coupled with a dilution in values, as being symptoms of the Celtic Tiger. Not all

would have acknowledged themselves as being affected by these factors, but as one stated:

> *I probably got caught up in the money end of it... or... maybe my values became... you know (diluted) – I wanted to move out of this house and... really... it wasn't for any reason except my own self aggrandisement really.*
>
> *The focus became very materialistic. People were very concerned about the extra car or the extra television and I was as guilty of that as anybody I would say. And but I think a lot of things got left behind.*

Greed was a factor associated with materialism, *everybody got greedy...everybody changed at the Celtic Tiger and suddenly everything was very important like cars and bigger houses and conservatories and bigger (everything)* and *I think the amount of Greed and the amount of ... the display of kind of lavish spending I mean... fellas got very ostentatious and I have to say like... I suppose... did I ever fall into it, I'd say I probably did for two or three years.*

The dilution in values manifested itself in people doing things in business that they were not really comfortable with. Exposure to the Celtic Tiger values meant that *maybe you do misplace more high lofty values that you might have had. So I think yes, you'd have to say that the market economy in full flight is quite a powerful force.*

People became more avaricious, it was almost a case of dog eat dog… *I think the Irish lost their Irishness, I thought some of the behaviour of fellas in business was bordering on gross.*

A number of the more mature people (who would have come from more humble beginnings) suggested that that a lot of the problems were with the younger age group, *new age business people don't have a lot of honesty and integrity, younger people don't have l standards their goals are money.*

It was suggested that a result of the Celtic Tiger was a reduction in rapport-people had less time to "smell the roses" as the pace of life quickened.

There would have been a general recognition of the reduction in religious worship, although the fact that the church had let itself down was recognized -*I'd say my sense of organised religion as a Roman Catholic has probably been diminished a bit. I don't just go every Sunday as I used to.*

It would not be fair to say that all the interviewees felt that spirituality was diminished for them during the Celtic Tiger period. Indeed the tone of a number of conversations seemed to reflect dilution in values as pertaining to other people. A number of them specific stated that their spirituality would have improved during this period. *I think it's deepened rather than diluted.*

One was as strong as to say – *I think the perception might be that during the Celtic Tiger we became a cold and impersonal world...ah... in Ireland. I hear that an awful lot, I don't share that view at all, not a bit of it. Ah, I think ah... there's a great social conscience in Ireland.*

However the following two colourful descriptions of the era may best describe the attitude towards what happened *the decade of the diamonds we could nearly call it,* and. *they would roll over you with the 4 wheel drive!*

Having now gone into a recession, there was recognition that the Celtic Tiger period was *a bit artificial* and wasn't grounded. Some welcomed back the more austere times- *I think we are kind of nearly welcoming a little bit of consolidation because, that wealth thing, we did it and we were never really comfortable with it*. Some saw a positive aspect to the recession relative to spirituality *I think people will naturally curtail things, I do believe that family values will become more important.* We may see more community based stuff -   *I think it will be forced on people initially and then people will see a value on it that maybe was missed over a few years.* The downturn was needed - *because there were people losing the run of themselves.*

It was suggested by more than one respondent that they had experienced an increase in spirituality since the downturn- *I find that my increased spirituality is*

positive in putting my mind at ease and in perspective and realising the important things.

It was recognized that some people would be better able to cope in the recession than others, particularly those whose values had been tested, and who had an established belief system. However some would be less well able to cope *I think that people in their 20's now, because we would see them a lot here coming into the business, have no...they don't have any coping mechanism for this kind of environment.*

Other positive aspects of the recession were noted - *I thought that people had got nicer again.... people will actually say hello to you now* and *...the downturn is no harm because it gives people more of a time to have a chat and talk about things and think about things and at the end of the day like to be honest, money is not the be all and end all.*

Challenges to personal values arising from the recession were identified, including how to deal with redundancies in a humane way, another side of this was that retained employees seem to have more loyalty as before getting alternative unemployment was much easier. Retaining unemployment was another target *that was the target we had in the year (2009), to just try and hold the business together while the world was sorting itself out.*

The spirituality of those who were more grounded would not have been affected by the recession (nor by the boom) *the downturn has not affected my attitude; this was forming independently from some time back.*

My motivation to undertake the research in this area had been a feeling that during the Celtic Tiger we had 'lost something,' involving possibly a deterioration in spirituality, but certainly a greater materialism. Although there were one or two alternative views, the overwhelming majority of respondents were, I believe saying the same thing- we got caught up in chasing material wealth, and lost sight of our values.

5.4 Personal View- Spirituality, You and Work

5.4.1 Does Spirituality have a Role in Work?

One of the respondents was very clear that you could not separate spirituality from work. He was also clear that the work represented a fulfilment of his values… *if I didn't work, I wouldn't have any spirituality because I'm called to work. And being a steward I can't avoid it.* Another interviewee made a similar point *…you can't take part of a person from nine to five you actually get the whole person now.*

In the same vein it was also stated that if you were a spiritual person it would be reflected in your work dealings with people… *you have to be aware of yourself, how you are interacting with people.*

The issue of how one dealt with people in business was one of the most common themes emerging and it was quite clear that people felt that to fulfil ones own values it was important that people were dealt with in a fair manner. *I've just mentioned the likes of honesty and integrity.... and respect I think for people you are dealing with and people you're working with.*

There was recognition of the moral responsibility to deal honourably with both employees and customers, in the case of employees the benefits of teambuilding and comradeship were recognized. Having compassion for employees who were in difficult circumstances was also a factor including provision of a counselling service. It was desirable to have employees comfortably with what they were doing, so that there were values were aligned with those of their employers…*if you can align the values of an organisation with a sense of purpose and a sense that they can maximise their contribution in this place. I think that's a fairly powerful thing.*

It was through the development of staff that the greatest level of personal satisfaction was expressed for the use of spirituality in business. Two of those interviewed talked of the huge personal satisfaction of supporting employees

who had successfully completed training programmes… *at the end of the (sessions) they asked me to come to their diploma night, which I did. But it was probably one of the most uplifting nights of my life* and… *and when I sat up in Dublin at the graduation and saw these young people looking forward, having learned about housing and more importantly having learned about poverty and justice through our course. I cried.*

These managers tried to develop people by encouraging them, challenging them to use their talents recognizing that...*this person has a brain and intelligence and is a spirit and we see the dignity of the person*. Employees were encouraged and supported to grow… *to give them.... a view of something new and different was actually quite a spiritually uplifting feature*. The importance of encouraging employees to be positive and recruiting employees with a positive disposition was recognized, and could be related to spirituality in an organisation.

Spirituality was also related to ethics and business dealings generally. There was a clear recognition of the relationship between spirituality and values in business. *I think that how I conduct my business every minute of every day is based on my values.*

Whilst generally there seem to be a feeling that spirituality had a role in business, related to values, the point was made that it could not be overt …*but if you start describing it as spirituality people might be frightened of it... because they might perceive it as religion....*

The "dog eats dog" syndrome was however mentioned, as being a characteristic of certain people in business who were not bringing their spirituality into work.

5.4.2 Conflicts –Spirituality and Work?

The question was asked as to whether work would contribute to or would ever compromise a person's spirituality. There was a mixed response on this, although the strongest responses were that it would not...*work is my spirituality.* One interviewee was very strong: *No, I wouldn't, I couldn't live with that. I've*

only once come across somebody who wanted me to compromise my values. And we fell out over it and I left the company. The requirement to have to live with oneself meant that in one's daily business dealings the question had to be asked as to whether it was the right thing to do.

In a number of instances there was recognition of the bigger picture, that people were in a privileged position to be in employment, that there was this strong sense of doing well in the work that was carried out, and they were contributing something positive to humanity.

It was certainly recognized that business dealings could often challenge one's spirituality, for example in dealing with customers and recovery of debts, redundancy situations, and generally making difficult decisions ... *how do you retain your humanity while doing what you have to do.* The relationship with people was important here *...well I certainly had to do things that were very unpleasant. And em... and very harsh... And I like to think that even those I did in a way that allowed people to preserve their dignity as much as possible.*

 As managers the requirement to deliver results was a potential cause of conflict with spirituality as it gave managers the responsibility to drive employees. The need to be grounded, and to relate all the time back to one's values was a requirement, but sometimes what one individual felt might be the solution that was most spiritual might not be practical because of the requirement to compromise to the views of a majority. But there would be a breaking point *…but if you reach a line and you can't do ….you have to be able to say, 'look, I've gone as far as I can.*

Whilst the majority of interviewees felt that the challenges of running a business, involving growth, bottom-line deliverance and motivation of employees could be managed relative to one's spirituality one felt that the challenge was too great: *But I think unfortunately the reality of it is that there is little room for spirituality if you want to run a profitable business.*

An effort was made to enquire as to how achievement of personal objectives might have been aligned to spirituality. The biggest factor here was achievement of business objective or growth - achieving things against the odds, developing brands, developing relationships with customers and clients, and generally *taking the business to a better place.* In the period since the demise of the Celtic Tiger, survival, retention of unemployment, or humane redundancy policies could have been the objective. Again there was huge satisfaction from development of employees …*to see those people going on in their lives, to see that they've developed and blossomed.*

This could also be manifested in pride in retention of a team, or keeping a workforce together in good times and bad. Contribution to the general community also gave satisfaction.

Achievement by a woman as a manager in a man's world was only mentioned by one of the females, but could have been an unstated source of satisfaction for all those females.

I believe that those interviewees who were most grounded, and who had challenged their beliefs and values, had certainly recognised that there could be a challenge between spirituality and achievement of work requirements. In most cases the requirement to stick to ones basic values was the main thought.

5.4.3 Getting Through Difficult Times in Work

There were some interesting responses to the question as to how difficult times in work were dealt with. The most significant relief was from being grounded and being in tune with one's beliefs, taking time out in various formats was also common.

Being faithful to one's values was a requirement: *But I think if you try and do the right thing and stick with that. As long as you feel that you are doing the right thing. That's what I feel can get me through the toughest decisions I've had to make and the toughest times I've had.*

Having a broad belief in the value of one's work enabled one to look inwards and draw on whatever resources one had within oneself. Looking at the bigger picture: *understanding the nature of things,* realising that everything is connected to everything else *…I try to hang on to the basic vision of what the hell I'm at. And I think the work team I'm with. They would be supportive*.

Not giving up, trying to have an understanding of the other guys picture, trying harder and being optimistic were other factors.

Several of the interviewees welcomed challenges which they felt could give opportunities, and optimism could be a significant factor in overcoming challenges.

Most people would take time out as a panacea for dealing with difficult issues in work. This could take many forms but in a lot of instances was related to nature: -walking on the beach, listening to the sound of water, getting into space on one's own. Sport was also used widely to still the mind, golf, tennis, sailing, walking, *allowing time to reflect on whether you were doing the right thing are not.*

It would not always be practical to get out of the business environment; rarely could it be possible to allow time for quiet reflection in a work setting. Rarely was prayer resorted to *I don't ever remember turning around and saying a prayer anything like that, no.* One interviewee would have been completely against this *but not prayer ... because I don't think... I think to pray for your job is wrong. You're using up your holy points for the wrong things.*

Only two of the interviewees were honest enough to admit that they would resort to a substance use for relaxation, one with cigarettes, and one with a drink.

With one exception all the interviewees got satisfaction from work, the main reason being that they felt they were fulfilling personal beliefs. It was also satisfactory to be in control of one's own destiny. Some just said they loved what they did in work, others qualified by saying that certain parts of the work were difficult for them. The aspect of working with people was cited again in this connection.

Taking time out in various forms was the panacea for dealing with difficult times at work: this seemed to give the manager a chance to let the problems 'sift through' the brain, and try to see the bigger picture –a sign of Spiritual Intelligence?

5.4.4 Impact of the Celtic Tiger on Spirituality

Most of the interviewees acknowledged that there had been a change in spirituality during the Celtic Tiger period… sure *we have all been affected to some degree by a more material society,* some suggested that this was with other people not with themselves *the Celtic Tiger didn't change my attitude but I could see that a lot of people were getting more aggressive and more greedy*.

People changed and became more hard nosed, *values changed and people became more materialistic about possessions and properties.* There was less empathy between people, life got tougher, longer hours were worked, loyalty of employees to their employer lessened. It was a lot more 'cut throat', a lot more challenging; everybody would have been caught up in the feeling of having to do better, to achieve more.

On the other hand, those who were grounded from the start were not affected hugely by the Celtic Tiger… *my philosophy or my beliefs or my values wouldn't have changed that much in the Celtic Tiger…..there was no mad excess in terms of either opportunity or pursuit. It was very busy professionally, so we didn't go mad.* Again grounded people could appreciate what was important in life and see the bigger picture…*You have to recognise that being able to walk, being able to go for a 5 mile walk along the coast is free, it's cheap and it's the thing that's... and it's important we get to do that.*

5.4.5 Changes since?

So with the Celtic Tiger gone, has there been a change in peoples feeling about spirituality in business? Several people felt that they thought it was not a bad thing, that it was an opportunity, and it meant that problems had to be looked at

in a different way… *you are working at different issues. , like you're trying to downsize, you're talking to staff about layoffs and you know you're working differently; you're looking at more opportunities.*

It was also suggested that it was an opportunity to exercise some temperance …*we did need a little stop. And examine your conscience sort of thing.* Values had become distorted, greed was the norm. It was an opportunity to get back in touch with the people, to re-assess values – *you would be asking yourself a lot more frequently-am I doing the right thing.* While it likely meant more pressure, hard work did not frighten people.

Some of the females interviewed felt it was a good thing insofar as their children were concerned, as they had become extremely materialistic. Children who were born in the 1990s had become so spoilt *if somebody has designer something, the next child has to be as good.*

One parent instanced a transformation with one sibling**:**

> *Now he was a guy now who bought into the whole Celtic Tiger thing big time you know. He just wanted a job where there was going to be big cars, blond women, loads of money and no work if possible. But I have seen the change in him. You know he rang this morning and he said to me I've sent out 25 CV's.... and part of me says... 'Good' I'm really really pleased. I mean we did try and give them that sense of work ethic and all that growing up but they did have loads and they had too much like a lot of children of that generation had. In a way I see this Celtic Tiger (or the break down of it and this recession). I think its going to be good. For the next generation. Because something was lost in translation in those years and I really feel that very strongly.*

So, the recession, while tough to deal with, is in some ways a relief, as the race to keep up with the Jones is off.

5.5 Spirituality and its Role in the Organisation

This section of questioning focused on whether the interviewees felt that spirituality had a role in the organisation they had worked in.

5.5.1 Organisational Values

Initially interviewees were asked whether their organisation had values that one could clearly identify with.

Engagement with, and respect for, employees was a very significant factor in the responses. Keeping employees informed was very important, in many instances people were conscious of current difficulties and the need to have redundancies, and a humane approach to this was necessary *so we went and met them and told them what we were doing*.

The obligation to provide a good working environment was also recognized, wherein staff could grow and develop, and have a pride in their organisation. This also involved engendering teamwork, and ensuring the recruitment of staff that had a positive attitude towards work and the business.

Also the people angle of dealing with clients and customers was a value that was intrinsic in the business*: Customer satisfaction is a priority. Total priority.*

Integrity and fairness were values that were high on the list: *I think that the level of service comes back to integrity, it comes back to fairness.* This is related to staff, customers and business partners, treating people with integrity and respect, doing the right thing, being honourable, also extending to how one would deal with the wider community and with the environment. It was felt that since this could be encouraged through teamwork and can be grown by the collective input of as many people as possible. *The company, our kind of mission statement for want of a better word, really centres around teamwork and it centres around ....working together as a team.... achievements through teamwork and they are the values and that is the philosophy of the company.*

These values would not have been completely altruistic, it was recognized that there was a payback in terms of the employee motivation and satisfaction, and customer loyalty, but there was a satisfaction expressed in at least one case,

that… *the owners of the business had got values that were beyond material… that connection is good for me…they have a sense of grounding…mature.*

On the other hand, a note of caution was sounded by one interviewee, who suggested that the values of the organisation, which were written down in a mission statement, had not actually been followed by his masters in their dealings with him. In this case there had been a lot of rationalisation which may not have been carried on in a humane manner.

Almost half of the interviewees would have worked with large organisations, which would have had "Mission Statements", or codes of conduct, setting out values which could incorporate spiritual principles. In the case of the other interviewees their organisations would have developed cultures. To an extent therefore, spiritual principles would be intrinsic in all organisations. Certain of the organisations recognized their public service role *that element in particular has to have a spiritual undertone to it.*

5.5.2 Role of Spirituality in the Organisation

The answer to the question as to whether spirituality had a role in the organisations the interviewees worked with was essentially positive. This related to the principles by which you conducted your business, and operating with a sense of integrity. The people element was again recognized: *spirituality is about people being comfortable with themselves, comfortable with what they are doing.* The payback was recognized… *if you can engage people they are going to deliver for you* and… *it's a two way process that they can achieve their potential. Then that can help people get to a greater sense of purpose. And that can only be good for the organisation.* The requirement to deal compassionately with employees was a spiritual act, not related to "bottom line" maximisation. Engaging with employees, and fostering teamwork engendered togetherness and belonging *…and I think belonging is a very core thing about spirituality and being part of a large group.*

A contrary opinion was that spirituality was related to religion and religion did not have a role in work. Another negative view was that while there should be a morality in business dealings, unfortunately there did not seem now to be room for that caring element.

The degree to which spiritual principles, incorporated into the values of the organisation would be specifically stated varied. In the majority of cases it was felt that, even if the values were "up on the wall", the extent to which they were practiced related hugely to the culture in the organisation, which in turn related back to the principals, or managers of the business. Recruitment practices ensured that one could be surrounded by people with similar values - *the one that is going to be closest to your way of thinking is the one you are going to be employing at the end of the day-*, so that the essential ethos of the organisation could be carried on.

5.5.3 Restraints on Expression of Spirituality

In general it was felt that there were no restraints on the expression of spirituality by individuals in the relevant organisations. To some degree people had been encouraged to express their spirituality, in their dealings with other staff, with customers, and in making a contribution to the community. At the same time demographic changes in Ireland were recognized, where we had moved from a Christian monoculture to a multicultural society: *but I await with interest situations which may challenge any complacency in that or any other department.*

At the same time it had to be recognized that the originating culture of those interviewed was Christian, and there was an expression of concern that Christian values in the organisation should not be diluted *because I don't see anything in Christian values that are in any way oppressive.* On the other hand *there has to be a certain amount of tolerance and complying with and respecting other people's cultures and beliefs.*

In some cases the requirements of business practices within the business meant that tolerance of overt displays of spiritual practices could not be tolerated, and the overriding principle that work came first had to be respected:… *we do encourage people to be themselves as much as they can at work but obviously there are constraints in the sense that we've a job to do, we've a performance to deliver.*

It was felt that it would not be desirable to allow a denominational view to dominate, by overt expressions of practices; these should be carried out outside of work hours. At the same time respect should be paid for the requirements of a denomination, for example Jews not working on a Saturday. In general work time should not be interrupted for denominational religious practices.

The principal way in which expression of spirituality might actually be encouraged, was in the way people were dealt with. Staff were encouraged to grow and develop, through teamwork and motivation, everybody is encouraged to learn and grow. There was a limited expression of support for a greater development of spirituality among staff, through non business-related training including retreats.

5.5.4 Organisational Achievements

The achievements of the organisation that the interviewees would have been proud of were reviewed. Again development of people was high on the list, people being encouraged to grow, learn, and move on in their careers. Achieving excellence in HR practices was mentioned. Most had invested heavily in people development, and pride was expressed in staff being loyal to the organisation over the years. Another side of this coin was distaste at the necessity currently of having to deal with redundancies.

 Building up a business, developing new markets, innovation in product design were other achievements that were found satisfactory, in some cases marked by rewards from peer organisations.   Building up a good reputation, being recognized as an organisation with integrity, good to deal with were important.

One respondent, who I might have regarded as not the most spiritually well-informed, made the point that the business achievements were not important what was important was things such as development of a good family atmosphere *But I think if you raise your family nice and your family are happy and your children are happy at home and all that. You can be proud of that.*

5.5.5 Did the Organisation change during the Celtic Tiger Period?

A significant number of the respondents stated that they felt things had changed for the worse in the period of the Celtic Tiger. There was *a much greater drive for material things,* and *people* became *less concerned about each other and much more concerned about themselves.*

People behaved more arrogantly: *they have fierce opinions now* and *whether you call it greed or whether you call it lack of moral standards….that puts a strain on how we would like to conduct ourselves.* So there was more stress *the net effect of some of that for us is that it has increased tension in the Irish business.*

Materialism was a very big factor: *materialism not only crept in, it leapt in.* An opinion was expressed that the culture in business in Ireland definitely changed:

> *There is more focus on the money than there was in the past and some of the people you'd see, you know, certainly bigger businesses around you are too focused on their own personal wealth and not enough focused on the general good you know… and I feel that there are a pile of people out there with lots of money, for whom money has become a God because there's nothing else who is taking that place.*

Another strong expression of disgust at what went on during the period, and how people became so material was:

> *I think there are a lot of people out there who could have given a lot, not only in money but expertise. I mean no one ever mentioned names but you know there are huge builders around the city and they were building up to the last day of the.. Now I say and I spoke to a lot of those before and my feeling was.. .' how can ye achieve happiness?' you don't need the money. You don't need the houses and why would you continue with the hassle of building day after day, just houses. Because they're not*

building communities, they're not interested in that. Why would you do that? And I think you'd do it if you had nothing else to live for.

Values did change, the pace picked up, *it was less fun really.* Everyone was so busy; people were looking for an instant response. There was less loyalty, to both employers and customers; people would judge things on price alone. Business was tougher, customers expected more, and it was challenging to have to abide by one's standards. However there were positives, people became more independent, and entrepreneurial spirit flourished. Also there was an indication that where businesses were grounded, and core values were embedded, essential values didn't change.

There was also recognition that demographic changes meant that the organisation had to adapt, particularly the impact of immigration on multicultural practices.

5.5.6 Has the Organisation changed since the Demise of the Celtic Tiger Period?

The downturn has got us back to basic beliefs, values had got skewed, but business is now very challenging. Some have adjusted better than others, some have managed to shake their attachment to the material values which had been in vogue, but… most *people adjust that's always the bones of it.*

Again there can be positives:

> *It's good for the office because it's almost like that blitz spirit … you know we're all in this together… suddenly there's a siege mentality and there's a sort of strength in that. And there was initial horror of cuts with salaries being cut and no bonuses and all of that but now it has settled in …and there is a feeling of you know we're all working to keep this place afloat*

The downturn has been painful from the point of view of reductions in incomes, more stress in business, but particularly for having to deal with issues such as redundancies. The good times during the Celtic Tiger period meant that people had become complacent and this had to be dealt with, and to a certain extent there was not a full recognition of the problems to be faced yet:…*the other thing*

is that when a company has performed very successfully as we would have done over the past number of years, people become very sheltered.

5.6 Spirituality in Business Generally

Participants were asked what they saw as the greatest changes in the way business had been conducted in the last 25 years - with particular reference to interpersonal relationships, satisfaction from work, enjoyment.

5.6.1 Changes in how Business was Conducted

The most frequently made comment was in relation to the greater amount of aggression in business dealings: *Negotiations certainly over the last number of years became very tough. Everybody was looking for the bit of extra margin.* People became arrogant, harder, became indifferent to customers, and became very aggressive about obtaining '*the last red cent'. I think there is more brutality in it to be honest with you; people are more mercenary than they used to be.*

It was expressed that there could be a generation of people, now the deal makers in business, who had not been properly grounded in good business values:

> *…and people who have become successful, very successful, who haven't had the benefit of it in terms of business standards and in terms of their moral responsibilities. And in terms of their attitude to other people. I think that that in terms of a sense of values, that's a big problem I think that we have in Ireland.*

It was tougher: *the workplace over the last 20 years has become a less and less pleasurable experience.* Everybody was working harder, working longer hours, even though during the Celtic Tiger period the rewards were considerable. Price competition became the norm, concern was expressed that this had lead to deterioration in business relationships, and the potential for a decline in the quality of products or service.

> *Once a generation of professionals is cut out through tendering, a whole ethos of study, experience, and expertise will be lost. It will be interesting to see if the new model will generate sufficient*

professionalism in my own walk of life. God forbid we have tendering for medical service.

It was suggested that we had become much less spiritual and much more material. We lost touch with our roots; it was definitely not changed for the better: *as we got more wealthy I think we weren't able to handle it as a country- we weren't able to handle our wealth and we've lost our spirituality.*

There was less time to talk, the term '*dog eat dog*' was used again *I think the whole social aspect of, you know, relating with somebody from a business point of view where you ... chat, and that just went.* There was less care for other people, *there's less interest in you as a person. You could fall over in the street and people just walk by you. That's the way it is in Ireland. It's awful to see it. It's become very less spiritual and much more material.*

It was suggested that there was a decline in moral standards in business that agreements sometimes meant nothing *the first 20 years of my business, you shake hands with people and you have a deal and that was honesty and integrity. That doesn't exist any more.* People were consumed with consumption, and were not grounded: *he has all these properties around the world... and he just doesn't see the big picture... that this is a transient experience ... this thing called life on earth.*

The huge improvement in communication was commented on, mainly the emergence of mobile phones and e-mail, but this may have added to rather than improved the problem of interpersonal relationships:… *I am a huge fan of technology. It (email) has definitely helped enormously, but there are ways in which we use it which is ill-advised - to avoid meeting people, when it is the personal connection that is definitely required.*

It was the gold rush era *always going after the brightest star rather than actually having a look, and running so fast that you are not actually drawing back all the time in reviewing your business"* There was a lot of insincerity out there *…and I think money became the be all and end all for a while.*

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Conversations could be centred on possessions -- houses, cars, holidays, and *where you nearly felt inferior because you were not buying houses in Bulgaria or something like that.*

The distaste for the behaviour was expressed in a number of quotes:

> *I just think the excesses really were, I have to say, you know, incredible at times.*

> *I think people just got very greedy, and were they nice to people? No, they were not!*

> *They wanted to make names for themselves... and I think there was an awful sense of arrogance*

> *…its greed. Absolutely*

Everybody was orientated towards salaries, generating income, ideally with less responsibility

> *So they wanted their 3 or 4 holidays a year and they wanted fulfilment in their families but they saw work simply as providing the money for that. But they didn't see much value in the work itself.*

And

> *The downside is that it's sometimes difficult to get them to own the work. They see it as your work or working for you. They don't see it as themselves... the work.....and then they get out of there five to-5 if they can. So I think that the attitude about the work has changed and I think that's linked in with the remuneration as well.*

Concern was expressed at the impact of the change in culture on younger people, who were more and more difficult to deal with, became more arrogant, were not involved in communities, but were consumed   with looking after themselves. To some extent they were the victims of the Celtic Tiger, they had to work longer hours, but they were missing from the community. A significant change in lifestyle was a requirement to have two incomes, and two parents working, initially this might have been a lifestyle choice, but it became a requirement to meet their mortgage repayments.

On a positive note it was suggested that we continued to be generous in supporting people who were less well off, both with our time and funding. Standards and protocols became much more professional, improved technology did have a favourable aspect to it particularly in terms of access to information, employees were far better educated and generally were more talented. General access to education meant a more egalitarian society, there was greater opportunity for employees to develop and succeed, and society became less stratified.

It was also acknowledged that change would happen in any event, and had to be coped with *I try not to forget there is always the opportunity to walk in a different direction.*

5.6.2 Did Values change?

There was a reasonable consensus that values changed for the worst during the Celtic Tiger period. The following give an indication of the attitude of people:

> *I think greed and profit have been the main orienting factor*

> *It's much tougher... it's much meaner... and I think that became the thing to do*

> *I think people have been more focused on money and cars and the holiday homes... working longer hours and poor quality of life*

> *...and I'm going to stand on you and anyone I have to stand on to get I have to go... it's all about me and my entitlements... my needs are paramount*

Definitely the perception was that there was more greed, more concern with ones own entitlements and benefits, and less concern for business colleagues or the community. The changes happened gradually, and most people would not have been consciously aware of it, but as a result core values such as honesty trust and respect ... *maybe those things were shoved aside and it was about making the last cent or just being totally driven to get the optimal.* There was a rush for short term gain, fuelling the ego demand; *nobody had time to smell the roses.*

Full employment may have meant that there was a decrease in entrepreneurialism, and there was less empathy between the employee and the organisation. Full employment involved huge increase in the public service, paving the way for far greater regulation.

Some people thought it would never end: *one of the shortcomings of the Celtic Tiger was that a number of sectors and people took that kind of growth for granted.* But some recognized that it could not last *I mean it was really so obvious that the country was going to come to a sticky stop.*
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5.6.3 Is Spirituality Practiced in Business, and has this changed?

The different perceptions that people had of spirituality would likely have influenced the response to this question, but there were some valuable comments made. There were also mixed views on whether it was practised or not, on the one hand many organisations had developed and strongly supported ethical values, on the other hand there were the negative factors noted above including greed, selfishness and the "dog eat dog" mentality.

It was pointed out that spirituality is a personal thing, and if it is intrinsic in the values of a business leader, it will tend to permeate within the organisation:… *people have their own internal set of values and bring that to what they are doing in business* .The question really was what the person's personal standards were, and if they had not been grounded from the start they was unlikely develop values such as integrity and honesty later - *I think that if the person themselves hasn't got their sense of spirituality right at the start, I think there are going to get into trouble later on.*

People will act according to their conscience, which is related to their spirituality, *because our sense of conscience, our sense of right and wrong, and our spirituality are all banged up together.*

I think when we become disconnected from spirituality we might lose respect around our values. And our values might shift to a place where they're more arrogant and they're more uncaring and they're more its like dog eats dog. And we don't want to ever see Ireland go in that direction you know. So I think spirituality is important and I think the difficulty that people see though is because of the things that happened with religion in Ireland over the last few years, the corruption and abuse of position and power and so on. There's a risk that people are disconnecting from organised religion and also disconnected from spirituality.

In general it would not be overtly practised, but it was argued that there was no conflict between good business values and spirituality; in fact - *I suppose good business practice is not very far away from ethical practice, which in turn, is not far away spirituality..* One senior executive talked of a management mantra which incorporated spiritual principles – achieve the task, build the team and develop individuals. This gave people a sense of direction, a sense of team involvement, and would help to deliver the organisational goals.

It was felt that there were some companies where profit maximisation was not the only issue, who had high ethical standards: *you can spot the companies that have that bias towards doing business…it shines out like a beacon.* There was however concern that the number of such companies is diminishing

5.6.4 Did the Celtic Tiger bring a Greater Feeling of well being or Spirituality?

There was a greater feeling of well being, because of the greater wealth around, people had jobs security, and nothing had gone wrong for so many years:

And yes, even though there was excess in the Celtic Tiger climate, it is also the case that there can of course be a greater sense of well-being when people have more. Poverty and hardship can really diminish people, just as much as excess can expand us to bursting point! And so we are back to the rebalancing stuff.

There was a greater feeling of being well off because of possessions: *people aspired to those things but I think they thought that was what was going to make them happy* and *there might have been a greater feeling of well-being but they might have confused that with spirituality.*

The media had a big influence, advertising suggested that acquiring possessions would give people a greater sense of well being, and contentment, and even discussions were misleading:

> *The discussions I hear on the radio about spirituality are spirituality without depth, without value. It's of value to the person as long as it gives them good feelings and kind of a vague sense of belonging to something or another. But I find that they never nominate that belonging in discussions. And they're never asked by the interviewer. What does this spirituality make you belong to? There is no sense of higher value systems or higher destinies or higher persons. So to some degree it's just a passing reality. Some vague passing reality.*

People thought there were happier because they were able to achieve more things, but they were too busy having a good time to think too much about spirituality: *I don't think people had time to stop and think what they were doing* and some of the behaviour certainly was not spiritual:

> *…why did the Holy Communion need to involve a limousine and two grands worth of gifts? It's insane! An 8 year old! It was insane and I do think something was lost.*

> *I think there was a greater feeling of well being from the point of view of material things but I think that people became very greedy when you look at it. There was more consumption of food and drink and people acquired in a more than they needed more material things.*

However, although it became fashionable to suggest that spirituality decreased during the Celtic Tiger period, we did continue to give generously to charitable causes, to put time into community involvement, and the Special Olympics (organised nationally with professional backup) was instanced as a huge positive in terms of social interaction.

5.6.5 Impact of the Recession

The ending of the Celtic Tiger period may have been a relief to some people; the big chase to keep up with the Joneses was over. People had lost the plot, *we were immersed in a huge amount of wealth creation and we enjoyed the spoils of that without thinking that this could stop at any time.*

It was an artificial situation, an unsustainable bubble. Reality had to come back. *We were down here and we came up here so fast and there was never a middle ground. And I think we are coming back to the middle now I think that's great. I actually welcome it.*

It has saved people from themselves *to say that the quality of life didn't suffer at this time would be a naive assumption.*

As to what happened, there was a great consensus that greed had been a major factor:

> *Greed. No question, massive greed. Recession is the antidote, and maybe we will get back into balance, and in the course of doing so, hopefully there will not be too much suffering*

Everybody had lost the run of themselves, and consumption had become rampant: *I think we all got caught up in that. And it was greed and want and you know – he has it and I want it.*

The lack of leadership by government and regulators was blamed for not saving ourselves from ourselves. Markets got out of hand, banks were given freedom to lend to developers way beyond their capacity to repay, and a weak government went one if not two or three agreements too far in social partnership. The government became disconnected from reality, and did not face up to hard decisions. Little faith was placed in the ability of the leaders to guide us out of the downturn: *There's a lack of leadership at the top of the country at the moment. We don't have competent optimistic leaders leading the country through this thing.*

We hadn't learnt from history, there would always be peaks and valleys in economic development. One of the interviewees spoke of Ambrose Congreve, who has passed his hundredth birthday, and predicted during the Celtic Tiger period that it would come to a sticky end. When asked how he knew he referred to 1929, which of course he had lived through.

But in the last two years reality is coming back, and people have to live with the fact that they cannot spend at the same rate as they used to. Even children are recognizing that they will not be the beneficiaries of the big spend as much as they were before. A female interviewee talked about her child who was attempting to get to grips with the new reality:

> *I had to laugh at him the other day, reality is dawning finally. He's in 5th class and he has friends in 6th class and he says 'Mam, I'd love to give them all a card for their confirmation and a few bob but he said, we are in a recession so I'll only give it to three of them!*

People have become more grounded, and *I think that most people realise that happiness is not a pile of money.* There is more realism now, people are moderating their demands, they are more realistic at pricing, and less wasteful in their purchasing. People have been stopped in their tracks, and spirituality stocktaking may be taking place:

> *Like up to now, it's like as if I was overindulging in cake and all of a sudden there's a shortage of it and all of a sudden I say well why did I ever get involved with that anyway. I go for a walk in Tramore and I might have an ice cream, but that's all I'd do. So I think something like that happens with the human spirit, taking its course and I think that's an opportunity for people to move in another direction.*

People are questioning things more, they are beginning to ask how are they going to get through life in the changed circumstances, there is a humbling in attitude, they are thinking:… *I think there is more a reflection going on, which is a step into spirituality,* but you have to move on and learn what you can from what has happened.

On the other hand there is a suggestion that the pace of life may have slowed down, improving the quality of life. The quality of life would also have been approved by a reduction in the struggle to keep up with the Joneses.

Given the strong roots of so many people to the Christian ethos, it is perhaps inevitable that there may be a reawakening of Christian practices *when things go wrong for people they start praying. There is nothing else to do, there is nowhere else to go, so they try to get connected with god, consciousness, themselves.* Also

I'm sure there is a lot more people going to Mass and going to church

I think that people will start coming back... maybe becoming more spiritual again... when the Celtic Tiger was thriving people went away from spirituality

So I think there are going to be more people going to church, and more people going to psychiatrists

However the attitude to the church has changed in the meantime, while people are questioning a bit more *I don't think the downturn has affected people's spirituality as much as the abuses in the church and the rise of Islam.*

The church is compromised, and there are many other factors impacting people's approach to spirituality. Change is inevitable, and changes in the last 25 years were not just economic, but demographic as well, and people's personal situation could change dramatically, particularly family changes. There is also of course the possibility that people are just too busy fire fighting, trying to save their businesses, trying to survive financially, to allow themselves to give thought to other things.

5.7 Spiritual Practices

It is very important for most of the respondents that they are in a position to get to a place where they can reflect….*quiet reflection.* The time here could just to be a period when the mind was allowed to go blank, and thoughts allowed to settle, or could be a more intense effort *to reflect on the standards you live your life by* - an effort to question whether one is doing the right thing, and to assess where one is in life.

This period was not so much a prayer session directed at a higher being, but an effort to *tune into myself,* to stand back a bit, get things in perspective, get connected:

> *I see myself getting in touch with what's inside, with whatever it is that's looking at the thinking. -that part of me that sees the thoughts going by. Not my conscious mind but the subconscious, the one that's there behind all that. The being that's in there looking at all that. That's what I'm getting connected with.*

It was suggested that this period was definitely an intense period of spirituality, getting into a transpersonal self, getting in touch with where you are. It helps one to get in touch with the bigger picture:… *suddenly I just get that feeling of you know – I'm part of a bigger cosmos and I'm part of more than just who I am here, you know – in the moment.*

At least two of the respondents, who spoke of reflection as being an important part of their spirituality, had training in meditation practices.

This inner peace, or connectivity, could be reached through activities such as painting music or gardening:

> *…because when you are doing that you are beyond the thoughts that are going through your brain. You're really meditating. You're focused. It's like the Zen of living. You're empty of everything else; you're just there you know, in the moment.*

It could also be found in sport, in sailing for example where one is on the ocean, away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life and *you have peace and solitude and time to think and are away from people.*

Sport was a release for a lot of the participants, golf, tennis, running walking, its healthy to free the mind from the concerns of everyday living, and gave one a chance to get in touch with the inner self *sport can have that spiritual aspect is that we talked about.*

Simple activities associated with the beach and water were mentioned a number of times as being locations were one could reach into one's spirituality. A walk on the beach, sitting on a rock by the sea, getting out in the fresh air, just being quiet, was helpful in fulfilling the spiritual longing.

A number of the interviewees did resort to a prayer as a spiritual exercise, and found comfort in this, and felt that it helped in assuring the mind that correct decisions were being taken. A visit to a church, possibly accompanied by a short prayer, was also found satisfying, *because of the experience of the building but also partly because of the peace and quiet and solitude*.

An interesting observation was that personal spirituality was found in a work context in terms of satisfaction from relationships with people, and in the achievement of objectives. There could be considerable spirituality emerging from people relationships and compassion where a work colleague had a problem:

> *For example my sister is very ill at the moment and she is getting better but she had brain surgery and everybody in here knew about it and they were all praying. I said lads 'I need your prayers now, she needs your prayers.' And you know different people came along and said, you know – Look, I've put a request with Brother Ignatius Rice and different people that they had their own contacts with so...I suppose they know here how I feel about prayer…. and that's not a bad thing.*

There was an element of habit, or perhaps fear, in the continuation of the practice of attendance at a religious ceremonies, particularity mass. We all need *something to hang on to; it's a good peg in the ground.*

The peril of getting too involved in business, devoting too much time to it, and generally getting caught up in the greed of the Celtic Tiger, with too little time standing back to think about one's values, had resulted in a failed relationship in one situation.

I asked whether any of these spiritual practices could be experienced in a work setting, the responses were mixed, approximately one third felt it was possible, that time could be taken for quiet reflection or prayer, closing one's eyes and getting in touch with the inner self. They risk of being seen to be day dreaming, was a possible downside, so this practice was likely only possible for those who had there own personal workspace.

Frequently there was an opportunity to carry out this reflection when moving from one location to another, for example when in a car - the phone would be turned off, the radio would be off.

On the other hand, a number of people felt that religious practices had no place in a business context that in effect spirituality was a personal thing divorced from the work setting.

There was no suggestion that people's religious practices had changed during the Celtic Tiger period. The lack of tolerance by people during the period of the Celtic Tiger had meant that to some extent one had to be more open and patient in business dealings, but generally the feedback was that those interviewed were grounded to an extent that the Celtic Tiger did not affect them in their practices.

There was also a recognition that we had all aged during the period, had become more experienced and open, and whereas in one's younger days religious practices might have been carried out from habit, as one matured, more thought was given to why practices were carried out, so continuation of the practices was from conviction rather than habit.

6 Discussion and Analysis

What questions arise from the previous chapter, which has collated key findings from the interviews, that are worthy of discussion and analysis?

Although each of the interviewees had a common thread in that they were senior business leaders operating in the Southeast of Ireland during the period, were their individual profiles different in terms of factors such as family background, training and age? If so, would this have affected their responses?

How well did they participants understand spirituality? Given my own difficulty in coming up with an accurate definition, it was likely that each might have approached their thoughts about spirituality from different angles. As noted, with limited exceptions, all those asked to participate were willing, and seemed to have an interest in the topic. But was their interest superficial, or was spirituality a big part of their lives? Had they talked about the factors that could be involved in spirituality as I had identified in my literature review, incorporating things like the hidden yearning, the search for meaning, values, or relationships with people? Was spirituality relevant in business, and if so was it practised?

And, the core question at the centre of my research - was there a change in the experience of spirituality during the period of the Celtic Tiger, and had the subsequent recession helped us to recognize this?

6.1 Profiles of the Participants

As noted, 18 senior business leaders from the South East of Ireland were interviewed, and their responses are set out in the previous Chapter. Did they

have characteristics in common, and did their opinions represent what might be expected of business leaders in the area generally?

All were in senior positions in business, all working with substantial businesses, all with achievements to be proud of. To succeed, as they had done, there were undoubtedly common characteristics, expressed by them in outlining what their basic values were.

All had benefitted materially from the economic success of the Celtic Tiger, and all had to deal with the subsequent recession, and the reduction in incomes. All seemed to have an ability to deal with the bigger picture, possibly an element of Spiritual Intelligence, worthy of further examination, in a later study.

It would not have been considered in any depth beforehand, but became apparent from the interviews, that there was a pervading influence of the Catholic Church on the development of values among all the interviewees. Although many were no longer practicing, and many were disenchanted with the performance of the Hierarchy, none could escape, nor did they seem to want to, from the imposition of Christian cultures on their belief system –this was true even of the younger interviewees. Another generation may need to pass before the impact of secularism on our value system may be felt. For the present Irish Catholics of the generation interviewed are developing alternative, more personal, paths to meaning and transcendental experience (Inglis 2007).

The age profile of the participants is interesting- although I did not ask people their age, I would have had a rough idea. Appendix F looks at the various Economic periods over the last 50 years, as outlined in Chapter 2, and charts against this the age of various age groups during the periods. What becomes apparent is that a person in the current age group 45-50 would likely have come into a management role during the Celtic Tiger period(I would estimate that one third of the interviewees were in this category), and would not, as a manager, have had to deal with the bleak period up to 1987. Only someone over 55 would have had a serious exposure to this bleak period (again estimated at one third of the interviewees, the other third being older again).

What cannot be forgotten is that during the period, everybody got older, with consequent growth in life and management experience, so nothing stayed the same. Also people had personal experiences which could have significantly affected their experience of spirituality, particularly family issues like birth of children, death or incapacity of family members.

6.2 Participants Understanding of Spirituality, and how it is practiced

The interviewees had each been given a document by me (**Appendix B**), which introduced the topic for discussion, and set out a basic understanding of what I believed spirituality might be. To some extent therefore each interviewee was primed as to what spirituality was, but there were probing questions teasing out what their understanding was.

I believe, from a review of the transcripts of the interviews, that at least 13 of the interviewees had a deep or profound understanding of spirituality, had read or contemplated about it, and had incorporated it into their lifestyle. Their basic values would have been framed through their Christian family upbringing, but I believe that this significant majority of the interviewees had tested and honed their belief system and values.

In attempting to see was there a common thread in how their understanding of spirituality was expressed, the interviews were reviewed again, and what seems to comes through most strongly is the relationship, particularly amongst business people, of spirituality with **values**. This is expressed in how you live your life, how you conduct your business, a sense of fair play in dealing with customers and employees, a sense of *doing the right thing*. As Clark (1987) says spirituality is essentially based upon the life principle of the person. There is something deep within you, possibly a conscience, that one has to be true to, but a source of inner strength to call on in difficult times. Guillory (2000, p. 33) defines spirituality as our *inner consciousness* and *that which is spiritual comes from within-beyond*

our programmed beliefs and values. Dorr (1984) who would have been influenced by Christian ideals referred to spirituality as not just a set of theological ideas but more outlooks and attitudes that are revealed by the way we act and react. He says that when he thinks of spirituality, what he has in mind is the outlook, the approach, and the set of attitudes and values which are the expression of this 'me' at his most authentic.

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An ability to see the bigger picture was mentioned, and is an obvious requirement for somebody in a senior management position. Zohar (2001), coined the phrase *Spiritual Intelligence*, meaning the intelligence with which we address and solve problems of meaning and value, the intelligence with which we can place our actions and our lives in a wider, richer, meaning giving context, the intelligence with which we can assess that one course of action or one life path is more meaningful than another.   It is our ultimate intelligence. On this basis, I believe that the business leaders I interviewed would have had this Spiritual Intelligence.

There had been a definite development of secularism amongst the group, although most were still participating in Christian rituals like attendance at church, in some cases this was to give a good example to family members or neighbours. As Inglis states (Inglis, 2007, p 74) it may well be for an increasing number of people that being Catholic in Ireland may have more to do with belonging to an inherited social identity.

A clear majority of those interviewed could differentiate between spirituality and religion, the latter being seen as an organised set of beliefs, a framework that one operated, in effect compliance with *the rules of a club*, but a necessary discipline in most cases. As Steiger and Lipson (1985) comment, Religion is a social institution in which a group of people participate rather than an individual search for meaning. As such, religion is more about systems of practices and beliefs within which the social group engage. Bu I believe the general appreciation of the difference would be closer to that of His Holiness the Dalai Lama (1998) who stated;

> *Religion I take to be concerned with belief in the claims to salvation of one faith tradition or another-- an aspect of which is acceptance of some form of metaphysical or philosophical reality, including perhaps an idea of heaven or hell. Connected with this are religious teachings or dogma, ritual prayers and so on. spirituality I take to be concerned with those qualities of the human spirit -- such as love and compassion, patience, tolerance, forgiveness, contentment, a sense of responsibility, a sense of harmony, which brings happiness to both self and others.*

People could be religious but not spiritual: as one interviewee said *my experience of it is that an awful lot of people who are involved formally in religion aren't necessarily displaying spirituality.*

Spirituality was better regarded and was more essential –as one respondent put it *I don't think I could go through a day without tapping into something spiritual.* Mitroff and Denton (1999) carried out a qualitative survey in West Coast America among a management group reported on in their book *A Spiritual Audit of Corporate America.* The majority of respondents had a very positive view of spirituality, using terms such as *essence of life, spirit, interconnectedness,* but had a negative view of religion using terms such as *narrow, prescriptive, dogmatic, and closed.*

It also appeared that the general attitude was that spirituality was at the core of one's belief system, and consequently could not be left at home –as Nash & McLennan (2001) had noted. However there were challenges from time to time when difficult decisions had to be made, mainly relating to employee issues, where one had to be conscious of people's dignity. But as Zohar and Marshall (2001, p296) high Spiritual Intelligence demands the most intense personal integrity. It requires us to face choices and to realise that sometimes the right choices are difficult ones.

If one had a value system that was grounded and that one had a belief and confidence in, then one was better able to deal with difficult issues arising in work… *understanding the nature of things,* realising that everything is connected to everything else …*I try to hang on to the basic vision of what the hell I'm at.* This belief in one's values system engendered an amount of optimism, again a

necessary quality to deal with adversity. As Thompson (2001) says spirituality comes into play when we decide to do what is right.

Taking time out, in its various formats, was the most common spiritual practice used by the interviewees. In essence this involved getting to a place where they could achieve *quiet reflection*. It could be a time and place where a particular problem was deliberated on, alternatively the mind might just be left blank, or it could be a more intense effort *to reflect on the standards you live your life by.*

This place might be in church, might involve participation in a religious ceremony, but more likely would be a quiet place-walking the beach, sailing, meditation. A minority found it possible to achieve this in a work setting, although spirituality could be achieved through other actions, for example interaction with staff.

Sport was a common outlet, where the mind was freed from the concerns of everyday living, at least temporarily, *sport can have that spiritual aspect is that we talked about* and a healthy activity was introduced to balance the stresses of work.

As Rolheiser(1998) noted spirituality is about finding the proper ways, or disciplines, by which to access our spiritual energy and contain it. Time out for quiet reflection, or sporting activity, is seen as a way to achieve this.

6.3 Is Spirituality Relevant in Business, and if so is it practiced?

I believe that all the interviewees felt that spirituality was relevant in business and was, or should be practised, although not overtly. No dissent was expressed by any of the interviewees to this question.

A significant majority, thirteen of the eighteen interviewed, mentioned dealings with people (employees, customers) as being a spiritual exercise, and an area where their strongest spiritual experiences in work had happened. This could have been expressed in dealing fairly with employees and customers, and satisfaction could have been achieved from development of employees, and development of good relationships with customers. Developing a good relationship with employees was felt to be a spiritual exercise, whereby their values were aligned with those of the employers…*if you can align the values of an organisation with a sense of purpose and a sense that they can maximise their contribution in this place. I think that's a fairly powerful thing.*

There are many writings which are in tune with the sentiments expressed here. McGeachy (2001) suggests that love in the workplace is expressed by genuine compassion for one's colleagues; allowing that love to permeate all of one's activities as an act of love of God and Colleague; it is the exchange of love, energy, kindness and caring.

Dorr (1984) takes love as referring to a second major area of Christian spirituality, the inter-personnel aspect, concerned with face to face relationships with other people -- including friendships, family life, community living and even our more casual relationships.

Marques et al (2007, p89) definition of spirituality in the workplace placed heavy emphasis on this interconnectedness:

> *spirituality in the workplace is an experience of interconnectedness among those involved in a work process; initiated by authenticity, reciprocity, and personal goodwill; engendered by a deep sense of meaning that is inherent in the organisation's work; and resulting in greater motivation and organisational excellence.*

Collinson (1999) says the responsibility of leaders is not to develop people but to develop the climate and opportunities for self development. Spiritual leadership encourages others to ask questions. As a result of employees being given empowerment, they can have a better vision of their own personal destiny and to take more responsibility for their actions and personal growth (Howard, 2002).

It was important for the business and the manager to have values, particularly incorporating honesty and integrity, and this was spirituality. Ideally these principles or values should be incorporated in the mission statement of the organisation, and enshrined in the principles of the managers, and if so could be a powerful tool in building teamwork. Garcia –Zamor (2003), who reviewed literature on workplace spirituality, noted that a growing body of literature dealing with spirituality in the work place has been emerging and has become part of some Ethics course syllabi. He stated that spirituality encompasses the same topic which is so important in ethics- character, and the giving of one's self for the benefit of others i.e. *morally good behaviour.*

There was a general feeling that there should be no conflict between good business values and spirituality- … *there's an attitude that people do their best and that comes from lots of different things, like it comes from having decent standards, it comes from having a certain amount of honesty and having a good relationship.* There is evidence suggesting a link between workplace spirituality and enhanced individual creativity and practice (Freshman, 1999) increased honesty and trust within the organisation (Wagner-Marsh and Conley,1999), enhanced sense of personal fulfilment of employees (Burack,1999) and increased commitment to organisational goals(Delbecq,1999:Leigh,1997).

While there would be pressure to comply with the values which the business and the manager had, this was no different to how one had to deal with one's own values in one's personal life. In business there would be the inevitable pressure of attempting to deal with delivering results…*there is that bit of a pull or contradiction at times* but *there was a need to keep feet firmly on the ground.* This could involve approaching a breaking point… *if you reach a line and you cant do anymore you have experience that you have to be able to say, 'look, I've gone as far as I can.* As Rahner, quoted by Marmion (1998) states the movement towards a divine authority occurs wherever someone is faithful to the dictates of his or her conscience.

Essentially personal values could not be compromised… *no I wouldn't, I couldn't live with that,* but there should really be no conflict between personal values and organisational values.

But work could have an important part to play in contributing to a person's spirituality, particularly in the context of service to people, employees and customer. In the Rule of Saint Benedict work is seen as conducive to holiness, and so is seen as a holy endeavour.

6.4 Was there a Change in the Experience of Spirituality during the Celtic Tiger Period, and after?

The question central to this research is   whether there was a change experienced in the level and quality of spirituality, among a group of representative business leaders from the South East Region during the period of the 'Celtic Tiger'. I believe the answer is an overwhelming *yes.*

During the semi structured interviews participant's attitude to spirituality and the Celtic Tiger was questioned under a number of areas. Initially changes in the period relative to their own outlook on life were reviewed, followed by their personal attitude to spirituality in work generally. More specific questioning on spirituality and their own particular organisation, and the market place followed; finally their personal thoughts on the causes of what had happened in the period were looked at.

The personal experience expressed by most of the interviewees of how things evolved during the Celtic Tiger period was that there was a huge increase in materialism: *their goals are money*, and values were diluted *my values waddled a bit in those years.* One of the first people to recognise what was happening was Fr Harry Bohan who had worked with Irish emigrants in Birmingham, but returning to Ireland in the late 1990's found it a changed place, with huge social developments, few for the better. His feeling was that something of value had been lost, that Ireland was flying on one wing, dominated by corporate and market values, with a corresponding diminution of the spiritual and cultural

dimension. Bohan established the *Ceifin Institute for Values led Change*, whose opening conference was promoted as *Are We Forgetting Something,* a self explanatory title. He believed passionately that Ireland was waltzing into an economic, moral and social cul-de-sac which would scar not just the face but the soul of the nation.

McWilliams (2005) was another commentator who knew *we were losing the run of ourselves* and could anticipate the recession and noted that we were losing some core values that make us Irish. The organisation CORI, representing religious organisations in Ireland would have been similarly concerned at the developments. As CORI (2009) claimed, the philosophical basis for this approach is rooted in modern rationality and comes to a full expression in the individualism that sees no value in community of the common good, but rather sees the individual as the primary unit of social reality.

Since the recession has come there is recognition that the boom was artificial, austerity is almost welcome back, and there is an expectation of a revival of family and community values. It is tough but people are nicer.

Personal factors could have affected the experience of individuals, and in general grounded people would have been affected less by the highs and lows.

The experience in business was that during the period it was not as nice as before, it was tougher, people were more *hard nosed*, values changed to a more materialistic culture.

There may have been a greater feeling of well being because of the wealth being generated, and job security, *but they might have confused that with spirituality. People thought they were happier*, but *spirituality wasn't on the agenda.* Layard (2005 p3) a leading British Economist points to a paradox at the heart of our lives: most people want more income and strive for it. Yet as western societies have got richer, their people have become no more happier…We have more food, more clothes, more cars, bigger houses, more central heating, more foreign holidays…and above all better health, Yet we are not happier.

Since the recession there were different issues, there was a reality check with an element of temperance. There were different challenges, some opportunities, and a requirement to reassess values relative to work issues *you would be asking yourself far more frequently - am I doing the right thing?*

In relation to spirituality in their own business dealings and how it might have changed there were 14 responses indicating that it would have changed for the worse, evidenced by a *much greater drive for material things; less loyalty; less concerned about each other and more concerned about themselves. It was less fun; people were more arrogant; everyone was so busy, looking for an instant response. The culture in business in Ireland definitely changed: materialism not only crept in, it leapt in.* As CORI (Conference of Religious in Ireland) described the situation in their Issue 47 March 2009:

> *There are deeper moral dimensions to this crisis that require attention. Much of the current crisis is rooted in a philosophy of individualism that resists communitarian connectedness and is sees the individual as the primary unit of social reality. This philosophical approach sees the person principally in economic terms and considers the market to be the key place for advancement and development.*

There were some positives from the period: greater entrepreneurial spirit and more independence, but now it was back to basics with a requirement to adjust to the more challenging times.

Greed was a huge factor in the boom and bust mentioned by most people *the more people got the more they wanted. Everybody lost the run of themselves.* As James (2007) noted in his book *Affluenza* people were suffering emotional alienation because they were defining themselves through the level of affluence in their lives.

The situation was fuelled by a lack of regulation and the fact that all economics is based on the *Bigger Fool Theory-you are only a fool to invest in something until a bigger fool came along and paid you more for it!*

An issue worth reviewing is whether too much emphasis was put on measurement of Economic Performance as the barometer of how the country was

doing. During the Celtic Tiger period we congratulated ourselves on economic achievements, but took too little interest in social developments. As Layard (2005) notes, this devastating fact should lead us to reappraise our whole approach to how we try to improve our lot. Taking up this theme, Fahey (2007) suggest that instead of continuous dedication to the 'joyless economy' to use Scitovsky's (1976) phrase, where people constantly pursue more wealth in the futile belief that it will make them happier, we should focus on the things that really matter, such as strong social relationships, lower unemployment and poverty, less commercialism, and a stronger sense of moral values, and by that means strive for a real and meaningful increase in human happiness. Fahey notes that a similar view is expressed by Diener and Seligman (2004).

7 Conclusions

7.1 The Extraordinary Period

The period of the Celtic Tiger, covering approximately the period from the early 90s up to 2007 was an extraordinary one in Ireland. The economic growth was spectacular, and there were also huge social and cultural changes during the same period. Ireland moved from being an under performing, isolated, intensely Catholic state on the fringe of Europe, to a more progressive and diverse society, and an apparent model of economic success for all the countries of the European Union.

The figures for economic growth have been outlined in Section 2. Economic growth averaged over 7% per annum between 1994 and 2007. With the benefit of hindsight we can now see that the last 5 or so years of this period was a construction fuelled phase, funded by borrowings which ultimately could not be repaid and caused the downfall of our banking system.

A number of factors contributed to the economic success, but perhaps the most significant factor was an attitude change, where we developed the confidence to drop our isolationist stand, opened up to trade and embraced the concept of membership of the European Union. This openness to economic change was coupled with openness to social and cultural changes.

Economically Ireland was dramatically transformed in little more than a decade. The economy doubled in size, as a result of an increase of over 50% in the numbers employed, and an increase of almost 30% in real output per person. Unemployment became a thing of the past, immigration replaced immigration, and the public finances were brought under control.

But unfortunately we thought the boom would never end, we paid ourselves too much, we did not put anything away for the rainy day, and in fact we borrowed from anticipated future growth, from banks that could not wait to shovel out the money. We choose now to blame Lehmann Brothers, the Government, the

Opposition, the Banks, the Financial Regulators, but we are like children caught with our hand in the sweet jar- *the more people got the more they wanted. Everybody lost the run of themselves.*

Had the downturn not happened, it would have been less easy to view the Celtic Tiger period with realism. From an economic point of view it was an enormous success story, the problem was that the people of Ireland just wanted more and more. We wanted to have more income, more and bigger houses, more disposable income, and we were prepared to mortgage the future in order to get it. The interviewees in identifying greed as a major factor echo this thought.

As our economic situation improved, secularisation also increased. The Catholic Church shot itself in the foot, and its tenuous hold on the minds of the new Irish was strained by the scandals involving priests who fathered children, and priests involved in child abuse. The role of women changed, their voice was no longer silent, and they were not ardent lovers of a church, which was significantly male dominated.

Immigration, our involvement with overseas trade, and huge advances in communication technology, meant that we became a multicultural society, and the Irish ethos diminished. But in no way can any diminution in our values be attributed just to this. Like children, who will always test the boundaries of acceptable behaviour, once we were freed from the closed mentality of the early State, we adopted the mantle of secularism; picking and choosing which value system suited us. Many social commentators are now recognising that while we have a serious economic problem at present as a result of excesses of the recent past, what is more disturbing is that it has happened because of a change in our collective ethos –we have lost some of our Irishness.

So, clearly it was period of enormous economic, social, and cultural change, everybody in a hurry, consumption to the fore, and God pushed to one side for the moment, or forgotten about all together.

It is obvious therefore that it was a fertile period for changes in the experience of spirituality among business people, and it is hard not to anticipate that spirituality would have been challenged during this period.

7.2 Was Spirituality there to start with?

As noted in section 5 all the interviewees had been brought up in a Christian background, and so the suggestion of the existence of God or a higher being would have been familiar to them. From my interviews with them I formed the impression that all of them still believed in a God of some sort.

By and large, although the emphasis in their youth and family background would have been more on religion than spirituality, I believe that most had a clear understanding of the difference between spirituality and religion.

The transcendent and imminent aspects of spirituality were mentioned by most of the respondents, and were nicely expressed by a number, such as:

 . ..*you have a sense that God is within you and is part of you and that somewhere in the human being, in every human being, there is a-how would I put it? There is the opportunity for connection with God.*

A very strong theme coming through from most of the interviewees was that spirituality was related to a person's core values and living to one's values should be reflected in lifestyle-*its basically the way you live your life* and *the way you deal with others and the way you deal with, I suppose your own inner peace.* Only by being true to one's values in living a lifestyle can one be grounded, be comfortable with oneself, have balance, and have contentment.

A person's core values should include honesty and integrity, respect for people and an acknowledgement of an obligation to contribute to the community and to attempt to maximise one's own talents.

So, definitely, the majority, if not all, of the interviewees did have a clear understanding of spirituality, and it had been a part of their lives from their childhood.

There was also a widespread acceptance for the concept of spirituality having a role in work. Given the general feeling that spirituality was related to one's core values, this was not unexpected. As noted in the literature review section 3.5 there has been ample empirical evidence that spirituality is an intrinsic part of a person's makeup, it cannot be left at home, and has to be accommodated in work.

The most significant way in which spirituality was seen to have a role in business was in how the business managers dealt with people- expressing honesty and integrity in dealings and discussions with customers and staff. The most spiritually uplifting experience was expressed as satisfaction from seeing the development of staff.

Spirituality does have a role in work, or should have; people cannot leave their spirituality at home. spirituality is not religion, and therefore can be dealt with more overtly in a work context. spirituality in work is mainly to do with values, and particularly how these values are expressed in dealings with people. Many books on spirituality and work argue that one can bring one's spiritual self to work, and more importantly they strongly suggest that in the cut and thrust of work one can find the spiritual.

The possibility that there could be a conflict between spirituality in work and the requirement to drive corporate performance was explored. As managers the requirement to deliver results was a potential cause of conflict with spirituality as it gave managers the responsibility to drive employees. However, the majority of interviewees felt that the challenges of running a business, involving growth, bottom-line deliverance and motivation of employees could be managed relative to one's spirituality.

The three aspects of Christian spiritual experience, the mystical, the interpersonal and the social, were noted in section 3.4.4 and given the background of the

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participants are worth examining. The mystical element means that part of a Christian's belief and practices that concerns the preparation for, the consciousness of, and reaction to what can be described as the immediate direct presence of God. The usual approach to the interpersonal dimension of spirituality is to explore how one is drawn to serve God in the neighbour because of the felt conviction of God's presence in the other. The social dimension involves a sense of solidarity with strangers and the community.

It was the interpersonal dimension that was recognized most strongly in the experience of spirituality in business amongst those interviewed-dealing with customers, dealing with and developing staff, trying to operate with honesty and integrity, recognizing the requirement to get outside oneself and to recognize God's presence in other people.

The opportunity to recognize the mystical aspect of spirituality was not recognized to the same extent, unless a requirement to comply with one's own values system could be regarded as recognition of the presence of God.

In a number of cases the social development was recognized by the participation of employees in community work, but while such activity was encouraged, it did not seem to be high on the agenda.

7.3 Was there a Change in the Experience of Spirituality?

Given the extent of economic and social change during the period, it would have been surprising to find that there had not been a change in the experience of spirituality during the Celtic Tiger era. In Section 6.4 the responses of the interviewees are dealt with, and it is safe to conclude that there were changes. The recession has given us an opportunity to reassess where we are, and is welcomed by some as a requirement to get back in touch with reality. The changes which I believe were most significant as articulated by the interviewees were:

A greater drive for material success: Virtually all the respondents referred to this as a negative aspect of the Celtic Tiger period, where posturing and conversations were centred on possessions –cars, houses, holidays. The drive to keep up with the Jones was relentless, and with the recession there is relief that the race is over. Our Irish ethos diminished, our values diminished. As CORI claimed, this approach is manifested in individualism that places less value on the common good, but rather sees the individual as the primary unit of social reality. Advancement is achieved at the expense of others who may be seen as rivals or competitors. Is this not greed, as noted by many respondents?

There was a requirement in the changing times to question whether one was doing the right thing: During the boom spiritual leaders had to pause to think whether their personal values could be compromise by corporate ambitions. With the advent of the recession the impetus had changed, and a need to deal with different issues was there, like how to deal humanely with downsizing. There may be more reflection now.

Less loyalty was a feature: Being in business was more cut-throat, as a result looking after oneself was paramount. Employees were less loyal, moving for greater money, customers demanded the best value, threatening to move if competitor's prices were not matched. Individualism was the name of the game.

There was less concern for each other: Again individualism meant we had less time to care for each other, less time to 'smell the roses'. It was feared that there could be a generation, schooled in the Celtic Tiger era that were not grounded in proper business values. Many felt that the recessionary times were a godsend; family type values were making a comeback.

There was more arrogance: Our confidence increased greatly as the Celtic Tiger developed, but as it continued, seemingly unending, this confidence developed into arrogance that we could do no wrong. Our opinions were expressed fiercely, resulting in more tension. People reacted like children, pushing out the boundaries of acceptable financial behaviour, and because of the lack of proper regulation there were huge excesses in personal spending and borrowings. Although we were badly let down by many in authority who should have

exercised greater leadership discipline, we behaved badly, blinded by our own arrogance.

Everyone was busy: Life got tougher as the race for material gain progressed. Business was less fun, there was no time for casual conversation regarding people's health, family, or interests. People worked longer hours to generate the income to fund the Celtic Tiger excesses. There was less time available to get involved in social or charitable projects, less community involvement. The pace has slowed now, providing a certain relief.

Instant responses were sought: There was a rush for short term gain, with too little consideration given to the long term picture. Greed was the motivation. We wanted more, and we wanted it now.

Our Irishness was lost: During the Celtic Tiger period we congratulated ourselves on economic achievements, but took too little interest in social developments. Organisations such as CORI and Ceifin reminded us that we should be paying more attention to those in our society who had not been carried along on the wave of prosperity, but we did not want to listen. Economic indicators were the God – performance growth, housing starts, price per acre, wealth. Only now, almost 18 months after there was a general recognition of the economic collapse, do we find some social commentators recognising that the economic problem is less important than the change in our collective ethos that crept in.

We took our eye off the ball: We thought we were doing well, because economic indicators were positive. Even now when the unsustainable excesses are revealed, do we think too much about the economic implications, and too little about the changes in our values that may have happened? The UK Prime Minister supports the development of alternative measures of the country's state of being, such as a well-being index to measure progress as a country, not just by how the economy is growing, but by how lives are improving; not just by the standard of living, but by the quality of life. Countries such as France and Canada are looking at similar initiatives as governments around the world come

under pressure to put less value on conventional economic measures of prosperity such as gross domestic product. Should Ireland not do the same?

This research study has been extremely interesting, and I thank all those who contributed. I am satisfied that the question raised at the beginning has by and large been answered- there was a change in the experience of spirituality among business people during the Celtic Tiger period. If a lesson is to be learned it would be that concentration on economic indicators alone as a measure of success is futile, and certainly not spiritual.

Spirituality and the Celtic Tiger – Bibliography

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Appendix A –Example of Introductory Letter sent to Interviewees

Dear   ,

I am currently a Research Masters student at Waterford Institute of Technology, under the supervision of Dr Michael Howlett. I returned to full time Education in autumn 2007, having retired in 2004. Prior to my retirement I worked as an Accountant in practice, as partner in charge of the South East offices of PricewaterhouseCoopers (Coopers & Lybrand). I am a past President of the Chamber of Commerce in Waterford.

My Masters project is entitled –"The experience of spirituality in the context of the economic, social and cultural development of the South East region of Ireland in the 20 year period from the mid – 1980's"

The topic to be investigated is whether there has been a change experienced in the level and quality of spiritual experience among a group of representative business leaders from the South East region during the period of the 'Celtic Tiger', a period of significant cultural, social, and economic change. There may also be changes in the last 9 months, since our economy slowed down.

My personal experience, from my own perspective, and from discussions with work colleagues before retirement and since, is that doing business is not as enjoyable as before – the 'culture' is different. Also, whilst the evidence of increased prosperity is everywhere, there appears to be a feeling that 'we have lost something'

Research has been carried out on changes in spirituality in a group from a deprived area, the Liberties in Dublin, identifying that the nature of spirituality has changed, but is not extinguished. This grouping would not have benefited from the increased prosperity of the 'Celtic Tiger' Ireland, but would in contrast have seen a widening of the rich/poor divide.

My study will focus on a group who benefited from the increased prosperity, and will attempt to map changes in spiritual experience which have occurred.

The proposal is to get feedback by conducting in-depth interviews with approximately 20 individuals who have been successful in business in the South East Region in the last 20 years. In depth interviews are seen as the most efficient data collection method, allowing participants the opportunity to express the key issues involved. The project has the support of the Chamber.

I would like that you would be one of the individuals who would be interviewed. I hope that you will agree to participate, I will contact you in the next 10 days to clarify this, and to arrange a mutually convenient time for a discussion (this should take approximately an

hour and a half). The interview can take place at your offices, or I have an office at my home. Your individual information will be confidential to me and my Supervisor .Your participation is voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time. I attach a "Consent Form" which sets out the basis of participation.

I also attach an Interview Summary Form, which sets out a brief understanding of what I am thinking of when I talk of spirituality, and sets out some question headings we could use.

Please feel free to contact me at any time, 087 2565498, or kellyfml@eircom.net if you require more information. Thank you for taking the time to read this letter, I do hope you will agree to participate.

Yours sincerely,

Frank Kelly

Appendix B – Explanatory Letter

Interview Summary Form

Frank Kelly – Research Project- 2009

"The experience of spirituality in the context of the economic, social and cultural development of the South East region of Ireland in the 20 year period from the mid – 1980's" (The Celtic Tiger Period)

What is Spirituality? –   In less than 100 words!

Spirituality is a much used/abused word, and means different things to different people. Having spent a year reading about the subject, I realize I have only scratched the surface of writings on the topic, and new writings appear weekly.

I like a definition by **Sandra** M. Schneiders, respected   as one of the most significant and influential figures in the study of Christian spirituality in recent times. *"Spirituality refers to the experience of consciously striving to integrate one's life in terms not of isolation and self absorption but of self transcendence towards the ultimate values one perceives"* Schneiders (1989, p 684). Components of this definition include:

Experience, striving –an everyday effort at the core of ones being, the way

Not self absorption- Love of others, connectedness, balancing desires

Values one perceives – personal values, priorities

Not of isolation, Self transcendence – Immanence (spirit within) and transcendence (reaching to a spirit without).

I hope the above pointers may help my interviewees relate to my understanding of the word, and the changes in peoples experience of this phenomenon.

Questions for Participants

I Background information

family upbringing   - youngest/oldest

- strict? happy?

-well off/poor?

schooling, education, business career, successes and failure, your general outlook on life.

2 Your Outlook on Life

2.1 What are the basic values you hold? What gives you purpose?

2.2 What is your understanding of Spirituality?

2.3 What is your understanding of Religion?

2.4 Are spirituality and religion important in your life?

2.5 What do you see as the difference between Spirituality and Religion?

2.6 Do you think your experience of these factors have changed in the last 20 years?

2.7 How does the present downturn affect your attitude?

3 Spirituality, You, and Work

3.1 Do you believe Spirituality has, or should have, a role in work?

3.2 If so, can you give some examples of spiritual experiences in work?

3.3 Does your work contribute to, or inhibit, your Spirituality?

3.4 Where has Spirituality influenced your work experiences?

3.5 Does work ever compromise your values?

3.6 What personal achievements in work are you most proud of? Ashamed of?

3.7 What gets you through difficult times at work?

3.8 Do you get satisfaction from work?

3.9 Do you think your attitude to these factors have changed in the last 20 years?

3.10 How does the present downturn affect your attitude?

4 Spirituality, You, and Your Organisation

4.1 Does your organisation have values that you can clearly identify? What are they?

4.2Does Spirituality have a role in your organisation? In what way?

4.3Are the values you believe your organisation stands for clearly identified with by your staff?

4.4 Are there any restraints in the organisation on expression of individual spirituality?

4.5 What achievements by your organisation are you most proud of? Ashamed of?

4.6 Do you think your experience of these factors have changed in the last 20 years?

4.7 How does the present downturn affect your attitude?

5 Spirituality and the Market Place

5.1 What do you see as the greatest changes in the way business is conducted in the last 25 years - with particular reference to interpersonal relationships, satisfaction from work, enjoyment?

5.2 What changes do you welcome most?

5.3 What changes do you least like?

5.4 Do you believe that values in business have changed in the last 20 years? In what way?

5.5 Generally speaking, do you believe Spirituality is practiced in business? Has this changed?

5.6 During the "good years" of the Celtic Tiger, do you think there was a greater felling of well being or Spirituality?

5.7 We have a recession now, the boom years may be over. Have you any thoughts on what are the causes of this?

5.8 Do you think people's attitude to Spirituality has changed since the downturn?

6 Spiritual Practices

6.1 What are your most favourite or most common spiritual activities?

6.2 Can any of these practices be experienced in a work setting?

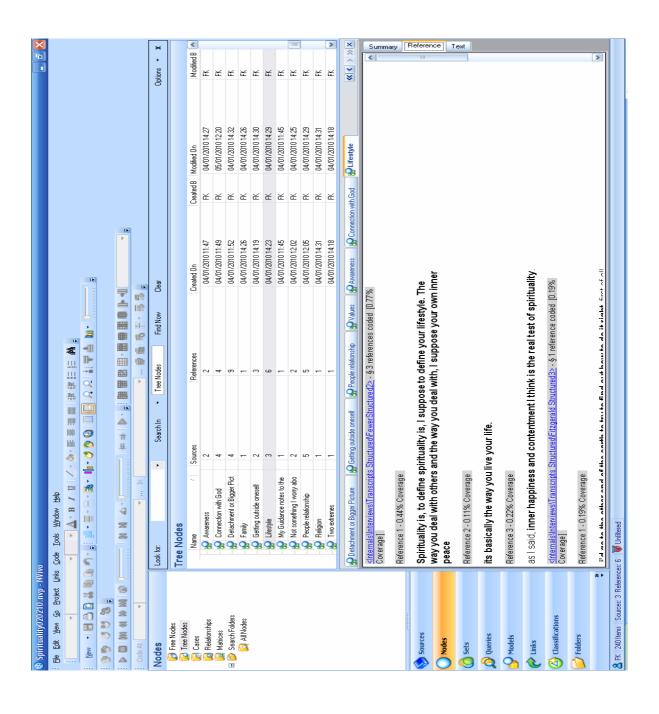6.3 Have your spiritual or religious practices changed over the last 20 years?

Appendix C

CONSENT FORM

I ………………………………agree to take part in the research project - 'The Experience of Spirituality in the Context of the Economic, Social and Cultural Development of the South East Region of Ireland in the 20 year period from the mid – 1980's.' . I understand what the research is about, why it is being conducted and what the information will be used for. Frank Kelly has fully explained to me the aims and purpose of the research.

I consent to taking part in a research interview and for this interview to be taped. *I have/have not agreed that the transcript of this interview may be typed by Frank Kelly*'s *secretary*. It has been explained to me the reasons for taping the interview and that these tapes and transcriptions will be kept in a locked area accessible only to Frank Kelly and his academic supervisor, Dr. Michael Howlett, and that they will be destroyed upon completion of the research. I also understand that my name will never appear as having taken part in this research unless I grant permission by ticking the appropriate box below:

Please tick one of the following:

I grant permission for my name to be included in all printed, published and broadcast outcomes of the research	
I do not grant permission for my name to be included in any printed, published or broadcast outcomes of the research	

I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time and that

participation is entirely voluntary.

Participant_____ Date_____

Appendix D-Analysis of Data with NVivo

Appendix E

Nicky Fewer and Spirituality-Address at Funeral Service   March 2009

I interviewed Nicky about spirituality in late November last year. This was part of a research project I am carrying out on spirituality among business leaders, and whether there had been a change in the experience of spirituality during the period of the Celtic Tiger. The interview was recorded, and then transcribed. It was a private interview, but his permission was obtained to reveal these extracts.

Nicky had a very well developed sense of spirituality. He did not often talk about it as such, but it came through in his philosophy on life and in all his actions.

I asked him what was his understanding of spirituality, and this is what he said:

I believe that spirituality …..Is basically about how you live your life, how you treat your fellow being. Your integrity, your honesty with people. And the respect and the values that you bring in terms of, I suppose, of being a role model or giving example.

…To define spirituality is, I suppose to define your lifestyle. The way you deal with others and the way you deal with, I suppose your own inner peace. You know, I don't believe that there's anybody today who doesn't sit down at some stage in their life and consider spirituality in either the broad sense or in a very definitive sense.

As I said earlier, I'm not sort of into organised religion and I don't sort of wear religion on my sleeve. But I do believe that it's the way you treat your fellow man, the way you support your fellow man and I suppose – to

use the old cliché – the acts of charity that you can actually provide to help others, without causing conflict, without causing upset. And you know, as I said earlier also; being fair, being reasonable, being supportive. And understanding people's point of view.

Everybody has an opinion and everybody is entitled to an opinion, and sometimes you might not agree with them but I think it's important that you understand the fundamentals of what their point of view is and where they're coming from. So, it is basically the way you live your life. The way you deal with your own family, your wife, your son, or your extended family and the way you deal with the people that you're dealing with - and it comes back to integrity and honesty.

What's important in terms of my own philosophy in life is that, you know, if you take, you give. If it's given to you, you try and give back. And it gives you a balance in life,, that's part of spirituality also.

Spirituality is, important in my life because, you know, we all have a conscience and I think that, if you practise spirituality, I think you'll always have a clear conscience because it gives you standards by which you operate, standards which you conduct your business by, standards by which you conduct your life in general. And, I must say that it's a, it's a barometer of how you conduct yourself.

Towards the end of his life here, Nicky was well prepared for what was to happen, and would have said that he was comfortable heading to his 'Nirvana'. He certainly could believe he had a clear conscience; he had operated all his life to the high standards and values he had set himself.

He was an example to us all: we all were the better for knowing him, and we are the poorer for his loss.

Frank Kelly 26 March 2009

Appendix F

Comparison of Periods-Stagnant, Growth, Bleak, Celtic Tiger, Depression

Age of Person Currently	Start of Management Career	Late 60's-	1970's	1980-1987-	1987-2007	2007+
		Stagnant	Growth	Bleak	Celtic Tiger	Depression
Mid period		*1968*	*1975*	*1985*	*2003*	*2008*
70	27	28	33	45	63	68
65	27	23	28	40	58	63
60	27	18	23	35	53	58
55	27	13	18	30	48	53
50	27	8	13	25	43	48
45	27	3	8	20	38	43
Years ago		*40*	*35*	*23*	*6*	

Note:

- A person aged 65+ went through all periods as a manager, stagnation, some growth, bleak 70's ,Celtic Tiger period ,then recession

- A person 55+ came into management in bleak 80's ,went quickly into Celtic Tiger period, and now into recession

- A person 45-50 came into management in Celtic Tiger period, didn't know recession or stagnant growth, only from parents