

NEWSLETTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE-SSCS¹

NEWS FROM IRC MEMBERS AROUND THE WORLD

July 2022 – No. 4

From Phil Daughtry, Australia

The biggest thing on my mind for this edition of the IRC newsletter is the **successful launch of our July 5-7, 2023, SSCS Conference down under**. It has been a joy to work with my colleagues, Dr Chris Morris, and Dr Kirsten Macaitis in getting the event to this stage. Below are the links to the call for papers and other information:

- **Conference Webpage:** <https://news.tabor.edu.au/ssch-conference>
- **Welcome video:** <https://vimeo.com/698870136>
- **Eventbrite Registration:** <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/339654123627>

We have been heartily encouraged by the enthusiastic response to the news of the conference from our North American colleagues and from various members of the IRC!

Other news from my corner of the world includes:

- A research project on young people's spirituality which is led by Graham Stanton from Ridley College in Melbourne and is driven by the concern of the low levels of youth engagement in churches. A lovely feature of this research is its narrative focus and broad inclusivity. You can check out some of the emerging stories of young people's spirituality via this link: <https://yourstory.ridley.edu.au/>
- I have recently published an article with two of my colleagues from Tabor in the *Journal for the Study of Spirituality*, the flagship publication of the International Network for the Study of Spirituality. It focuses on qualitative research we conducted here around participant experiences of walking the labyrinth. You can check out *Walking into the rock – labyrinth experience as thin space and [spi]ritual direction* at this link: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/20440243.2022.2037188>

On another personal note I am 11 weeks into a 32-week process of doing the full spiritual exercises of St Ignatius in common life. I have found the process deeply grounding and liberating. This is the first step in my journey towards gaining accreditation as a spiritual director within this tradition.

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From Christopher Morris, Australia

The Department of Pastoral and Spiritual Studies of Catholic Theological College held an **on-line conference** for 90 participants considering the question: *How do we know Christ Now?* Three keynote presentations and 4 workshops were presented focusing on the themes: Biblical foundations; science and evolution; spirituality; art; and meditation and mindfulness. It made for a very stimulation discussion with significant participation.

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From Diana L. Villegas, Colombia

Theologica Xaveriana, the theological journal published by the Pontifical Javeriana University, the Jesuit University in Bogotá, Colombia, **published six peer reviewed, open access articles on spirituality** in this year's volume (72). Two articles address Pope Francis' culture of encounter. The practice of listening to the other, sincerely attempting to understand their perspective and context, and from that stance entering into dialogue, constitutes a way of being in life and of pastoral practice that is an expression of the Gospel call to love. Mauti's article focuses on the practice and its underlying theology, while Merino-Beas shows the roots of this spirituality in Latin American liberation theology and the theology/spirituality of the people of God, the later rooted in the works of Argentinian theologians. See, Merino Beas, Patricio. "Espiritualidad de raíz latinoamericana y cultura del encuentro." <https://doi.org/10.11144/javeriana.tx72.erlce> Mauti, Ricardo Miguel. "El ecumenismo de la caridad como aporte a la unidad de la familia humana (EG 245). Algunos criterios inspiradores de Francisco." <https://doi.org/10.11144/javeriana.tx72.ecaufh>. The article by Coupeau discusses Ignacio Ellacuría's understanding of spirituality based on an essay he first published in 1983 called *Espiritualidad* (spirituality). This is an example of a significant theologian defining and interpreting spirituality in a manner different from that primarily used by Anglophone scholars of Christian spirituality. See, Coupeau, José Carlos. "Una ciudad en lo

¹ Society for the Study of Christian Spirituality

alto: espiritualidad y ciudad en los *Escritos teológicos* de Ignacio Ellacuría.” <https://doi.org/10.11144/javeriana.tx72.caacet>

The other three articles are:

Córdoba Salmerón, Miguel. “El lenguaje teológico-espiritual del arte. El mensaje del templo de San Ignacio de Loyola de Bogotá” <https://doi.org/10.11144/javeriana.tx72.ltea> [*The theological spiritual language of art: The message of the Church of St. Ignatius in Bogotá*]

López Hortelano, Eduard. “El ojo interior o la imaginación en Ignacio de Loyola y Carl Gustav Jung: una interpretación espiritual.” <https://doi.org/10.11144/javeriana.tx72.oiil> [*Interior Vision or Imagination in Ignatius of Loyola and Carl Gustav Jung: A spiritual Interpretation*]

Staab, Christopher Michael. “The desire for Jerusalem: Historical Considerations of Ignatius of Loyola’s Desire to go to the Holy Land.”

<https://doi.org/10.11144/javeriana.tx72.djhcil>

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From Tim Geoffrion, Myanmar and Minneapolis

Tim Geoffrion writes about his experience of consultation with pastoral and seminary leaders in Myanmar at the Thai-Myanmar border, as he is still unable to enter Myanmar to teach in person due to the political crisis in the country.

My school, Myanmar Institute of Theology, resumed online instruction in January, but there remains no prospect of bringing the 1400 students back to campus in the foreseeable future. It's been over two years since COVID-19 first forced the closing of the school in March 2020, but offering classes is critical both to the survival of the school and to providing hope for the students.

Our one hour scheduled meeting [at the Myanmar Thai border] with the General Secretary and Associate General Secretary of the Thailand Karen Baptist Convention (TKBC) turned into a two and half hour, in-depth, passionate discussion on the needs of the Karen people in eastern Burma and Thailand, as well as a trip to speak briefly to the trustees of the main Bible college affiliated with TKBC. We began laying tracks for us to offer Spirit-led Leadership training for Karen pastors who live in mountainside villages throughout western Thailand. After driving five hours to Mae Sot, situated right on the Thai-Myanmar border, I had the opportunity to meet with Dr. Wado, the visionary and founder of two colleges and seminaries serving the Karen people there, as well as with the academic deans of these schools. They stressed the importance of not just focusing on immediate, humanitarian needs without also actively preparing for the future by educating the youth and young adults.

In terms of spiritual formation, the Burmese people, on both sides of the border, are seeking to know God better and to learn what it means to be led by the Holy Spirit in the midst of their crises and daily challenges. These topics will be the focus of my lectures when I conduct a seminar for the faculty and students of the two schools on the Myanmar-Thai border in August.

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From KangHack Lee, South Korea

The Group of Christian Spirituality in South Korea is part of the Korean Society for the Studies of Practical Theology. It has 25 members from mainline Protestant denominations such as Presbyterians, Methodists, Pentecostals, and Baptists. **The group meets four times a year for paper presentations** – February, May, September, and October. **In 2018, it edited and published a book in Korean, *The Soul's Spiritual Journey to God***, collecting articles published in various Korean journals. The representative titles are as follows: Haeryong You, “Spirituality and Spiritual Theology”; Seunggi Choi, “Hermeneutical Methodology”; Bangsik Oh, “Understanding Contemporary Contemplative Prayer”; Jaekyong You, “Evagrius Ponticus’ Spirituality and Human Understanding”; KangHack Lee, “Current Issues of Spiritual Direction”; Kyungeun Kim, “Protestant Spiritual Practices: Today and Future.” KangHack Lee, its former president, a GTU alumnus, and IRC member, wrote papers such as “Understanding a Methodology of Christian Spirituality: Sandra Schneiders and the GTU Protocol” and “Lee SeJong’s Spirituality.” Most papers are written in Korean.

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From Celia Kourie, South Africa

1. Prof. Pieter de Villiers attended a celebration of Prof. Kees Waaijman's 80th birthday, presenting him a Festschrift in his honour. Details of this publication will be forthcoming in the SSCS Blog.
2. Elmor van Staden, a senior manager at Hitachi, who worked with Carter Haynes on the SSCS website, has obtained his doctorate from the University of the Free State (UFS) in Bloemfontein with the thesis title, 'Leading from within: The Spirituality and Development of the Contemplative Leader'.
3. I participate in a monthly meeting, 'Mystic Matters,' held in Pretoria. We invite speakers from diverse traditions to give a presentation/talk. The talks are often academic, but there are also more practical presentations, such as a Baha'i

practitioner, who described the Baha'i faith, and a Sufi practitioner doing the same.

4. I continue to attend an inter-faith and ecumenical committee, organized by the SACBC (South African Catholic Bishops Committee). This committee organizes inter-faith/ecumenical events and conferences. For instance, we are in dialogue with those representing African spirituality.

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Comments, suggestions or critiques are welcome.
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