

NEWSLETTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE-SSCS

NEWS FROM IRC MEMBERS AROUND THE WORLD

July 2019 – No. 1

The IRC is inaugurating its first annual newsletter to share with the SSCS membership news from various regions of the world. We welcome your comments, suggestions or critiques. Diana L. Villegas, editor(dianavilsa@gmail.com)

From Phil Daughtry, Australia

Spirituality types of Australian teens - Research

This research profiles 6 differing spirituality types within the Australian teenage demographic (13-18). It helps identify spiritual perspectives and interests of young people outside the traditional survey frameworks of church attendance etc. I find it interesting not only for what it says but for what it doesn't say; namely that Australia is a country where spiritual education and mentoring is rarely a focus or priority for schools and many families. Thus, the profiles appear to me to say something of what you get when spiritual formation with young people is marginal, ad hoc and often poorly delivered.

Spirituality for youth work - publication

This multi-authored book that I co-edited and contributed to is one attempt to say something about what might happen if we don't simply leave the spiritual education and formation of young people to chance. (Stewart Devenish, Phil Daughtry, eds. *Spirituality for Youth Work*, Cambridge Scholars, 2016)

Research - I am working with a colleague on the analysis of qualitative data from a series of guided labyrinth walks that we curated with a group of interested participants (multi-generational). We aim to write this up by year's end. The writing will highlight the phenomenon of mystical encounter through participation in non-didactic ritual.

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From Chris Morris, Australia

Meetings of local societies in spirituality: I have had informal discussions with a number of researchers in the areas of spirituality at the University of Divinity. (The University is made up of 11 theological colleges predominantly located in Melbourne <https://divinity.edu.au/>). We plan to begin meeting later in 2019.

Educational Initiative: At the Catholic Theological College we are in the process of reconfiguring our Graduate Certificate in Teaching Meditation program. From 2020 it will run across one year and form graduates to teach meditation and meditative prayer in a variety of situations (schools, parishes, hospitals, etc). The program equips graduates to engage with an emphasis on mindfulness, and

offer the unique gifts of the Christian contemplative tradition.

Research: I am in the last year of doctoral research on Bruno Barnhart's Christian wisdom approach. He was a Camaldolese Benedictine Monk from Big Sur California until his death in 2015. I aim to show how his vision provides principles of interpretation for Christian lived experience and therefore contributes to the discipline of spirituality. I will be presenting a paper based on this research at the 'Spiritual Direction Without Borders Research Symposium' in Melbourne in August. The conference is put on by Spiritual Directors International.

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From Diana L. Villegas, Colombia

Having listened to and read a number of the witnesses to reconciliation, forgiveness and rebuilding of destroyed lives by victims of Colombia's violent civil wars, I sought an opportunity to interview some of these witnesses and write about the values and beliefs that made their extraordinary resilience and acts of reconciliation possible. Most of these victims were displaced; many suffered the disappearance of loved ones, witnessed their torture, and lived in fear of attack. In October 2018 I had the opportunity to interview several survivors of this violence in a town and surrounding countryside that suffered especially from the conflict between guerrillas and paramilitaries. I found scholars have interviewed victims all over Colombia to study their experience from the perspective of political science, history, sociology and most recently, psychology. However, I found nothing on their spirituality. I have now completed an article on their spirituality which I hope to publish soon.

From Annie Yi Jung PAN, Hong Kong

Publications

Gratefully, on September 21 2018, *Pilgrimage of Metropolitan Spirituality* by Annie was announced as the Winner of Best Awards of Spirituality of the 8th Association Christian Publishers (ACP) Book Awards in Hong Kong. [Pan Yi

Jung, *Pilgrimage of Metropolitan Spirituality* 《相遇在都會靈程路》 Hong Kong: Christian Communications Ltd., 2016.] Annie's publication with artist Wong Chim Yuen, *Meditation on Chinese Painting: A Journey through the Book of Exodus*, Hong Kong: MaHA Ltd, 2018, is the first Chinese book to integrate 40 Chinese Lingam Style Paintings with meditations on the journey of the book of Exodus.

Annie's 2017 book co-authored with Choi Bess, *Integral Pre-marital Counseling* 《身心社靈的婚前輔導—指導本與新人本》 Hong Kong: Christian Communications Ltd. has just been re-published by the Nanjing Theological Seminary in mainland China. This is significant given increasingly tight government control of the church.

Annie has worked on a new book, *Companionship in Spiritual Journey*, which aims to explore contemporary persons' spiritual needs and struggles in order to suggest new spiritual directions. This study will be published at the end of 2019.

Conference presentations

Annie was invited to present two significant papers in Hong Kong. "The Spiritual Formation of Metropolitan Spirituality in Hong Kong," was presented at the *120th Anniversary of Alliance Bible Seminary Symposium* (Theme: "Academic Conference on Shaping the Future Horizon of Hong Kong"). "Teaching and Research by Women Theological Educators in Practical Studies," will be presented at the *2019 Mandarin-speaking Women Theological Educators Conference* held by the Foundation of Theological Education in South East Asia (FTESEA) in June.

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From Michael O'Sullivan, Ireland

The *Routledge International Handbook of Spirituality in Society and the Professions* edited by László Zsolnai and Bernadette Flanagan was launched at the historic international conference in Waterford Institute of Technology, Ireland on May 17th, 2019 (<https://www.jesuit.ie/news/a-book-to-relish/>). The *Handbook* by 68 contributors, includes a chapter on 'Spirituality and Education' co-authored by Bernadette and Michael O'Sullivan. The book shows the scope of the influence of spirituality studies, research, and practice, in a multitude of fields of learning and professions.

Conference - A conference, based on the book, a collaboration between the Spirituality Institute for Research and Education (SpIRE), based in Dublin and headed by Michael and Bernadette (<https://spiritualityinstitute.ie/>), the European Institute for Spirituality in Economics and Society (SPES), based in Hungary and Budapest, and Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT) in Waterford, which awards the MA in Applied (<https://spiritualityinstitute.ie/ma-applied-spirituality/>). The conference included 110 participants from 19 countries among them 3 IRC members. For the programme see <http://spiritualityinstitute.ie/events/16-18-may-2019-international-conference-on-spirituality-in-society-and-the-professions/>

Conference - 'Spirituality in Research, Professional Practice and Education' will be offered June 1-3, 2020 by The British Association for the Study of Spirituality (BASS) at York St John University. For further information see, yorksj.ac.uk/BASS2020

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From Tim Geoffrion, Myanmar

In Myanmar (Burma), roughly one half of all the three to four million Christians in the country are Baptist. Most Baptists, the group I have been working with since 2007, are very traditional in their worship and spiritual practices, most of which were inherited from Baptist missionaries. The traditional nature of the church has helped to sustain its integrity and identity, at the same time fostering certain challenges for spiritual formation and vitality. Most Baptists value traditional rituals, obedience to elders and authorities, and allegiance to their church and Christian heritage, but often do not seem to have much interest in reflecting on their faith intellectually or growing spiritually beyond being more obedient, compliant, or useful in service. If there is interest in personal and spiritual growth, few understand how to integrate their spirituality, family life, and leadership at deeper levels.

Research - In 2016, a dozen research assistants and I conducted a survey of 110 pastors throughout the country. One of the most common responses was a desire for greater spiritual vitality. However many pastors lack resources (especially education in spiritual growth) and time to practice what they do know.

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From Pieter G.R. de Villiers, South Africa

The Spirituality Association of South Africa (Spirasa) will hold its annual general meeting on 14-15 October 2019 in Johannesburg. Spirasa celebrates its 15th year in 2019. The theme for this year's international conference is "Contemplation." Prof. Kees Waaijman of the Titus Brandsma Institute and Honorary President of Spirasa will read the main paper and will also lead a workshop on contemplation. Detail and a call for papers will be provided on Spirasa's Facebook page. Spirasa also runs a Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/spirasa.org>) where notes on Spirituality Studies and Devotional reflections are published. The page is read widely in South Africa and abroad. The page is edited by Pieter G.R. de Villiers, chair of Spirasa and Elmor van Staden, its treasurer.

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