

Ritual as a House with Many Mansions

Inspirations from Cultural Anthropology for Interreligious Cooperation

Sjaak Körver

1. Introduction

In 1987, I travelled through Tibet, from the capital Lhasa, via a number of mountain passes of above 5000 meters, to the border with Nepal in the south.¹ In those days, that was not an easy venture. Although the Chinese occupation had left its traces (empty spaces where once there had been shrines), the Tibetan culture and religion were very visibly present everywhere in public life. Wherever we came, pilgrims were on their way, sometimes crawling and *en route* for weeks or months, towards a specific shrine. At every crossroads, at special places and at every mountain pass there were prayer flags, their prayers being lifted up by the wind. At every shrine we could walk past human-sized prayer wheels and make them spin, clockwise, in that way 'saying' as many prayers. Walking past these prayer wheels reminded me of praying the rosary in my Roman Catholic childhood and of the processions in the cities and the countryside. Once, when we walked past a shrine in Lhasa's old district, a ceremony was in progress. Pilgrims invited us to join them and to participate. A small prayer wheel was pressed into our hands. We imitated the movements and the rhythm, and listened to some monks' rhythmically singing and praying. Words, symbols, gestures and images had no direct meaning to us, but our inner experience was similar to that of participating in the divine office in a Catholic abbey or in another contemplative Christian worship. At that moment, the exact theological meanings of the words, actions and symbols were irrelevant. Participating in the event created a kind of symbolic awareness.²

Recently, one of my students had a remarkable experience. While on placement in a hospital, she assisted in bringing Holy Communion on the wards. One of the patients to whom she brought Communion turned out to have a Hindustani background. The student was a bit confused. Did the patient understand what was going on? She asked him explicitly. It became clear that he knew exactly what was going on. He told her that receiving Communion gave him the same feeling as when he participated in a Hindu ceremony. Participat-

¹ While finishing this paper, I came across C. CORNILLE (ed.): *Many mansions? Multiple religious belonging and Christian identity* (= Faith meets Faith) (Maryknoll, NY 2002), in which reflections on the fact that people unite within themselves more than one religious tradition, are presented using the same metaphor.

² T. VAN DEN BERK: *Mystagogie. Inwijding in het symbolisch bewustzijn* (Zoetermeer 1999).

ing in the ritual offered him a huge feeling of consolation while waiting nervously for the results of a medical examination and the major treatment that he likely would have to undergo. He added that, where he originally came from, Hindus, Christians and Muslims regularly took part in each other's ceremonies. For him, this ritual, Holy Communion, created a space where he felt comforted, could cherish hope, and where he felt connected with his longing and with the Sacred.³

In my career, almost 20 years ago, as a Catholic chaplain (hospital, psycho-geriatrics and psychiatry), I have read a psalm for and with a Muslim patient, said a blessing for a dying woman with a Hindu background, baptized a newborn child of atheist parents in the Emergency Department, and administered the Anointing of the Sick to a Jewish patient in the Operating Room, who was not going to survive his heart surgery.⁴ These were all crisis situations, in which there was no time to consult the next of kin or friends. It was the hospital's policy to consult Chaplaincy – Pastoral Service in those days – when there were crisis situations. We had an agreement with the hospital that in such situations we would act as we saw fit, assuming that grave crisis situations transcend worldview or religious differences and even render them unimportant.⁵ This was always confirmed later on: the fact that we, as hospital staff, had conducted these ritual interventions, has never been a problem in the conversation afterwards with the patient (if possible), the family or other relatives. Most essential was – according to the patients or their relatives – that the hospital had paid attention to the difficult moments in a careful and respectful way, and that the hospital, in doing so, had shown its fundamental attention to the existential dimension of life. The ritual, although unfamiliar to them, had clearly been recognizable as a symbolic space within which they had been able to experience their hopes, fears and longings. It was not necessary to explain the meaning of the ritual in retrospect, on the contrary. As soon as I tried to bring this into the conversation, all kinds of misunderstandings ensued. Discussions arose, with improper arguments, the result being a strong emphasis on the differences. It was precisely the ritual as an open symbolic space, combined with the respect-

³ P.E. JONGSMA-TIELEMAN: *Rituelen. Speelruimte voor de hoop. Wat rituelen (ons) doen* (Kampen 2002).

⁴ Similar examples can be found in: D. GREFE: *Encounters for change. Interreligious cooperation in the care of individuals and communities* (Eugene 2011) passim; N.A. KIRKWOOD: *A hospital handbook on multiculturalism and religion. Practical guidelines for health care workers* (Harrisburg 2006²); W.H. GRIFFITH: 'A chaplain reflects on caring for a Jewish family', in D.S. SCHIPANI & L.D. BUECKERT (eds.): *Interfaith spiritual care. Understandings and practices* (Kitchener, ON 2009) 81-87; P.B. TOBACK: 'A theological reflection on baptism by a Jewish chaplain', in *Journal of Pastoral Care* 47/3 (1993) 315-317.

⁵ See for instance: H. ALMA & C. ANBEEK: 'Worldviewing competence for narrative interreligious dialogue. A humanist contribution to spiritual care', in D.S. SCHIPANI (ed.): *Multifaith views in spiritual care* (Kitchener, ON 2013) 131-149.

ful attention to their existential needs, that had been important to the patients and their relatives.

2. Interreligious space and rituals?

In the situations or experiences described above, interreligiosity enters the discussion. Or maybe it is better to say that people enter an interreligious space and are able to make contact with their longings, with their origins, but also find consolation and attention. In all these situations, ritual is at the center. Could it be that rituals or symbols create a space in which contact with oneself, with the other and with the Sacred is possible – even though the rituals and symbols stem from a different tradition or background? In what follows, I want to reflect on the importance of the ritual dimension within the context of intercultural and interreligious encounters. How can it be explained that – as happened in the situations and experiences described above – the space, evoked by the ritual, leads to a transcending of the differences in worldview or religion? To that end, I will take a number of steps. First, I will reflect on the framework of the interreligious dialogue in which, within spiritual care, the issues of interculturality and interreligiosity are usually brought into the discussion. Next, using, amongst others, a number of cultural anthropological insights, I will clarify that ritual is an open space in which people, in spite of cultural and religious differences, find a place for their existential questions. Joint ritual actions or behaviors contribute to generating mutual recognition and understanding. In the third step, I will examine what could be the role of spiritual care in such a context, in which the metaphor of hospitality is particularly suitable, in a house with many mansions – referring to the image from *John* 14,2.

My reflections will focus on spiritual care in the Dutch context, but they also connect with international developments. Increasing mention is made of participation in rituals by people of divergent religious backgrounds and traditions. Increasingly, it belongs to spiritual caregivers' core tasks to provide care for people with religious or worldview backgrounds that differ from their own. Spiritual caregivers as well as participants wonder whether this is possible and where, if necessary, boundaries have to be drawn. In a recent publication, experiences and reflections by theologians from Europe and the US have been compiled, in which these critical questions are elucidated, practices of interreligious ritual participation are examined, and possibilities in this area are explored.⁶ The present paper purports to be a contribution in the framework of these national and international developments and reflections.

⁶ M. MOYAERT & J. GELDHOF (eds.): *Ritual participation and interreligious dialogue. Boundaries, transgressions, and innovations* (London / New York 2015).

3. Intercultural and interreligious spiritual care

In the past couple of years, many studies have been published regarding the importance and the (im)possibilities of interreligious and intercultural spiritual care. In the praxis of spiritual care one cannot avoid the reality of the target group (for example in a hospital, in a psychiatric institute, in a care home for elderly, in a prison or in army barracks) being very differentiated with regard to culture and worldview. When army units are deployed abroad, usually only one chaplain is allocated to the group of soldiers. This implies that the diversity in worldview perspectives existing among young people is served by a chaplain of one specific denomination. In large (academic) hospitals, patients and staff reflect the diversity in culture and worldview that, certainly in big-city areas in the Netherlands, is taken for granted. Gradually this is also happening in nursing homes, where in the years to come the group of residents, who were born before and during WWII in a society that still was ‘pillarized’ (in other words: compartmentalized along religio-political lines), will be succeeded by residents born after the war and characterized as the protest generation or the baby boom generation⁷, or who have immigrated from a variety of cultures since the 1960s. In facilities for people with learning disabilities, in psychiatric institutes and in prisons too, chaplains are being confronted with populations that are plural with regard to culture and worldview. This does not only apply to the residents, clients or detainees; it applies just as much to the employees at every level in the organization.⁸

Already during the last decades of last century and in the beginning of the present century, a number of spiritual caregivers in the Netherlands have drawn attention to this reality, for instance in several contributions in the *Nieuw Handboek Geestelijke Verzorging* (New Handbook Spiritual Care) that describes and elucidates the scope of spiritual care within healthcare.⁹ It is not yet an explicit theme in the *Handboek Justitiepastoraat* (Handbook Prison Chaplaincy), but in

⁷ H.A. BECKER: *Generaties en hun kansen* (Amsterdam 1992).

⁸ D. LOOTENS: ‘Diversity management in European healthcare organizations. The Catholic chaplain as advocate’, in K. FEDERSCHMIDT & D. LOUW (eds.): *Intercultural and interreligious pastoral caregiving. The SIPCC 1995-2015: 20 years of international practice and reflection* (Norderstedt 2015) 201-216.

⁹ See for instance: A. VAN BUUREN: ‘Een Moslimkind sterft – het draait om compassie’, in J. DOOLAARD (ed.): *Nieuw Handboek Geestelijke Verzorging. Geheel herziene editie* (Kampen 2006) 193-199; A. VAN DIJK & A. VAN BUUREN: ‘Identiteit en interculturalisatie’, in J. DOOLAARD (ed.): *Nieuw Handboek Geestelijke Verzorging* 171-191; C.L.M. VAN STRATEN: ‘Multireligieuze Geestelijke Verzorging’, in J. DOOLAARD (ed.): *Nieuw Handboek Geestelijke Verzorging* 300-307; C.L.M. VAN STRATEN: ‘Interlevensbeschouwelijk leren’, in J. DOOLAARD (ed.): *Nieuw Handboek Geestelijke Verzorging* 805-823. See also: A. VAN BUUREN, M. KAYA & B. TEN BROEK: ‘The junction of the seas. Interfaith spiritual care in the Netherlands’, in D.S. SCHIPANI & L.D. BUECKERT (eds.): *Interfaith spiritual care. Understandings and practices* (Kitchener, ON 2009) 279-313.

one contribution it is noted that the target group is no longer just Roman Catholic or Protestant, and also that one Catholic (or Protestant) is not the same as the other one.¹⁰ Just after the 9/11 attacks in the US in 2001, a special issue of the journal *Handelingen* (Acts) was published in which particular attention was given to spiritual caregivers' experiences and reflections concerning interreligious dialogue.¹¹ In international perspective, the American Daniel Schipani, who anyway, with his own existence, is testifying to interculturality *in actu*, has expressly drawn attention to this subject matter in several publications.¹² In the present brief outline, the work of the *Society for Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counseling* (SIPCC) and its founder and current chair, the German supervisor and trainer of Clinical Pastoral Education Helmut Weiß, should not go unmentioned.¹³ A research group at the VU University in Amsterdam, where the professional trainings of several religious backgrounds are affiliated with the Faculty of Theology, is presently also exploring this theme. This latter research is carried out, among other things, from the perspective of the demands placed by this new interreligious reality on the education of spiritual caregivers, in which, on the one hand, each tradition's central or essential elements will be honored, but, on the other hand, a rich interreligious or inter-worldview learning environment will be pursued.¹⁴

4. Dialogue or non-cognitive dimensions of religion?

Quite a number of these studies take as their starting points the importance of dialogue, of the search for mutual similarities, of the acknowledgement of dif-

¹⁰ See for instance: L. SPRUIT: 'Het religieus profiel van gedetineerden, met het oog op herstelgericht pastoraat', in A.H.M. VAN IERSEL & J.D.W. EERBEEK (eds.): *Handboek justitiepastoraat. Context, theologie en praktijk van het protestants en rooms-katholiek justitiepastoraat* (Budel 2009) 155-170.

¹¹ C. ANBEEK, C. BAKKER, L. MINNEMA & C. MENKEN-BEKIUS: 'Geloven in de interreligieuze dialoog', in *Handelingen* 29/1 (2002).

¹² Some publications are: D.S. SCHIPANI & L.D. BUECKERT (eds.): *Interfaith spiritual care. Understanding and practices* (Kitchener, ON 2009); D.S. SCHIPANI: 'Transformation in intercultural Bible reading. A view from practical theology', in D.S. SCHIPANI, M. BRINKMAN & H. SNOEK (eds.): *New perspectives on intercultural reading of the Bible. Hermeneutical explorations in honor of Hans de Wit* (Amsterdam / Elkhart, IN 2015) 159-178; D.S. SCHIPANI, M. BRINKMAN & H. SNOEK (eds.): *New perspectives on intercultural reading of the Bible. Hermeneutical explorations in honor of Hans de Wit* (Amsterdam / Elkhart, IN 2015).

¹³ Some SIPCC publications are: H. WEIß, K. FEDERSCHMIDT & K. TEMME (eds.): *Handbuch Interreligiöse Seelsorge* (Neukirchen-Vluyn 2010); K. FEDERSCHMIDT & D. LOUW (eds.): *Intercultural and interreligious pastoral caregiving. The SIPCC 1995-2015: 20 years of international practice and reflection* (Norderstedt 2015).

¹⁴ R.R. GANZEVOORT, M. AJOUAOU, A. VAN DER BRAAK, E. DE JONGH & L. MINNEMA: 'Teaching spiritual care in an interfaith context', in *Journal for the Academic Study of Religion* 27/2 (2014) 178-197.

ferences, of the communication about each other's religious and theological basic assumptions, and of the avoidance of fundamentalist tendencies.¹⁵ The scope of these approaches is primarily that of the convictions, the doctrines and the (intellectual) discourse. This discourse, moreover, is taking place in particular between theologians. Comparing the contents of the different worldview and religious traditions is much too crude, and such a discourse rarely results in an opening, in particular if this discourse is held without a direct link with the praxis. 'The' Islam does not exist, and neither does 'the' Buddhism or 'the' humanism. It leads to a one-sided cognitive approach of worldview and religion, while precisely the non-cognitive elements (images, symbols, rituals, bodily forms of expression) have a very large (all-determining?) influence on the interaction and communication between people of dissimilar cultures and worldview backgrounds.¹⁶ Another approach is presented in the process described by Schipani, in which eighteen groups ("ordinary readers", who are all confronted with corruption, crime and lawlessness) in different South American countries discuss the same Bible text (*Luke* 18,18) as an experiment. In the course of the experiment, several groups are introduced to each other and read each other's reports of the discussion of the Bible text. In such an experiment, other dimensions of religion are addressed alongside those of the convictions and doctrines. Narrative, ritual and experiential dimensions enter the discussion too. The result is an interplay between the differing contexts and text interpretations. The richness of the text, over and beyond the differences between participants and contexts, becomes manifest. The process generates creativity and growth in awareness.¹⁷ If we take Smart's model of religion as a starting point, the cognitive approach of religion is only one of the possible approaches. Smart, a religious studies scholar, distinguishes seven dimensions in religion: the doctrinal dimension, the mythological dimension, the ethical dimension, the ritual dimension, the experiential dimension, the institutional dimension, and the material dimension.¹⁸ Professor of ritual studies Paul Post emphasizes the importance of ritual and asserts that much talk about religion is too far removed from people's actual ritual acts. He states this when describing the contours for actual ritual acts in penitentiary facilities, emphasizing that ritual acts

¹⁵ W. ARIARAJAH: *Not without my neighbour. Issues in interfaith relations* (= Risk book series 85) (Geneva 1999); D. GREFE: *Encounters for change. Interreligious Cooperation in the Care of Individuals and Communities*.

¹⁶ ANBEEK et al.: 'Geloven in de interreligieuze dialoog'.

¹⁷ SCHIPANI: 'Transformation in intercultural Bible reading'.

¹⁸ N. SMART: *Dimensions of the sacred. An anatomy of the world's beliefs* (London 1997). Apart from this, there are more models elucidating the multidimensionality of religion. All models agree that convictions and ideologies constitute only one dimension: T. KÜÇÜKCAN: 'Multidimensional approach to religion. A way of looking at religious phenomena', in *Journal for the Studies of Religions and Ideologies* 4/10 (2005) 60-70.

are or should be spiritual caregivers' *core business*.¹⁹ Theology and spiritual care often prove to be too cognitively and too verbally orientated, disconnected from the ways in which people often approach and experience religion and spirituality. Precisely ritual, as the basis or heart of religion, appears to be able to offer space to people with different religious backgrounds – like a house that has many mansions (*John* 14,2). This becomes clear, anyway, from the examples in the introduction, in which interreligious space and encounter could take shape, precisely within the context of a ritual act in existentially (very) major situations.

5. Model for interreligious spiritual care

But even if we take prayer and worship and ritual behavior as our starting points for evoking interreligious encounter and dialogue, this interreligious space does not always and immediately take shape. In his personal report on his quest for interreligiosity, also within the framework of projects and activities of the World Council of Churches, the Sri Lankan professor of oecumenical theology Wesley Ariarajah shows that many people, at individual and institutional levels, are inhibited by fear in their search for the interreligious space. People react in frightened or defensive ways when confronted with prayer texts and rituals from other traditions, and withdraw in their own tradition and in their own being right.²⁰ The same has been observed by the American spiritual caregiver Dagmar Grefe. In the context of her reflections on the possibilities of interreligious encounters, she observes that prejudices, stressing one's own identity, downward social comparison, stereotyping, and the fear of threats from the outside to one's own identity, are impediments for people's intercultural and interreligious encounters.²¹ Looking at the future, in which interculturality and interreligiosity will increasingly occur, Ariarajah designs a model for exploring and advancing the possibilities of interreligiosity. In the innermost circle he places the core or identity of a religious tradition: that which is most characteristic. In this context, spiritual care is only possible according to one's own tradition. Here, one's own tradition is shielded and sealed off. Outsiders can be invited in, but they will remain outsiders. The differences are emphasized and cherished. The model's outer circle represents the experiences and practices that are communal and universal for all people. At this level, interreligious spiritual care is possible and necessary, and a shared story and shared

¹⁹ P. POST: 'Perspectieven van vloeibaar ritueel. Het actuele ritueel-liturgische milieu gepeild', in A.H.M. VAN IERSEL & J.D.W. EERBEEK (eds.): *Handboek justitiepastoraat. Context, theologie en praktijk van het protestants en rooms-katholiek justitiepastoraat* (Budel 2009) 113-143.

²⁰ ARIARAJAH: *Not without my neighbour* 26-48.

²¹ GREFE: *Encounters for change* 23-47.

prayer and ritual can take shape. The intermediate level represents the spacious treasure-house of spiritual sources and traditions, from which everyone can draw for personal use. Here, however, differences of opinion and conflicts are lying in wait.²² This model for bringing to light the differentiations in interreligious dialogue and space, has later been adopted by Dagmar Grefe and by Daniel Schipani.²³ Grefe further elaborates the model, indicating which roles and interventions are available to spiritual caregivers in the three different circles. In the outer circle, she sees the spiritual caregiver functioning as companion and counsellor, with presence, empathic listening, exploring, reframing, advocating, affirming, integrating, empowering, and generic ritual, prayer or blessing being the principal interventions or activities. In the intermediate circle, the spiritual caregiver functions as a representative of the Sacred, with prayer, blessing, meditation, sacred text, and ritual being central. And in the innermost circle, the spiritual caregiver is a resource agent, so that sacraments, rituals of initiation and rituals of reconciliation will be implemented in the right way by representatives of the respective worldview tradition.²⁴

If, however, the basic assumption is that all people, from whichever worldview or religious background, share in the same precious, fragile and vulnerable life, then the question is whether this model is adequate. The model suggests that, in the core – the particular religious or spiritual experience and praxis –, the cultural and religious differences between people will lead to conflicts again and again. Furthermore, the assumption is that people will withdraw into this core as soon as differences with other groups or individuals will present themselves. However, the examples presented in the introduction suggest that people actually are able to meet without playing down or denying the differences, but also without making the differences larger than they are. As long as fear does not prevail. As long as prejudices and stereotypical imagining do not get the upper hand. As long as one's own being right is not put first. As long as people recognize that they all are searching for something to hold on to, for consistency and for meaning making in a life characterized by fragility. This recognition is achieved almost automatically in crisis situations in, for instance, a hospital, or during an incident in the context of military deployment, or during detention. Against this background, people are able to transcend cultural and worldview differences, between them and within themselves. Hence, the question is whether Ariarajah's (and Grefe's and Schipani's) model shouldn't be turned inside out. In the old model, it seems as if the innermost circle is the heart, also the most precious, and the outer circle is the surface that has to be penetrated in order to arrive at the core. However, the core is precisely that

²² ARIARAJAH: *Not without my neighbour* 48-57.

²³ GREFE: *Encounters for change*; D.S. SCHIPANI: 'Commonality and beyond. Exploring the "circles" of spiritual care'. Paper presented at the expert meeting on intercultural & interreligious spiritual care: commonality, complementarity, contrast & conflict potential (Utrecht 2016).

²⁴ GREFE: *Encounters for change* 138-145.

people share in the same precious, fragile and vulnerable life.²⁵ And it is precisely ritual that can be that house with many mansions, in which people – regardless of their specific worldview background – can experience consolation, can regain or nourish their longings, and can restore and experience the contact with the foundation of their existence or with the transcendent. Against this background, spiritual care can offer hospitality through and in the ritual praxis.

6. Ritual as a house with many mansions

A number of insights from, amongst others, cultural anthropology and psychology of religion can elucidate why rituals can offer this space, so that people – even in rituals from religious or worldview traditions other than their own – regain themselves and the transcendent.²⁶

The anthropologist Barbara Myerhoff has said: “In ritual, not only is seeing believing, doing is believing”.²⁷ In her analysis of a partly secular, partly religious new ritual, she makes clear that rituals have persuasiveness, create meaning and self-esteem, and evoke continuity in individual-biographical and collective-historical perspectives. These convictions, meaning and continuity are evoked by precisely the participation in the ritual, the praxis itself, by jointly carrying out and undergoing the ritual.²⁸ In his description of religion, the cultural anthropologist Clifford Geertz emphasizes something similar. He defines religion as “a system of symbols which acts to establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic”.²⁹ In his clarification of this definition, Geertz emphasizes the importance of symbols and rituals, interpreting symbols as objects, acts, events, qualities or relations that serve as a kind of vehicle for a concept or an abstraction, or perhaps better, that make a concept, abstraction or experience tangible, visible and concrete, or embody them. Symbol and ritual provide a “model of reality”, an interpretation

²⁵ ALMA et al.: ‘Worldviewing competence for narrative interreligious dialogue’; C. ANBEEK & A. DE JONG: *De berg van de ziel. Een persoonlijk essay over kwetsbaar leven* (Utrecht 2013).

²⁶ Of course I cannot provide here an exhaustive review of the developments and insights in cultural anthropology and psychology of religion regarding the functions of rituals. But I hope to make plausible that ritual has the inherent potentiality for interreligious encounter and space.

²⁷ B.G. MYERHOFF: ‘We don’t wrap herring in a printed page. Fusion, fictions and continuity in secular ritual’, in S.F. MOORE & B.G. MYERHOFF (eds.): *Secular ritual* (Assen / Amsterdam 1977) 199-224, p. 223.

²⁸ MYERHOFF: ‘We don’t wrap herring in a printed page’ 218-223.

²⁹ C. GEERTZ: ‘Religion as a cultural system’, in C. GEERTZ (ed.): *The interpretation of cultures. Selected essays* (London 1993) 87-125, p. 90.

of how the world is at the present moment, and a “model for reality”, an ideal status of that same reality. Rituals bring both these models together, and in this process participants acquire the conviction that these models and concepts of and for reality are credible (“veridical”) and “sound”.³⁰ This definition has been used by practical theologians and spiritual caregivers in the Netherlands as a foundation for their research and reflection.³¹ Geertz’s definition and his accompanying reflections throw a clear light on how religion plays a role in all aspects of human existence, and on the central importance of symbols and rituals. Symbols and rituals create a new reality, so that convictions are clothed in a “splendor of reality”³², and so that they can contribute to finding meaning in confusing and major experiences.

The Dutch cultural anthropologist André Droogers agrees with this aspect, that symbols and rituals create a new reality. He sees symbols and rituals as play, and he considers play to be “the human capability to simultaneously manage two or more realities”.³³ Another, virtual reality is evoked and takes shape. This other reality is assimilated in one’s own repertoire as a possibility, is activated when necessary, is sometimes contradictory to other parts of the repertoire but is suitable for the differing roles of an individual, and has social in addition to individual aspects.³⁴ From a psychodynamic perspective, the psychologist of religion Nel Jongsmá-Tieleman shows – based on Donald Winnicott’s theory of transitional space – that religion and spirituality constitute a play area for the imagination, and that ritual in particular has this function. This area is an intermediate space between the often harsh reality and the purely subjective inner world of every individual. In that intermediate space, creativity, imagination and alternative possibilities arise, so that the individual can face reality with (new) confidence and (new) hope.³⁵

³⁰ GEERTZ: ‘Religion as a cultural system’ 112. The anthropologist Harvey Whitehouse emphasises in his publications that religion does not exist without ritual, that rituals bring about meaning, motivation and memory: H. WHITEHOUSE: *Modes of religiosity. A cognitive theory of religious transmission* (= Cognitive Science of Religion Series) (Walnut Creek etc. 2004); see also: K. DOUGLAS: ‘The secret that makes religion. Why rituals are the key to growing a belief’, in *New Scientist* 204/2739 (2009) 62-64.

³¹ Some examples are: J.A. VAN DER VEN: *Ecclesiologie in context* (= Handboek Praktische Theologie, in seven volumes) (Kampen 1993); W. SMEETS: *Spiritual care in a hospital setting. An empirical-theological exploration* (= Empirical studies in theology 13) (Leiden etc. 2006).

³² See for this description: VAN DER VEN: *Ecclesiologie in context* 144.

³³ A. DROOGERS: *Zinging als spel. Over religie, macht en speelse spiritualiteit. Een gids voor vrije zinzzoekers* (Almere 2010) 131; A. DROOGERS: *Play and power in religion. Collected essays* (Berlin 2012).

³⁴ DROOGERS: *Zinging als spel*; A. DROOGERS: ‘Religie als spel en zinging’, in *Religie & Samenleving* 6/1 (2011) 9-23.

³⁵ D.W. WINNICOTT: *Playing and reality* (London 1971); P.E. JONGSMÁ-TIELEMAN: *Godsdienst als speelruimte voor verbeelding. Een godsdienstpsychologische studie* (Kampen 1996); JONGSMÁ-TIELEMAN: *Rituelen*. In a still important publication, the liturgical scholar

The above-mentioned ideas about ritual make clear that ritual creates a space where people can briefly leave everyday reality, and can find or regain consolation and contact with their longing, with the other and with the transcendent. It is a space in which alternative scenarios and an alternative repertoire for reality acquire “a splendor of reality” – it is a transitional space, a play area, a space that religion has in common with art. The question remains how people who are not familiar with a specific ritual from a specific religious tradition, still sense that in that space they can find or furnish a mansion of their own, and indeed experience consolation, (re)discover their longing, and experience contact with each other and with the transcendent.

7. Ritual from a cultural anthropological perspective

A starting point is provided by the cultural anthropologist Wouter van Beek's observations. Van Beek has carried out a large amount of ethnographic research with the Dogon in Mali, Western Africa. In his inaugural lecture, he describes an interesting incident with respect to the above question. An American filmmaker and writer was filming a certain dance in the village in which Van Beek was doing his research. On a certain morning, this man, who was a member of the Native American Iroquois League, put a bit of tobacco on a saucer. He wove the smoke to the four points of the compass and murmured a few words while doing this. Immediately the cook and his brother –both Dogon– went outside, bared their chests and asked the filmmaker to wave the smoke towards their chests. Van Beek was surprised, in two respects. Although the Dogon never use smoke in their rituals, they recognized the “tobacco act” as a ritual. The second surprise was that both Dogon men immediately wanted to participate in the act that they recognized intuitively as a symbolic act, as a ritual – assuming that, whatever kind of ritual it was, it would be good for them.³⁶ In his attempt to explain the incident, Van Beek's starting point is the

Gerard Lukken has already earlier accurately described the different (psychological) functions of ritual. Ritual has an alleviating function, creates continuity in the individual's existence but also in relation to the past and the future, prepares for normal life, has an allaying function, provides space for personal expression, condenses and stylises everyday reality so that space appears for another reality, and orientates itself towards the other, by which togetherness becomes possible. See: G. LUKKEN: *Geen leven zonder rituelen. Antropologische beschouwingen met het oog op de christelijke liturgie* (= KSVG 2-24) (Baarn 1984); see also: J. KÖRVER: ‘Het ritueel als de ziel van geestelijke verzorging in de psychiatrie’, in P.J. VERHAGEN & H.J.G.M. VAN MEGEN (eds.): *Handboek psychiatrie, religie en spiritualiteit* (Utrecht 2012) 481-491.

³⁶ W.E.A. VAN BEEK: *De rite is rond. Betekenis en boodschap van het ongewone* (Tilburg 2007) 5; see also: W.E.A. VAN BEEK: ‘Ritual and the quest for meaning’, in D.L. BELNAP (eds.): *By our rites of worship. Latter-day Saint views on ritual in Scripture, history, and practice* (Provo / Salt Lake City, UT 2013) 15-36.

cultural anthropologist Frits Staal's proposition that ritual has no intrinsic meaning, function and intention. Ritual's intention is ritual itself.³⁷ Van Beek goes on to ascertain that a ritual is a paradoxical phenomenon. Rituals involve apparently recognizable acts, but at the same time the acts are unusual, in a fixed order, with fixed texts, at fixed moments and with clear instructions for the participants. Participants are unable to explain why they are doing exactly what they are doing.³⁸ Van Beek asserts that that, which takes place in ritual, is not so much the taking of meaning (based on the ritual's own inherent meaning), but rather the attribution of meaning, in which the fact that ritual involves counter-intuitive acts proves to be of essential importance. People recognize that the acts in essence are familiar, while at the same time being rather unfamiliar, counter-intuitive.

The unfamiliar does have to fit somewhat into the act's scenario: during the ritual meal, other things are eaten, other guests participate, and other words are spoken than during a customary meal, but one does stick to the social category, i.e. a meal, and one does not suddenly, while eating, don a mask, start to dance fiercely or to undress, because that would not be 'proper'.³⁹

It is precisely this counter-intuitive element of ritual that stimulates attribution of meaning. A ritual is not an announcement, it has no intrinsic message. Ritual is a dotted line upon which everyone can write their own interpretation, according to one's needs. It is a dotted line with structure. Ritual creates a virtual reality through acts that are very normally recognizable while at the same time deviating from everyday reality. In this virtual reality, contact and communication with each other and with the transcendent can evolve, and new meaning can be created.⁴⁰ Ritual is embodied, counter-intuitive yet recognizable, formalized and at the same time having an explicitly blurred purpose.⁴¹ In the present paper's metaphor: it is a house with many mansions. It is not inconceivable that the particular, restricted, predictable and strictly prescribed repertoire of acts and utterances would exert a powerful performative influence on the participants in the ritual.⁴² The combination of the surrounding culture and symbolism with the participants' needs and with the ritual's own internal logic and fixed patterns, creates meaning or significance.

³⁷ F. STAAL: 'The meaninglessness of ritual', in *Numen* 26/1 (1979) 2-22; IDEM: *Rules without meaning. Ritual, mantras and the human sciences* (= Toronto studies in religion, vol. 4) (New York etc. 1990).

³⁸ VAN BEEK: *De rite is rond* 13.

³⁹ VAN BEEK: *De rite is rond* 18.

⁴⁰ VAN BEEK: *De rite is rond* 49.

⁴¹ W.E.A. VAN BEEK: *Zwarte Piet in Afrika: rite en ruzie* (Tilburg 2015).

⁴² M. BLOCH: 'Symbols, Song, Dance and Features of Articulation. Is religion an extreme form of traditional authority?', in *Archives Européennes de Sociologie / European Journal of Sociology / Europäisches Archiv für Soziologie* 15/1 (1974) 55-81.

8. Ritual experience and tacit knowing

Anthropologist Roy Rappaport has analyzed the tension between the meaning that ritual has within a specific religious tradition, and the meaning attached to it by participants. A ritual creates and sustains two streams of meaning: self-referential and canonical meanings. The first stream of meaning involves the affective experience, the existential situation and the meaning making process of the ritual's participant. The second stream of meaning refers to the articulated and formal frameworks within the specific religious tradition, which define and interpret the ritual and the situation to which it applies. With the second aspect, the canonical meaning, participants position themselves within a specific tradition or group. The first aspect does address the personal experience and makes a connection with the personal existence.⁴³ A further consideration of these two streams of meaning, using philosopher Michael Polanyi's views, offers a next step. Polanyi assumes that humans, apart from explicit knowledge, have a more intuitive knowledge, tacit knowing or tacit knowledge. People have more knowledge at their disposal and are able to acquire more knowledge than they can explain: this is Polanyi's starting point, with which he wants to put the one-sided emphasis on objective, transferable, standardized and scientific knowledge into perspective. This applies to rituals too. Rituals constitute comprehensive entities consisting of many supporting details – acts, utterances, objects, places –, functioning as vectors or elements in awareness. Access to the whole is only possible via the concrete details. The combination of and participating in these details evoke a tacit knowing or intuitive knowledge of the ritual as a whole. The experience is indissolubly connected with the details that, as it were, become part of the participants (*indwelt*). The details or elements give meaning to each other, create a mutual coherence, and hence presuppose an understanding of the all-encompassing ritual entity. In this way, participating in a ritual creates an experience of meaningfulness and coherence transcending the concrete details of a ritual that are derived from a specific religious tradition. This explains how in Van Beek's example the Dogon men, through the details of an unfamiliar ritual, acquire intuitive knowledge of the ritual as a whole, and, as it were, know immediately that it is a ritual.⁴⁴ It is an embodied experience⁴⁵, which brings us back at Myerhoff's statement at the beginning of this section,

⁴³ R.A. RAPPAPORT: *Ritual and religion in the making of humanity* (= Cambridge Studies in Social and Cultural Anthropology) (Cambridge 1999).

⁴⁴ M. POLANYI: *The tacit dimension* (New York 1967); R.E. INNIS: 'The tacit logic of ritual embodiments', in *Social Analysis* 48/2 (2004) 197-212.

⁴⁵ C. BELL: 'Embodiment', in J. KREINATH, J. SNOEK & M. STAUSBERG (eds.): *Theorizing rituals. Classical topics, theoretical approaches, analytical concepts* (Leiden / Boston 2008) 533-543.

“In ritual, not only is seeing believing, doing is believing”.⁴⁶ Not only the rite is round⁴⁷, but so is this circle.

Ritual obviously is a space in which people can come close to their vulnerability and their deepest longings, to their despair and their hopes, close to the other and close to the transcendent. The specific religious meaning of the ritual obviously is not of the utmost importance. What is important is that, in ritual, through a tacit, intuitive recognition of an existential dimension via concrete details (also if they appear counter-intuitive), people recognize and meet each other in their vulnerability and their longing, in their distress and their need for consolation, in their search for coherence and a supportive foundation. They come closer together precisely by jointly doing something, by participating in the ritual’s concrete, detailed acts. They begin to share their cultural and worldview backgrounds –something that expresses itself first in concrete and ritual behaviour. Moreover, the relativity of the ritual’s intrinsic message or truth creates the possibility of change and of adapting the ritual to new circumstances. Hence, also adapting it to new intercultural and interreligious interactions and relations.⁴⁸ In the virtual space, opened by ritual, there is room for people of very diverse backgrounds. Maybe Victor Turner’s idea of *communitas* can be applied here also, in that ritual creates an intermediate space, a play area, a transitional space in which social and religious differences and borders are dissolved, and in which status, rank, social position and background do not play a role.⁴⁹

9. Spiritual care: hospitality in the house with many mansions

The examples with which this paper started appear to suggest that people in more or less far-reaching or confusing situations tacitly recognize rituals as a virtual space for their own vulnerability, for their own longing, for consolation, for contact with the transcendent or the Sacred. Cultural and religious differences are not in the forefront. During a crisis situation in a hospital’s Emergency Department, these differences are not important anymore, but the joint care for this one individual’s life is at the center. People – patients, relatives and staff – recognize each other in their humanness. A shared space develops in an atmosphere of receptivity, in which these people learn from each other and en-

⁴⁶ MYERHOFF: ‘We don’t wrap herring in a printed page’ 223.

⁴⁷ VAN BEEK: *De rite is rond*.

⁴⁸ KÖRVER: ‘Het ritueel als de ziel van geestelijke verzorging in de psychiatrie’; IDEM: ‘Ritualiteit en kanker’, in M.H.F. VAN UDEN & J.Z.T. PIEPER (eds.): *Ritualiteit tussen heil en genezing* (Tilburg 2012) 19-49.

⁴⁹ V. TURNER: ‘Liminality and communitas’, in P. BRADSHAW & J. MELLOH (eds.): *Foundations in ritual studies. A reader for students of Christian worship* (London 2007) 73-99.

rich each other.⁵⁰ Similar shared spaces can develop during a chaplain's deployment in the army, in which they encounter soldiers under stress and sometimes facing very traumatic situations.⁵¹ Compassion and social engagement are the coordinates of acting in such crisis situations. They are the anchoring points in every human encounter, although the cultural, worldview and ethical convictions of the various people concerned can differ strongly.⁵² Although cultural and religious differences should not be played down, there is neither a need for emphasizing, intensifying or cherishing them. It is, however, my assumption that – when Ariarajah's, Grefe's and Schipani's⁵³ models with the three concentric circles label precisely the religious identity as the core – the religious differences will continue to be potential sources of conflict. If the model is turned inside out, another perspective arises. The shared human experiences of vulnerability and awe, of longing and despair, of loss and solidarity, of doubt and faith will then become the core, in which the trick is to acknowledge cultural and religious identities and peculiarities, but not to view them as the end of the dialogue or encounter. Ritual creates a play area in which a new relationship can develop to oneself, the other and the transcendent. Subsequently, it appears plausible that every ritual from whichever tradition will offer clues that people will recognize intuitively (tacit knowing), based on concrete acts and ways of expression, without it being necessary to know the ritual's exact meaning. In Van Beek's words: ritual is a dotted line – granted, a dotted line with structure – upon which people can write their own story.⁵⁴

Against this background, hospitality could possibly be the metaphor for characterizing these ritual encounters in spiritual care, in which the roles of host and guest are constantly alternating in subtle ways, and in which each participant gives as well as receives. The spiritual caregiver is not only host, but at the same time guest in the other person's life. In such an encounter all participants change, according to Dutch professor of spiritual care Martin Walton.⁵⁵ In the epilogue of the book *Ritual participation and interreligious dialogue*⁵⁶ too, hospitality is mentioned as a model for a spiritual care that is facing cultural and religious

⁵⁰ B. GIEBNER: *Gedeelde ruimte. De ontvankelijkheid van zorgverleners in patiëntencontacten* (Delft 2015).

⁵¹ H.C. LEVY, L.M. CONOSCENTI, J.F. TILLERY, B.D. DICKSTEIN & B.T. LITZ: 'Deployment stressors and outcomes among Air Force chaplains', in *Journal of Traumatic Stress* 24/3 (2011) 342-346.

⁵² E. BEGIĆ, H. WEIB & G. WENZ (eds.): *Barmherzigkeit. Zur sozialen Verantwortung islamischer Seelsorge* (= Neukirchener Theologie) (Neukirchen-Vluyn 2014).

⁵³ See above: ARIARAJAH: *Not without my neighbour*; GREFE: *Encounters for change*; SCHIPANI: 'Commonality and beyond'.

⁵⁴ VAN BEEK: *De rite is rond*; VAN BEEK: *Zwarte Piet in Afrika*.

⁵⁵ M. WALTON: 'Mehr Partner als je zuvor! Mehr Perspektiven als je zuvor! Islamische Seelsorge im Gespräch', in E. BEGIĆ, H. WEIB & G. WENZ (eds.): *Barmherzigkeit. Zur sozialen Verantwortung islamischer Seelsorge* (Neukirchen-Vluyn 2014) 177-184.

⁵⁶ MOYAERT & J. GELDHOF (eds.): *Ritual participation and interreligious dialogue*.

differences and ritual participation in an interreligious context. In this epilogue, the Louvain liturgical scholar Joris Geldhof points out that there is a striking complexity in the descriptions of and reflections on interreligious ritual practices, that there is a perplexing and bewildering diversity that can hardly be put into words, and that especially a considerable degree of sensitivity is required. Eventually, he says, one could see these inter-ritual acts as a particular form of love, for which hospitality is an appropriate metaphor.⁵⁷ Such an approach acknowledges the fact that an increasing number of spiritual caregivers are meeting individuals and groups hailing from all kinds of cultures and faith traditions, as well as people who have integrated within themselves different worldview, religious and spiritual backgrounds.⁵⁸

In the context of spiritual care, ritual acts can create a space in which people find access to their core, their trust and hope, to the Sacred – without denying or playing down the reality of finitude, loneliness, unfreedom and meaninglessness.⁵⁹ It demands from spiritual caregivers that they should not be reluctant in employing the ritual from their own tradition, or in connecting with ritual from the client's repertoire, or in searching for new variants of ritual acts. Paul Post is one of those who are advocating ritual acts as core activity, in his study of the

⁵⁷ J. GELDHOF: 'Epilogue. Inter-riting as a peculiar form of love', in M. MOYAERT & J. GELDHOF (eds.): *Ritual participation and interreligious dialogue* 218-223.

⁵⁸ This phenomenon is known as *multiple religious belonging*. See for instance: C. Cornille (ed.): *Many mansions? Research by the Dutch Dominican Study Centre for Theology and Society and Motivaction* shows that 29% of adult Dutch are multi-religious, i.e. they combine in their lives practices, convictions, religiously inspired values and norms and social contexts from divergent traditions or religions. See: J. BERGHUIJS: *Miljoenen Nederlanders multireligieus volgens Motivaction-onderzoek*,

www.nieuwwij.nl/nieuws/miljoenen-nederlanders-multireligieus-volgens-motivaction-onderzoek/ [accessed on 3 juni 2016]; J. Berghuijs: 'Geloof en spiritualiteit over de grenzen van religies heen', in T. Bernts & J. Berghuijs (eds.): *God in Nederland 1966 - 2015* (Utrecht 2016²) 125-139. Rituals evidently play a central role in this, as becomes clear from the stories of famous and not so famous Dutch people, who have been interviewed in the framework of the above mentioned research: M. KALSKY & F. PRUIM: *Flexibel geloven. Zingeving voorbij de grenzen van religies* (Vught 2014). My own research regarding lung cancer patients' spiritual coping strategies also shows that interviewed respondents combine within themselves practices and ideas from often very divergent religious and spiritual traditions, in order to be able in this way to cope with the illness, the treatment and the approaching end of life: J. KÖRVER: *Spirituele copingstrategieën bij longkankerpatiënten* (Eindhoven 2013); J. KÖRVER, M.H.F. VAN UDEN & J.Z.T. PIEPER: 'Post- or paramodern devotion in the Netherlands?', in H. WESTERINK (eds.): *Constructs of meaning and religious transformation. Current issues in the psychology of religion* (Wenen 2013) 239-257; J. KÖRVER, M.H.F. VAN UDEN & J.Z.T. PIEPER: 'Varianten van spiritualiteit. Spirituele copingstrategieën van longkankerpatiënten', in *Collationes* 44/2 (2014) 189-208.

⁵⁹ I.D. YALOM: *Existential psychotherapy* (New York 1980).

work of chaplains in penitentiary facilities.⁶⁰ Already some decades ago, the psychologist Paul Pruyser emphasized that utilizing rituals, and in particular blessings, belongs to the heart of pastoral and spiritual care.⁶¹ The American sociologist Wendy Cadge too has recently pointed this out.⁶² This requires in particular the development of ritual competence, a competence explicitly mentioned by, for instance, the Dutch *Vereniging van Geestelijke VerZorgers* (VGVZ – Association of Spiritual Caregivers) in its professional standard.⁶³ Ritual competence is also being advocated for spiritual caregivers who have to function in serious crisis situations after calamities.⁶⁴

10. Ritual competence

I want to name some aspects of this ritual competence, so that the spiritual caregiver will be able to adequately shape ritual hospitality. One aspect is in any case that the spiritual caregiver knows how to create an “aesthetic” distance with the ritual. On the one hand, ritual should keep a sufficient distance from the concrete situation, crisis or event that is the issue in the ritual space, in order to prevent it from becoming just a re-experiencing, submerging the individual in that experience once again. On the other hand, the distance should not be too large, because then the ritual would be more of a cognitive activity and the participant would be unable to start moving. Precisely this aesthetic distance can bring about a real catharsis, with participation and observation, experience and reflection being in balance. It will be accompanied by physical sensations (crying, trembling, laughing, sweating) that, however, are not unpleasant, and one will not have the feeling of losing control. And afterwards one will experience a sense of relief and relaxation, one’s train of thought will be clear and one will be oriented towards social contact. Hence, ritual should be offered as a real intermediate or play area between objective reality and the purely subjective inner world, as a good ratio of pure re-experiencing to distant reflection.⁶⁵ The

⁶⁰ POST: ‘Perspectieven van vloeibaar ritueel’.

⁶¹ P.W. PRUYSER: ‘Master hand. Psychological notes on pastoral blessing’, in W.B. OGLESBY JR (ed.): *New shape of pastoral theology. Essays in honor of Seward Hiltner* (Nashville 1969) 352-365.

⁶² W. CADGE: *Paging God. Religion in the halls of medicine* (Chicago / London 2012); W. CADGE, K. CALLE & J. DILLINGER: ‘What do chaplains contribute to large academic hospitals? The perspectives of pediatric physicians and chaplains’, in *Journal of Religion and Health* 50/2 (2011) 300-312.

⁶³ VGVZ: *Beroepsstandaard geestelijke verzorging* (Amsterdam 2015).

⁶⁴ L. VROEGINDEWEIJ: *Crisiscompetenties. Benodigde kennis, vaardigheden en attitudes voor geestelijke verzorgers na rampen* (Masterthesis Faculty of Theology, Utrecht University) (Utrecht, 2006).

⁶⁵ T.J. SCHEFF: *Catharsis in healing, ritual, and drama* (Lincoln 2001); see also: KÖRVER: ‘Het ritueel als de ziel van geestelijke verzorging in de psychiatrie’.

ability to be silent is part of this as well. In the therapeutic context of severe traumas, it has become clear that not always everything has to be spoken. Silence and secrets are not always negative. Especially rituals and other nonverbal methods can be employed when openly discussing far-reaching events and traumas does not help. A virtual space comes into being, where everyone can find their own place, their own mansion, within a shared framework.⁶⁶

In this context, a second important understanding is that the better people can differentiate, the better they can integrate. Just like a child knows and can integrate better what is a dog, if it can perceive differences in size, color, age and breeds, likewise will people –entering different ritual settings– better be able to let that ritual space affect them and to integrate it. Imagination, trust, hope, but also awareness of the fragility of our existence will be nourished.⁶⁷

A third, but maybe the most important competence regarding spiritual caregivers' carrying out rituals is curiosity, especially when the differences appear to be unbridgeable and frightening. "A curious person is a slightly better person, a better parent, better partner, neighbor and colleague than a non-curious person. A curious person is also a better lover".⁶⁸ Curious spiritual caregivers are better hosts or guests in the virtual ritual house with many mansions.

11. To conclude

The preceding reflections have also important societal implications. This features prominently in the book *Ons erf* (Our heritage) by the journalist and sociologist Warna Oosterbaan that, written for a general readership, is the completion of the NWO research programme *Culturele Dynamiek* (Cultural Dynamics). One of the conclusions in the programme and in the book is, that we are growing towards a global culture, in which the native and the cosmopolitan become intertwined. Oosterbaan describes the dynamics of identity in relation to and as seen by others. Culture and identity are in constant motion, and everyone is shaped by it. This latter aspect becomes manifest when in the summer he is visiting a village in Morocco, where at that moment dozens of young Moroccans are visiting, who have lived in the Netherlands all their lives. The Dutch

⁶⁶ P. ROBER & P.C. ROSENBLATT: 'Silence and memories of war. An autoethnographic exploration of family secrecy', in *Family Process* (2015); P. ROBER & P.C. ROSENBLATT: "'Hoe was het in het kamp?'" Oorlogsherinneringen en familiegeheimen', in *Systeemtherapie* 28/2 (2016) 90-109. See also: R. SHAW: 'Memory Frictions localizing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Sierra Leone', in *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 1/2 (2007) 183-207.

⁶⁷ G. BREEUWSMA: *Alles over ontwikkeling. Over de grondslagen van de ontwikkelingspsychologie* (Amsterdam 1993).

⁶⁸ A. OZ: 'Lof van de schiereilanden', in *Nexus* 53/71 (2016) 11-22, p. 12. See also: A. OZ & F. OZ-SALZBERGER: *Jews and words* (= Posen Library of Jewish Culture and Civilization) (New Haven / London 2012).

Moroccans (or Moroccan Dutch?) can be identified immediately by their body language during the ritual walk that these youngsters take with their age peers from the village itself. They walk differently, they have a different way of looking and they are dressed differently from their local age peers. There really is something like “walking in a Dutch way”.⁶⁹ In an embodied way, these youngsters intuitively have mastered Dutch culture, more than they themselves can say.

Dr. Sjaak Körver is assistant professor in practical theology, pastoral supervisor, and trainer Clinical Pastoral Education at Tilburg School of Catholic Theology (Tilburg University). He is editor in chief of the *Tijdschrift Geestelijke Verzorging* (*Journal of Spiritual Care*).

E-mail: j.w.g.korver@uvt.nl

⁶⁹W. OOSTERBAAN: *Ons erf. Identiteit, erfgoed, culturele dynamiek* (Amsterdam 2014) 15-31.

