"One must recognize the vulnerability of the spiritual when you bring it into the open. Spirituality is like a bird. If you try hard you may catch it; if you try too hard you may choke it."

A Jewish Rabbi (quoted in Samartha 1974, 644 and Johnson 1975, 105)

Not so long ago it was quite accepted to write and reflect on 'spirituality' and to remain firmly within one's own tradition and experiences without asking or exploring further questions. We refer e.g. to Thurian (1968), Aalders (1969) and Evdokimov (1970) who, writing on spirituality, seem to ignore that the world is broader than only Europe and authentic religious experience is found not only in Christianity. This remark does not want to dispute the legitimacy of dealing with one's own spiritual life and experience, under condition, however, that one should be aware of its limitations by not claiming - implicitly at least - universality for essentially particularist experiences.

Nowadays we can discern a new orientation in assessing man's place in interdependent worlds, in which new horizons of hitherto unknown spiritual insights and experiences emerge, which tend either to replace one's former spiritual outlook or which challenge and enrich traditional spirituality. Further, though authentic spirituality never consisted in an escape from responsibility in this world into a one-sided concentration on a transcendental reality, we find that nowadays spirituality is very closely linked with struggle for human
fulfilment with special emphasis on emancipation and liberation.

This contribution deals with the phenomenon of growing interest in spirituality within various Christian circles and which is characterized by two main trends:

- to put 'spirituality' in an interreligious context
- to link 'spirituality' intimately with the struggle for a fuller and richer human life and a more humane society.

Our survey is, however, limited in many respects. First of all, in accordance with the aim of this Bulletin, it concentrates mainly (but not exclusively) on publications from the Third World, in as far as they are available in our Institute's library and documentation-department. Secondly, 'spirituality' is such a vast and vague theme (because multi-interpretable) that a selection had to be made which left out many aspects of spirituality today. The material collected could easily fill several issues of Exchange.

We finally decided to limit ourselves to a more general presentation of the new interest in spirituality with special reference to its interreligious and political implications. It so happened that in the course of eliminating and selecting material, mainly (though not exclusively) authors from Asia remained on the scene. This is not too surprising since the Asian faiths and revolutions seem to make a great impact on the religious and secular longing and quest for fulfilment of many people(s) in the contemporary world.

We embark upon this undertaking not without much hesitation because so much in this field is unsufficiently explored as yet and so many implications will only partly be understood and are, therefore, easily subject to misrepresentation and misunderstanding. We, for that reason, would like to receive comments and suggestions from our readers in a spirit of 'exchange'. This would be an encouragement for continuing the exploration of this timeless yet timely theme which could lead to presenting in future issues of 'Exchange' some more concrete aspects of spirituality, restricted either geographically or topically.