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EDITOR'S NOTE

The volume we present consists of five articles (by Paul Faller, Margaret Blackie, Marlene Martin, Jean Evans and Kees Thönissen) and three book reviews. It covers the two issues for the year 2015.

The underlying thread of this volume is a broad notion of spirituality in dialogue with various dimensions of life.

Faller's article argues that children's inborn capacity for contemplation should be developed in age-appropriate ways, both at home and in school, according to the Christian prayer gradation, having its roots in Scripture and in the practice of the early Desert Fathers and Mothers.

Blackie's reflection on a 'simple model of spiritual development' based on Rahner's view of ordinary mysticism and the movement of grace open to all, regardless of their confession of faith, offers a way of critiquing existing spiritual programmes and developing more relevant training models for spiritual directors.

These first two articles (by Faller and Blackie) are based on papers that were originally presented at the Third Joint Conference of Academic Societies in the fields of Religion and Theology which was held at the Faculty of Theology, University of Pretoria, from 11th – 15th July 2016. They were subsequently revised by their authors and submitted to *St Augustine Papers* for peer review.

Martin aims, in turn, to probe the conditions for a dialogue between spirituality and medical science in a South African setting. While she considers that such a dialogue is both feasible and desirable for the sake of patients and medical staff alike, she concludes that, due to diverse religious beliefs and extreme symptoms of exhaustion and burnout expressed by both medical practitioners and pastors, it is simply impractical in the current South African context. Martin's article is based on a paper which was presented at the Second Bi-annual Meeting of the Society for the Study of Christian Spirituality held at St Augustine College, Johannesburg, from 20th – 23rd May 2015.

In her article, Evans explores a wide range of pastoral and spiritual concerns raised in *Evangelii Gaudium*, a 2013 apostolic exhortation on 'The Church's

Primary Mission of Evangelisation in the Modern World', and draws connections between these themes and the personal spirituality of the author/editor of the document, Pope Francis. She observes the ways in which *Joy of the Gospel*, with its emphasis on religious care and spiritual accompaniment, the inclusion of the poor, peace and dialogue, and spiritual motivations for mission, reflects the Ignatian spirituality, pastoral priorities and experience of Pope Francis. This is demonstrated, in particular, by his affinity for the spirit underlying the Fourth Week of the Spiritual Exercises in which the Risen Jesus is represented in his office as *consoler*.

Lastly, Thönissen offers a 'reconstructive hermeneutic' based on the categories of *experience*, *relationality* and *spiritual-intuition* as a means to remedy damaging bifurcations such as 'spirituality v. formal religion' or 'everyday spirituality v. holiness'. His metaphysical *synthesis* is built on a deeper mystical spirituality which rests on the rich experience of saints (in particular St Francis of Assisi). This article is based on a doctoral thesis that was submitted to the University of South Africa in 2014.

CALLS FOR PAPERS:

In mid-2017, we plan to publish a volume dedicated to current global issues. Papers which focus on any of the following themes are welcome: Brexit; the 2016 U.S. elections and America under Trump; the refugee/ migrant crisis around the globe; religious fundamentalisms and terrorism; poverty; structural racism and the worldwide calls for decolonisation; Black Life Matters, and other issues surrounding social (in)justice. The call for papers is open until the end of May 2017.

Towards the end of 2017, a special volume will be published to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation. Articles discussing this topic – be it from the perspective of world or church history, theology, ecumenical movement, ethics, politics, law, peace studies, or any other relevant area of study – can be submitted for peer-review by the end of August 2017.

Guidelines for the authors can be found at the end of this volume as well as on our Journal's website: www.staugustine.ac.za/sap.

Is Meditation a Thing for Children?

PAUL FALLER

ABSTRACT

While there is resistance to the idea, even among the clergy, there is clear evidence for the place of mantra-based meditation in the Christian tradition from the earliest centuries. With regard to children and young people of school-going age, the experience of Catholic schooling in countries such as Australia and the United Kingdom affirms their capacity and readiness for such a practice. It furthermore illustrates the positive impact it has on their lives, resulting in a number of physiological, psychological and spiritual benefits. The work of teaching meditation in Catholic schools was pioneered by the Catholic Education Office in Townsville, Australia ten years ago in 2006. Since then, a number of other countries have followed suit and Catholic education in South Africa embarked on a project similar to the Townsville one in 2012. The latter part of the paper describes some of the conditions and strategies that have been found necessary for a successful implementation in the school context.

INTRODUCTION

Let the little children come to me... for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. In truth I tell you, anyone who does not welcome the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it (Mark 10:14-15).

Is meditation a thing for children and young people of school-going age? Can they meditate? Should they meditate? In this paper I address the question, first by appealing to relevant Church documents. I then consider

what writers such as Sofia Cavalletti, Madeleine Simon and Laurence Freeman have to say about children's spirituality.

Finally I draw from the experience of schools and children today. In the latter part of the paper I address some of the practical considerations involved in taking up the teaching of meditation to children.

The particular way of meditation I am considering here is a mantra-based way of silent prayer, following the teaching of the Benedictine monk, John Main (1926-1982), who had recovered the practice from the writings of one of the 4th-century Desert Fathers, John Cassian. Recognising the need for meditation in the modern world, John Main made it his life's work to promote it. The World Community for Christian Meditation which has grown from his work now has a presence in over 100 countries worldwide and an outreach to children in more than 20 of these.

MEDITATION AND THE CHRISTIAN TRADITION

There is a good deal of suspicion in Catholic and Christian circles surrounding the practice of meditation as I have described it. Because of its popularisation in the 1960s by figures such as Maharishi Mahesh Yogi who promoted Transcendental Meditation (TM), it is seen as something foreign to Christian culture, and even dangerous. Thus some answer the question we are considering with a resounding 'No!' in the belief that teaching children such a practice is leading them down a New Age path to the occult and its associated dangers or to forms of Eastern religion.

Following a round of seminars titled "A Way to Peace: Teaching Meditation to Children" led by Ernie Christie and Cathy Day of Catholic Education, Townsville Australia, a letter from Fr Finbaar Flanagan OFM appeared in The Southern Cross of 25 November 2015 with the title "No place for New Age meditation." The mention of "teaching half-lotus...meditation in our schools" suggests that the writer was misinformed about what was being presented and had received his information about the seminars second-hand and out of context. In the

letter, he writes: “A quick look at their website (*mediomedia.com*) with recommended authors shows that this form of meditation has nothing in common with traditional Catholic meditation but rather the New Age Movement (NAM).”

Such a response ignores that fact that this particular way of prayer has been part of the Christian tradition since the early centuries of the Desert Fathers and Mothers and has its roots in the gospel teaching of Jesus on prayer. It is clearly central to contemporary church teaching too. What the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (2668) describes is clearly an instance of this way of prayer:

The invocation of the holy name of Jesus is the simplest way of praying always. When the holy name is repeated often by a humbly attentive heart, the prayer is not lost by heaping up empty phrases, but holds fast to the word and "brings forth fruit with patience." This prayer is possible "at all times" because it is not one occupation among others but the only occupation: that of loving God, which animates and transfigures every action in Christ Jesus.

Recognition of the value of this way of prayer and encouragement for its practice comes from Cardinal George Pell, Archbishop of Sydney: “Fr John Main recovered the ancient prayer tradition of meditation for our times in a frantic world searching for meaning and purpose. I warmly endorse this prayer which opens your heart to the Holy Spirit connecting us with the sacred within. It is this gift of holiness and wholeness that we must give to all our students and our teachers” (quoted after John Main Christian Meditation – WCCM, n.d.).

Encouragement also comes from the very document referred to in Fr Finbarr’s letter which expresses, quite rightly, a concern about the effect of New Age techniques on the undiscerning. In Points to Note in the document of the Pontifical Councils for Culture and Interreligious Dialogue, *Jesus Christ the Bearer of the Water of Life* (6.2 Practical Steps), the following advice is given.

Perhaps the simplest, the most obvious and the most urgent measure to be taken, which might also be the most effective, would be to make the most

of the riches of the Christian spiritual heritage. The great religious orders have strong traditions of meditation and spirituality which could be made more available through courses or periods in which their houses might welcome genuine seekers.

This is already being done, but more is needed. Helping people in their spiritual search by offering them proven techniques and experiences of real prayer could open a dialogue with them which would reveal the riches of Christian tradition and perhaps clarify a great deal about New Age in the process.

At the same time, practices dubbed 'New Age' are popular among many young people today. Why is this so? The Pontifical Councils for Culture and Interreligious Dialogue (2003:7) propose a self-critical answer.

It should be recognised that the attraction that New Age religiosity has for some Christians may be due in part to the lack of serious attention in their own communities for themes which are actually part of the Catholic synthesis such as the importance of man's (sic) spiritual dimension and its integration with the whole of life, the search for life's meaning, the link between human beings and the rest of creation, the desire for personal and social transformation, and the rejection of a rationalistic and materialistic view of humanity.

The document (2003:13-14) explains further.

The appeal of New Age religiosity cannot be underestimated. When the understanding of the content of Christian faith is weak, some mistakenly hold that the Christian religion does not inspire a profound spirituality and so they seek elsewhere. The success of New Age offers the Church a challenge. People feel the Christian religion no longer offers them – or perhaps never gave them – something they really need. The search which often leads people to the New Age is a genuine yearning: for a deeper spirituality, for something which will touch their hearts, and for a way of making sense of a confusing and often alienating world.

By not teaching our children and young people to meditate are we denying them their inheritance? Are we shutting up the kingdom of heaven in their faces, neither going in ourselves, nor allowing them to enter? (See Matthew 23:13.)

Roy Lowe (2009:23) in a book dedicated to early childhood studies, presents the theory of the American scholar Lloyd DeMause who argued in the 1970s that “the habits and practices which were imposed on children throughout history offered the only meaningful explanation of how they subsequently performed as adults” and that it is therefore “not possible to understand human history without first understanding how the main protagonists had been reared: the kind of childhood they had experienced.” If we follow this line of thinking we may well ask what sort of world would emerge if we were to teach our children to meditate. It would certainly impact on their experience of the world as we shall see later when we consider the fruits arising from a practice of meditation.

CAPACITY FOR CONTEMPLATION

But should children meditate? Is it within their ability to learn and practise the discipline? The fact of the matter, according to a number of writers and attested to by the personal experience of many educators, is that children have an innate capacity for meditation: they are born contemplative. Penny Sturrock, the editor of Madeleine Simon’s book *Born Contemplative: Introducing Children to Meditation* (p. xvi), states the following:

Children are born contemplative... ‘Young children have a great openness to the presence of God in their lives and a real readiness for prayer’. We, parents, grandparents, teachers, and other significant adults in their lives have a responsibility to lead them ‘to a real and profound interior silence which is the first requisite of listening’ to ‘God [speaking] to their hearts[where] they can discover the love of God for each of them personally’.

Sofia Cavalletti, the originator of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, agrees with this assessment in statements such as “transcendent reality seems to be so apparent to the child” (1992:47), and “early childhood is primarily the time of the serene enjoyment of God” (:74-75).

A third voice, that of Laurence Freeman (2008:10-11), current leader of the World Community for Christian Meditation, attests to this capacity of the child from personal experience.

Children are natural contemplatives in some ways, not fully conscious, but because of their relative lack of self-consciousness, they are able to enter fully into what we call the contemplative dimension. The less self-conscious we are, the more contemplative we are, and the more ordinary and open we are as well. It’s a very wonderful thing to pray with children. We have many small groups of children, meditation groups, usually started by parents who have been meditating for some time, and who feel (sic) a natural sense of wanting to introduce their children as early as possible to this dimension of prayer. It’s a wonderful thing to see that and to see how naturally, how ordinarily a child can sit in stillness and in silence and do this inner work that Cassian describes - the work of saying the mantra. The child doesn’t necessarily find it easy, but they find it natural.

Given that this is so, and reflecting again on the thoughts of DeMause with regard to childhood experience and its long-term effect, it is sad to note that this capacity has not been acknowledged and therefore, to a large extent, been allowed to atrophy. William Wordsworth, in his *Ode on Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood*, expresses this regret.

*There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth, and every common sight,
To me did seem
Apparelled in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.
It is not now as it hath been of yore;—*

*Turn wheresoe'er I may,
By night or day.
The things which I have seen I now can see no more.*

*The Rainbow comes and goes,
And lovely is the Rose,
The Moon doth with delight
Look round her when the heavens are bare,
Waters on a starry night
Are beautiful and fair;
The sunshine is a glorious birth;
But yet I know, where'er I go,
That there hath past away a glory from the earth.*

St John of the Cross describes the soul as “an unopened parcel and only God knows what He has put in it.” Wordsworth experiences the unopened parcel which is now covered over with many layers of wrapping and string tied with hard knots. But in childhood the parcel is almost transparent. Consequently, says Laurence Freeman (Simon 2010: xiii), “if we can help children to see this in themselves at the beginning of their life’s journey we will have gone a long way to fulfilling our responsibility to them and also to remembering that we too were ‘born contemplative’.”

The many layers of wrapping in the adult soul, I suggest, are there for security, a need arising from fear of the inner desert that everyone seeking God must travel through. But the transparency that children experience allows them to agree with the Little Prince who says, “What makes the desert beautiful is that somewhere it hides a well...” Is this perhaps why Jesus says, “In truth I tell you, anyone who does not welcome the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it”(Mark 10:15).

READINESS FOR MEDITATION

Given this inborn capacity, it follows that children have a readiness for meditation. Unlike adults who, having reached the stage of logical thought,

“tend to have questions and queries when coming to this form of prayer for the first time,” children “take to it like ducks to water” (Simon 2010:2). John Main, whose work, as noted above, was the inspiration for the founding of the World Community for Christian Meditation (WCCM), shares his experience of the ease with which they come to meditation:

The children who come to our monastery to meditate are a marvellous witness of the naturalness of this way of meditation. They are a real example for the adults who come. They show the essential childlike quality that we need to tread the way (Simons 2010:7).

Theresa O’Callaghan Scheihing (in Simon 2010:16), voices a similar sentiment:

Once invited into the silence and privacy of their own inner core, they [the children] simply come aglow. Theirs is a knowledge of contemplation that comes from within, a knowing that was present long before I ever met them. I cannot stress this enough. It does not take any technical knowledge to engage in contemplation. There are no course requirements, no necessary books to read. Everyone, especially every child, has an innate aptitude for contemplation.

Not only are children ready for it, but “they have the right,” says Laurence Freeman, “to be introduced to a way of being in which they experience no threat, no competition, no exploitation, no distraction... If we underestimate their capacity for contemplation, we fail them” (Simon 2010: xiii). Those who are working in school systems around the world find not only that children are ready for it but that they like to meditate, ask for it when the teacher may have forgotten it, and even “choose to meditate in their own time after they have got used to practising it in their school environment” (Freeman in Battagin 2012: xiii).

The importance of spiritual development in education is not only recognised within religious circles. The 1996 report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the 21st Century, *Learning: The Treasure Within (Highlights)* (1996:37), notes that “formal education

systems tend to emphasise the acquisition of knowledge to the detriment of other types of learning; but it is vital now to conceive education in a more encompassing fashion.” It therefore strongly recommends that education throughout life is based on four pillars: learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and learning to be:

Learning to be so as better to develop one’s personality and be able to act with ever greater autonomy, judgement and personal responsibility. In that connection, education must not disregard any aspect of a person’s potential.

Earlier in the report (:16), attention is drawn to “the tension between the spiritual and the material.”

Often without realising it, the world has a longing, often unexpressed, for an ideal and for values that we shall term ‘moral’. It is thus education’s noble task to encourage each and every one, acting in accordance with their traditions and convictions and paying full respect to pluralism, to lift their minds and spirits to the plane of the universal and, in some measure, to transcend themselves. It is no exaggeration on the Commission’s part to say that the survival of humanity depends thereon.

Our urgent task as educators of children is then to foster in them the development not only of mind but of heart as well (Day 2011:26) so that they become aware of another way of relating to themselves – beyond competitiveness and consumerism (Freeman 2011:18, 2013:30), and so come to an experience of union with God (Freeman 2013:33). In *Spiritus et Sponsa* (2003:13). John Paul II emphasises the need for an education in silence.

One aspect that we must foster in our communities with greater commitment is *the experience of silence*. We need silence “if we are to accept in our hearts the full resonance of the voice of the Holy Spirit and to unite our personal prayer more closely to the Word of God and the public voice of the Church.” In a society that lives at an increasingly frenetic pace, often deafened by noise and confused by the ephemeral, it is vital to rediscover the value of silence. The spread, also outside Christian worship,

of practices of meditation that give priority to recollection, is not accidental. Why not start with pedagogical daring a specific education in silence within the coordinates of personal Christian experience?

In the context of Religious Education, the balance of mind and heart in faith education of children will be achieved by introducing them to tradition, Church, community, scripture and worship on the one hand – kataphatic knowledge (education of the mind), as well as to personal spiritual experience – apophatic knowledge (education of the heart) (See Christie 2008:10).

THE TOWNSVILLE EXPERIENCE

In 2006, the Catholic Education Office in Townsville, Queensland, Australia took this call to heart and initiated a project, under the leadership of the Executive Director, Cathy Day and Director of Learning, Teaching and Catholic Identity, Ernie Christie, to introduce Christian meditation to their 31 schools and some 12 000 students. They had the full backing of their bishop, Michael Putney and support from the World Community for Christian Meditation based in London.

The rationale for the project is stated in a Position Statement thus:

The world teaches children and young people a set of values – but are these values conducive to the making of a better world? Are these values transformative? Western culture invites excitement, not silence; activity, not stillness. Students are therefore often over-stimulated and restless. It is vital that education responds to such social challenges by presenting and teaching an alternative way of being.

Appendix I of *Coming Home: A Guide to Teaching Christian Meditation to Children* (Christie 2008:108-111) gives an overview of the stages of the project which began by offering an extensive training programme to specially selected teachers from 12 schools who then introduced meditation to their classes over a trial period of 12-18 months. After the

trial phase, the project was expanded to all 1500 teachers in Townsville Catholic schools. The work is ongoing with continuing support for the teachers, which includes two intensive formation retreats for teachers every year. Testimonies from teachers at various levels can be found on the Coming Home website (www.cominghome.org.au).

The effects of the project are seen beyond the classroom. “Many schools,” according to Day and Christie (2008), “have adopted Christian Meditation as their staff prayer and at least once a week, interested staff meet for meditation before school. The diocese of Townsville,” they report, “is actively fostering Christian Meditation as a particular experiential prayer experience and in turn there has been a renewal of interest in other forms of contemplative prayer.”

The Townsville initiative has sparked interest around the world and there are similar projects in various stages of development in 25 countries including Canada, Mexico, USA, Fiji, England and Ireland and, since 2012, in South Africa.

THE SOUTH AFRICAN EXPERIENCE

The Townsville project came to our attention through a presentation given at a Religious Education Symposium hosted by the Australian Catholic University in Sydney in July 2011. Such was the impact of this presentation that we decided to bring the message to Catholic schools throughout South Africa. We were generously assisted with resources from Catholic Education, Townsville, and over the next few years presented a total of 26 introductory workshops in 19 centres.

Schools that expressed definite interest in implementing the practice were supported with resources and workshops for the whole staff so that there would be a wider understanding of what was being introduced. To date, relatively few schools have taken this step, but if the experience of teachers in Fiji is typical, the seed is slow to germinate. Denise McMahon (2015), WCCM National Coordinator in that country writes: “Although

successive generations of children living near the Prayer Centre have learned how to meditate and we have noticed the visible positive effects which it has had on them, Christian Meditation in the schools in Fiji has taken quite a number of years to be accepted and appreciated.”

To help the seed to germinate, we have employed two main strategies – a round of 9 seminars in 5 cities presented in September 2015 by Ernie Christie and Cathy Day, and monthly communication of materials for personal reflection and classroom teaching with some 250 interested teachers and catechists.

WHAT CHILDREN SAY

To give you some idea of the impact that meditation is having on children and young people in our schools, I offer a selection of verbatim answers from a class of Grade 8 students to three questions posed:

- **Describe in detail your experience of our meditation time in class.**
 - At first I found it very difficult because whenever I tried to clear my mind I would just get all these thoughts about things that upset me and I never spoke about before. (Ayanda)
 - It is really relaxing and it takes my mind off all things happening around and what is troubling me. I tend to feel much safer when we are meditating. (Lerato M)
 - The first thing I thought is that it is very difficult and a waste of time. The second session I felt more relieved and free and I fell deep into it. (Kamogelo)
- **Do you enjoy meditating? Motivate your answer.**
 - I feel it makes me a better person. I become more calm and considerate towards others. (Zamokuhle)

- It releases tension. When I feel depressed meditation calms me down and helps me get out of my depression. (Kiara)
- Meditation makes me happy and I feel more energised deep down in my soul. (Lerato N)

- **What challenges do you face when meditating?**

- Falling asleep or not focusing. (Ayanda)
- I get easily distracted sometimes and my mind goes other places. (Bokang)
- When I say a prayer word and it slips out of my mind, I start thinking about other things. (Hloniphile)

While there is general positivity expressed in these responses, students clearly do not find the practice easy. What we stress is that we should not try to assess our meditation. It is not about success but about fidelity.

What we experience in meditation is not the point, but rather how gradually the practice begins to effect positive changes in our lives.

BENEFITS FOR CHILDREN

We introduce meditation to Catholic schools in the first place not as a technique for mental or physical wellbeing but as a spiritual discipline. Nevertheless, besides the spiritual fruits of love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Galatians 5:22), meditation has many other benefits, all confirmed by scientific research. Initial research into the Townsville project by Jonathan Campion of St George's University, London, and Sharon Rocco of James Cook University, Townsville showed, *inter alia*, the following results (Campion & Rocco, 2009: 51-53; Campion in Green 2011: 36):

- Meditation has the potential for improved ability to manage stress and calm self, improved attention/concentration, reduced anger impulsivity, and improved interaction/empathy.
- Meditation has the potential to improve academic outcomes and prevent stress, mental illness as well as risk taking behaviour.
- Many participants also reported that the experience of meditation at school had prompted them to meditate outside school, particularly at times of stress.
- A whole-school approach appeared to facilitate more regular practice.

In an article covering a range of areas which relate to education and meditation, Campion (In Green 2011:29) makes the link between meditation and mental health. He notes that the majority of mental illness begins before childhood, with half of life-time mental illness arising by the age of 14 (2011:30). He argues therefore that the early years are a particularly important time for the promotion of mental health and resilience (2011:31), and he advocates school-based meditation (2011:36) as having the potential to result in many of the characteristics that mark a state of mental health which, he says:

is more than just the absence of mental illness. It results in a broad range of benefits including improved educational outcomes, healthier lifestyles and reduced health-risk behaviour, reduced mental illness, reduced anti-social behaviour, reduced crime and violence, stronger social relationships, increased productivity at work, more flexible thinking, improved physical health and reduced physical illness and rates of mortality.

To sum up the fruits of meditation for children and young people, Ernie Christie (2008:33-36) describes four basic changes that can be expected from meditation:

- Personal well-being and harmony
- Self-knowledge and acceptance
- Personal relationship with God
- The experience of community

A comment on the last of these from Laurence Freeman (In Green 2011:19) is apposite, especially in view of the grave difficulty the world is experience today of recognising the one human family. He writes:

School is one of the first strong experiences that children have of a social environment outside of their own family. If they can learn to meditate with their class, they are also learning at a deep level that they are social beings. Meditation in a school setting can be adapted to a single faith, in a secular way, or in a class of mixed faith. Meditation highlights the distinction between faith and belief. (Faith is our capacity for relationship, forgiveness and transcendence). And so it is possible to build communities of faith with people of different beliefs. This is our future – and so the teaching of meditation is prophetic.

TEACHING CHILDREN TO MEDITATE

The foregoing discussion clearly points favourably to the introduction of meditation to children. How then do we go about this teaching? We can use the oft quoted words of the Canadian Catholic Schools Trustees Association (2011:6) to describe our rationale in preparing children in school for a contemplative way, thus taking up the strong suggestion of the Delors Report (1996:37) to include the pillar of ‘learning to be’ in our curriculum.

We are committed in the Spirit of the great Catholic tradition to more than a mere demonstration of the tasks of living. We are dedicated to the mission of living. To live is to explore wonder and to give life is to restore the capacity for wonder. As men and women committed to the

mission of the Church, we always remember our dignity. We are not technicians of survival. We are the guardians of life at the gates of wonder. Our curriculum must be the gateway to wonder.

If we are to lead our learners through this gateway, we must first be conscious of a few assumptions we must make if we are to effectively teach them meditation (Christie 2008:14).

- Recognise that each child is born as a spiritual being.
- Be prepared to work with and alongside the child.
- Listen to what the child has to offer.
- Honour each child's relationship with the divine.
- Always try to make the experiences of meditation positive.
- Never judge the child's meditation.

FORMAL AND INFORMAL TEACHING

Let us consider briefly some informal and formal aspects of teaching meditation and then look at the practicalities involved. We shall conclude with some comments on the distinctive features of a successful implementation of meditation in the school setting.

Meditation is often described as a lifelong spiritual journey. So where does the journey for the child begin? For some fortunate ones it can start in the womb. Madeleine Simon (2010:31) explains:

Meditation during pregnancy is beneficial to both mother and child. For the mother it has a steadying influence, keeping mind and heart centred in the present, in the depths of her own being. Her unborn child is part of herself and participates in the calming effect of her meditation. At a deeper level, as the mother quietly focuses her whole person lovingly on

God, she is preparing the way for a selfless, loving relationship between herself and her child.

This experience can continue after birth, depending on the closeness of the relationship between mother and child. Madeleine Simon again (2010:33) advises us that

touch can be a potent, wordless way of showing affection, and children, in these home years before school age is reached, have a great need of being held, cuddled, carried. Such physical contact with an adult who is meditating regularly is a real bonus because it brings a spiritual dimension to the intimacy between mother and child at a deep level, and completes the cycle of union.

In addition to these effects, further ways in which the child is exposed to informal teaching is through the practices of parents. These may include a daily rhythm of meditation where “no explanations are necessary, no verbal teaching given. This is part of the culture into which the child has been born and it is assimilated in the same way as the parents’ language and way of life” (Simon 2010:36). Or else, as Ernie Christie suggests (2008:23), deliberate times are set aside daily where televisions, radios and digital screens are turned off so that the children can develop an ease with silence.

These informal occasions will certainly act as a remote preparation for the more formal introduction to children and young people of meditation as a conscious discipline. There has been mention of various forms of meditation in our Catholic school curriculum for at least the last 25 years and students therefore might have had a passing acquaintance with the mantra-based meditation which is our focus here. However, it has not been encouraged and embraced by many schools to date. In only a few instances has it become a regular or even daily practice.

PREPARATION FOR TEACHING

Readying a school for the implementation of meditation is more than a day's work. Indeed it can take years for the right conditions to be present in the school so that the seed sown can germinate and develop into a robust plant. The time span is unpredictable and different schools are like the soil types in the well-known parable of the sower (Matthew 13). Nevertheless, there is a broad process that is recommended (Christie 2008:43).

An essential start is to get the support of the community. In the case of the school, this will mean information sessions for staff, parents and possibly governors. It will be an occasion to clarify the concept and to dispel misperceptions. Once there is a measure of support, a group of interested teachers can be invited to receive initial training and then to trial the practice in their classrooms.

Getting to the point of a trial practice will require a number of things from the teacher. Depending on the age of the learners in question, the teacher will need to approach the practice in a stepwise fashion, introducing the elements such as stillness, posture, breathing, silence, prayer word (mantra) and distractions one by one.

Some verbal explanation of these facets will be necessary, but a number of exercises advocated by Jeannie Battagin (2012:20, 55-56) will help to bring some of these lessons home. She describes relaxation and body awareness exercises, awareness of breathing and guided visualisations as useful for preparing children for the actual meditation session.

Another innovative way of drawing participants into a state of stillness and silence is the idea of 'stations of contemplation', a set of activities created by the Young Christian Meditators of Sydney for their 'silent' reflection centre at World Youth Day 2008. An example is the Station of Uninvited thoughts. A poster reads "Did you know that on average we have 60,000 thoughts each day? How long can you go without thinking?" An adapted clock with a blank face and only a second hand is on a wall or table. Participants are asked to observe the activity of their mind for a period of 60 seconds.

The readiness and receptivity of children and young people will differ with age and stage of faith development. Ernie Christie (2008:55-56) offers some useful pointers in this regard.

- Younger children in Foundation Phase (Gr R-3) have vivid imaginations and their ability to focus will be enhanced by the use of story, rhyme, music and song in preparing for meditation.
- Older primary school children (Gr 4-7) thrive in a trusting and supportive environment, and enjoy being actively involved in the preparation for meditation. They will ask more questions at this stage and the teacher will need to be able to guide them to a greater understanding of the benefits of meditation.
- Teenagers often tend to be rebellious and even agnostic as they struggle to forge their sense of religious identity, but will often recognise the value of meditation and be willing to engage deeply with related concepts.

As important as this kind of preparation, is the creation of a suitable environment. At times it may be possible to take a class to a specially prepared space such as a prayer room or chapel, but more often, especially if meditation is a regular practice, the teacher will have to make do in the classroom setting. A small table or desk or a rug on the floor can become a focal point on which are placed a lighted candle, an icon, a chime and special items that the children may be invited to bring. Playing suitable soft music as the space is being prepared or the children are settling themselves, may enhance the atmosphere.

Ernie Christie (2008:45 – slightly rephrased here) provides a teacher checklist of tasks prior to the meditation session to ensure a smooth process.

- Have the children been prepared for the experience adequately?
- What time of the day have you chosen for the meditation experience? Why?
- How will you position the students for the meditation?

- Will you have signs on the outside of your classroom door, such as “Meditation in progress. Silence please”?
- Do you phone the office and ask that calls not be put through for the period of meditation?
- Do you use a candle or other focus item to help gain the attention of the students?
- What will you use to signal the beginning and end of the meditation time?
- What lead-in routine will you put in place?
- Will you ask students to remove their shoes?
- Where will you position yourself to lead the meditation?
- At the end of the meditation time, what will you do to debrief the students?

MEDITATION PROGRAMMES IN SCHOOLS

What makes for a successful implementation of meditation in a school? Christie & Day (2011:38-41) offer some guidance from their wide experience.

- They mention first the need for resources. This may sound surprising, given that meditation is a simple practice that can be carried out anywhere, anytime and without anything in particular. But resources, like picture frames, help to bring out the silence and stillness into sharper relief. They also create interest and give the teacher confidence.
- Christian meditation is recommended as a foundation for the prayer life of the school, and indeed in the Townsville case, it has been introduced as a systemic practice. It should not, however, be seen in isolation from other forms of prayer, such as *lectio divina*, praying with icons, or vocal prayer, whether formal or spontaneous, private or in community. Laurence Freeman talks about meditation as the hub of the prayer

wheel, and other forms as the spokes that make contact with the person's everyday realities (WCCM 2012).

- Teacher formation is crucial and there should be plenty of opportunity and encouragement for teachers to attend workshops, courses and retreats. Because of large distances between Catholic schools in our country, the Catholic Institute of Education (CIE) is experimenting with a distance version of the six-week course offered by WCCM, School of Meditation.
- Formation of older students can also have a great impact, especially when they are invited to come up with their own programme for introducing meditation to younger ones. Jeannie Battagin (2012:97-101) describes how she enabled a class of Grade 7 students to introduce meditation to Grade 1 children. Part of her rationale was that a deeper understanding of and commitment to meditation would develop in the older learners.
- Schools need support, both initially from the local bishop and clergy, from the wider school community and from the teaching staff of the school. Reinvigorating the spiritual life of teachers often translates into experiences offered to students. Ongoing support needs to be provided by service bodies within Catholic education especially for leading 'designated' teachers who will inspire and energise others.

From their experience in the United Kingdom, Charles and Patricia Posnett (In Green 2011:56) present a threefold profile which is typical of a school where Christian meditation has been introduced most easily:

- A strong belief in the value of Christian meditation – usually led by the head teacher – not only as a way of educating the whole child, but also as a life-skill.
- A willingness on the part of the teachers to involve themselves personally in learning how to meditate and an enthusiasm in passing the gift on to the children.

- A realisation that this is not just a technique which may enable the child to be calmer and more attentive in an increasingly busy world, but a way of enabling children to know themselves better and thus to know God better.

CONCLUSION

Enough has been said in putting the case for teaching meditation to children and in sharing the experience of those who have taken up the task. If we agree that children are born with the capacity for contemplation, then it is our responsibility to ensure that the gift they have received does not atrophy, but is developed in age-appropriate ways at home and in school.

The way of meditation described in this paper is not, as we have seen, some new-fangled idea, but an essential element in the Christian prayer gradation, having its roots in Scripture and in the practice of the early Desert Fathers and Mothers.

Given the negative perception of many Christians about meditation, and the resistance to it that results, it may sound a challenging task to instil the practice in our children and young people. However, there are success stories that can motivate us and a ready source of support in the World Community for Christian Meditation to help us in this worthwhile and necessary task.

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Mysticism and Spiritual Formation: Developing a Simple Model of Spiritual Development

MARGARET A.L. BLACKIE

ABSTRACT

There are now a plethora of frameworks describing spiritual development. There is also a burgeoning of spiritual formation programmes available across the Christian spectrum. Some of the more popular authors such as Rohr and Bourgeault are placing emphasis on non-dual consciousness. Coming from a different angle, Rahner's view of ordinary mysticism suggests that mysticism both infuses and transcends all stages and states of spiritual development. How does one hold these ideas together? In this paper I suggest that a framework of spiritual development which allows for the emergence of authentic non-dual consciousness at higher levels held in creative tension with mysticism affords a robust scaffolding upon which to hang transformational spiritual formation programmes. The concept of mysticism provides a lens for discernment of spirits which will ultimately shape the individual experience. This paper develops these arguments and explores some of the practical implications for spiritual formation programmes.

INTRODUCTION

Spiritual formation in this context is referring specifically to spiritual formation in the Christian tradition. The discussion of mysticism therefore draws mostly on Christian authors, but mysticism itself draws us into the mystery of God which transcends the narrow confines of any religious

construct. Nonetheless, the framing in a particular religious context gives us access to language, theological understanding and spiritual practice which continue to be profoundly useful portals into the mystical. I myself am a Roman Catholic and I am steeped in the Ignatian spiritual tradition and this framing infuses the paper.

The argument proceeds from a proposal that stratification of spiritual or consciousness development is useful as an analytical tool. However, it is not particularly helpful in structuring tools or courses designed to foster spiritual development. One of the reasons is that the stratification requires an engagement of the ego which is directly counterproductive to spiritual formation. The basic premise provided herein is a simplified three phase model. I suggest that it is only really in Phase 1 that we can provide robust, universally applicable spiritual formation programmes, but the reality of Phases 2 and 3 significantly influence what must be present in Phase 1.

MODELS OF PSYCHO-SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

There are several systems which can be used to describe psycho-spiritual development. The majority of them are trying to link in various ways interior disposition; prayer practice; quality of encounter with God and, more recently, level of consciousness.

One simply cannot engage in this area without serious consideration of the work of Ken Wilber. His masterful integration of consciousness in ‘the great nest of being’ is an extraordinary piece of work (Wilber 2007, 2000). In this system, Wilber uses colours to denote the evolution of consciousness and gives 12 different distinct levels – transitioning from the red end of the spectrum which is the lowest level of consciousness – egocentrism, through amber – ethnocentrism, orange – sociocentrism, green – worldcentric (pluralist), in to teal and turquoise which are planetcentric and cosmocentric respectively. This finally gives way to indigo, violet, ultraviolet and clear light which are global mind, meta-

mind, supermind and overmind (these last four are not easy to explain and for our purposes it is enough to simply acknowledge their existence.)

Wilber's work takes religious experience into consideration (Wilber 2000), but it is a framework aimed at describing the evolution of consciousness. The connection to the spiritual is left implicit and is certainly not tied to any particular faith tradition. Richard Rohr in writing *The Naked Now* (Rohr 2009) draws heavily on Wilber's construct, but also uses the construct of Teresa of Avila which is laid out in *The Interior Castle* (Kavanaugh and Rodríguez 1979) to make the explicit connection between the development of consciousness and the development of the spiritual within a Christian context.

Teresa's seven mansions are a good description of the progress of faith development (Kavanaugh and Rodríguez 1979). They are, however, quite particular descriptions which may need some interpretation to apply more universally. As a quick summary:

Mansion 1 – the person is still under the egoic will. One is still very much under the influence and caught in the temptations of external success – health, wealth and happiness. To phrase this slightly differently, one is caught here in hedonic desire (Blackie 2013). One is looking for the thing that one hopes will make one feel good. There is an acknowledgement of things of faith, but the person at this stage may be in Fowler's mythical-literal faith (Fowler and Nipkow 1991). God is entirely anthropomorphised. If one is 'good', then one will be rewarded by God. Here, the person simply conforms to the religious system without questioning. Any conflict with religious authority is simply avoided.

Mansion 2 – Beginnings of the desire for companionship with Jesus. An active choice is made to follow a Christian path, but one finds oneself bumping up against one's own limitations. To use St Paul's imagery - the flesh and the spirit are at war with one another. The person is probably beginning to try to develop a prayer practice and finding it hard.

In Fowler's terms it is the start of the *individuating-reflective stage* (Fowler and Nipkow 1991). There is likely to be an active attempt to avoid mortal sin.

Mansion 3 – Now prayer practice is an established part of the routine. The move is from obedience to outer authority (usually the Church) to the establishment of personal conscience. One is likely to search out spiritual literature and one may well have a spiritual director. The focus of faith is not participation in the community of faith, but in one's relationship with God. A person will stay here until one suffers in some way. The suffering must be sufficient to precipitate a breakdown in the image of God, the image of self or of community (Rohr 2011).

Mansion 4 – this is a phase of inner transformation. Contemplation is no longer an effort. There is a strong desire for the things of God. It is the first mystical level. One becomes aware for the first time that prayer is not one's labour, but God's labour in one. In classical Christian language, this is the illuminative way. There is clarity and light. Mysticism is beginning. We are now at Fowler's conjunctive stage where conflict and paradox can be held (Fowler and Nipkow 1991). *Non-dual consciousness* is beginning to emerge (Rohr 2009).

Mansion 5 – union – and darkness. The felt sense of prayer 'working' disappears. One must journey on in good faith. This is only possible because one has come to trust the God who was labouring in one. This can be the second suffering but is probably not precipitated by external events but rather by an internal shift. The boundaries of the self are no longer quite so clearly defined. There is deep thirst for God but no sense of where God is and what God is doing.

Mansion 6 – It is here that Teresa describes rapture, ecstasies, locutions and other extraordinary phenomena. I would argue that there may be other forms of this stage which are less peculiar. It may be experienced as intense psychological events, which may be a form of suffering. All these things beyond one's control are experienced as being visited upon one by

God. The key thing at this stage is the continued pursuit of God for God's sake, rather than the pursuit of the happenings.

There is then a second chasm which must be transitioned through before the 7th mansion takes hold although this chasm is not so well defined in *The Interior Castle* and it is less clear exactly when this transition needs occur.

Mansion 7 – Spiritual marriage or transforming union – it is no longer I that live but Christ that lives in me. This is being 'in the flow'. The invitation is into a thoroughly infused living of an ordinary life. In Mansions 1-3 one is aware of making the effort to access God. In Mansions 4-6, it appears that God takes the initiative. In Mansion 7 real participation with God emerges.

In *The Naked Now*, Rohr breaks open the idea of non-dual consciousness for Western Christianity and explicitly links it to mysticism (Rohr 2009). So now we have a translation device between Wilber and Teresa of Avila. And from the argument that Rohr presents you get your toe in the door to non-dual consciousness at Wilber's green level (world-centric/pluralism) which is probably Teresa's mansion 4. But it really takes hold at the Turquoise level and mansion 5. Rohr's argument is clear that the aim of the path of spirituality is the emergence of non-dual consciousness and this is deeply linked to mysticism which is another way of speaking about [the?] qualitative experience of God.

There are, however, two inherent problems with such systems. Tying mysticism and experience of God too firmly into Wilber's evolution of consciousness is problematic in that there is no doubt that one's level of education impacts one's trajectory in the evolution of consciousness. One is far more likely to attain 'higher' levels of consciousness on Wilber's scale if one is more educated (Wilber 2007). How one reconciles that with the impact and spiritual insight evident in the writings of Thérèse of Liseux (Thérèse and Foley 2005), who is considered a Doctor of the

Roman Catholic Church, and Brother Lawrence (Lawrence 2013) to name just two, is not at all clear.

I won't labour this point, but simply acknowledge that there is a disconnect here which leaves me, as someone both highly educated and with the financial resources to access good spiritual teaching, deeply uncomfortable. Christianity simply cannot be a middle class project.

Turning to the theology of Karl Rahner, the conflation of the development of consciousness and the development of spirituality is problematic. Rahner's most famous quote 'The Christian of the future will be a mystic or not at all' (Rahner 1983) would suggest an educational elitist bias is incongruent with the preferential option for the poor so strongly endorsed by Catholic Social Teaching. Moreover, Rahner is very clear that he expects grace to be operating in the lives of every person regardless of whether they are consciously aware of it or not. One does not have to be a mystic in the classical sense – that is to say to be consciously operating out of a space in which one is aware of the way in which God takes the initiative in our lives in order to have access to God's grace (Rahner and Green 1975).

The second problem is the real launching point for the development of the argument I want to make here - that whilst systems such as spiral dynamics (Wilber 2000) and Teresa's mansions (Kavanaugh and Rodríguez 1979) can give us a great deal of insight into how spiritual development may proceed, we inevitably fall for one major weakness. We immediately begin to rank ourselves. The temptation is almost irresistible and, of course, it is sadly predictable how often we come out as a little more evolved than 'most'.

Any spiritual formation programme based on helping people move from one box to another is doomed to failure. It is doomed because it is an ego driven enterprise run by self-proclaimed highly-evolved people. But far more importantly, the ego is incapable of generating any kind of spiritual

growth. It cannot do it. The only way to achieve any kind of spiritual growth is through surrender and suffering (Rohr 2011).

If we go back to Teresa's system (Kavanaugh and Rodríguez 1979) there are seven levels, but there are two chasms which we will never be able to cross on our own. We can, through the practice of robust prayer, slowly work our way through the first three mansions, but we will stay there until one of two things happens, either our image of who I think I am shatters, or my image of God shatters. The shattering of the image of God is more common at this point, and it is almost always associated with the discovery that belief in God and the practice of prayer cannot insulate me from suffering. This suffering can take many guises. Illness, untimely death, loss of a job, divorce – it will be something that is beyond my control (see Rohr's definition of suffering, 2011), something that is painful, and something that does not change despite my prayer. This shatters the Santa Claus image of God – I have been good and faithful and yet God does not intervene to make things better.

So, for the purposes of this paper – Phase 1 is the formation that happens before that suffering event which shatters my image of God for the first time. I'll distinguish between Phases 2 and 3 a little later.

It turns out that these systems of spiritual development are a little like economic theory. They are tremendously helpful at mapping what has happened, but prove to be painfully limited as predictive models. Whilst one can see what the next level might be, it is not at all evident beyond what I will call phase 1, what the next step actually needs to be.

But there is a far bigger problem which we must admit to if we are going to do spiritual formation of any stripe. We can help people fairly effectively transition between the first three mansions – Phase 1 – but there is no programme which is universally effective in Phases 2 and 3.

Phase 1

Let us focus on Phase 1 for a moment. Something like the Alpha Course helps move people into Mansion 1 and perhaps from Mansion 1 to Mansion 2. *Hearts on Fire*, an introduction to Ignatian spirituality, run by the local Jesuit Institute will help people from Mansion 2 to Mansion 3. I would suggest that one of the most effective Phase 1 training programmes is the full Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius of Loyola. James Alison's course, *Jesus the Forgiving Victim*, is arguably one of the most robust theological foundations for Phase 1 training, but is not quite so strong in spiritual formation (Alison 2013).

Ideally our churches should be helping people transition to Mansion 3 and one would hope that in a well-established congregation that a fair majority of congregants would be in Mansion 3. Alas, this is simply not the case. At least it isn't in my experience. I'll err on the side of caution and speak only for my own parish church – the vast majority of the congregation is sitting in Mansion 1, completely unaware that Mansion 2 even exists, and they regard the people who are sitting in Mansion 4 or beyond as heretics. It is perhaps the reason so many arch-conservative Roman Catholics are so deeply shaken by the presence of Pope Francis – they have no frame of reference for understanding him. If they are caught in a paradigm where faith is largely dictated to by their own initiative, any system which speaks of grace and the initiative of God appears dangerous.

Carolyn Metzler, who is a spiritual director at the Center for Action and Contemplation, uses the image of a tricycle – the front wheel is experience, the two back wheels are Scripture and tradition. The combination of these three coupled with conscious engagement with life will propel a person forward in their faith journey (Metzler 2016b). This is a more dynamic version of the three legged stool image used by Richard Rohr (2009).

The evidence of the success of Phase 1 formation is that the person, well grounded in good theology and hermeneutics, can begin to trust their own experience of God and prayer to carry their faith journey forward. James Alison, in his discussion of the Emmaus story in Luke's gospel, argues strongly that this model is clearly demonstrated in this account. Cleopas and his companion have an encounter with the risen Christ which is then confirmed in interaction with the nascent church (the apostles) (Alison 2013). The locus of faith has become the recognition of the indwelling Spirit rather than the institutional church. Although the institutional church still plays a role in the way, Alison suggests, serving to confirm the experience of the individual (Alison 2013).

The primary guiding principle is individual conscience which is, of course, informed by Scripture and tested against tradition.

If we want to see the Kingdom of God manifest in our world, this Phase 1 formation is absolutely necessary. Note though that it is insufficient on its own. Simply providing Phase 1 formation will not, of itself, change the world.

Once the person has taken responsibility for their own faith journey i.e. they are consciously engaging with life, they have a prayer practice and are using their own sense of what is right to navigate, Phase 1 spiritual formation is done. There is nothing more we can actively do to help this person's spiritual development.

There is however a necessary caveat. We must be vigilant in the Phase 1 formation about one thing. We must be aware that we can get to Mansion 3 through egoic effort. The chasm between Mansion 3 and Mansion 4 is suffering, and this will be the first body blow to the ego. If we have not fostered the use of prayer practices which are steeped in surrender, the person has no safety rope. If the person has not begun to internalise the possibility that surrender may be the key to the journey into God, then the ego will reassert itself with vengeance and the person will most likely shake the dust from their feet and give up on faith entirely.

Furthermore, the institutional church (whatever the variety) will tend towards an external locus of authority rather than the conscience. For some that is an appeal to obedience; for others there are specific demands for the correct expression of belief; for others there are particular non-negotiable practices which must be adhered to.

Rahner clearly denies the power of ego to propel us into spiritual growth.

It would be unbelief if we tried with eudemonist or stoical intent to hasten or force the reconciled integration of our lives into our private existence, instead of patiently and confidently enduring the changing, the unpredictable, the contradictory and the unforeseeable, and renouncing all desire to cook our history by our own recipes.

It would be unbelief if we thought we could live in the social dimension by means of the ready-made ideology, whatever it might be, which would make us the absolutely sovereign planners of our future, instead of being (weary but hopeful) pilgrims constantly searching for the way to the absolute future so that then, when we have found it, we can appropriate it to ourselves in grace and undeservedly (Rahner and Green 1975).

If we try to sell Phase 1 formation like a commodity, as though it were the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven, people are right to be angry when they discover that it fails them. It is a useful and necessary phase. But for the breaking open of mysticism as a stage of consciousness, rather than a fleeting taste, the lessons learnt in Phase 1 formation must fail us. Perhaps a good example of this is the criticism so often laid at the feet of the charismatic churches. Too often they are filled with feel good stories, but they cannot abide the necessary pain of growing up.

Lucy Peppiatt, a British theologian who belongs to a charismatic church, writes

Charismatics love the immediate, the emotions, and the stories. They love the results — the testimonies of ‘This is real!’ If this dominates

our life with God and our lives together, what do we do when this all dries up? What happens when we feel numb, sometimes for months, or years on end, or when we don't have the stories, or when our disappointments are so acute that we can't bear to hear another story of someone's victory? (Peppiatt 2016)

What has happened far too often is that the person who suffers creates a threat to the community's prevailing image of God. There is no desire to know about a God who is vulnerable - the desire is for the omnipotent God. In some cases, the person will feel they have to withdraw from the space because it is just too painful to hear feel-good stories in the midst of acute suffering. In more extreme cases the person is subtly shunned – if they are suffering it must be because they failed to pray 'correctly'.

The foundations laid in Phase 1 really matter because they must be able to support Phases 2 and 3. Phase 1 is experienced largely as being initiated by myself. I am increasing my efforts in prayer; I am strengthening ties with a faith community; I am trying to find my own unique response to God's call. There is a feedback from God – the experience of spiritual consolation is real. However, for the most part regardless of the theology of the framework in which I am formed, my attitude will pretty much be – God loves me and wants good things for my life. There is a great deal of certainty and surety associated with this phase.

This is necessary to build a strong sense of the trustworthiness of God. The use of verses such as Isaiah 43 (I have called you by your name, you are mine) and Jeremiah 29:11 (I know the plans I have for you) are common and are deeply comforting. Rahner strongly endorses the idea that we need to work in the current worldview to make the God proposal viable (Rahner and Green 1975). This is the proper task of Phase 1 formation. But in itself it is unsustainable.

Phase 2

The Phase 2 transition begins with an experience of acute suffering. As a result of external circumstances such as disease, divorce, job loss, untimely death etc., the hard won belief that God is trustworthy, shatters. God fails to answer a perfectly reasonable prayer. This is usually experienced as a loss of faith. Because my image of God has shattered, it feels as though God has shattered. At this point people have one of three responses. Some become strident atheists. Some try to recapture the earlier naïve enthusiasm (which is as effective as trying to recapture romance!) or find convoluted justifications as to why God would not answer this prayer (i.e. God has a plan which specifically requires this dreadful happening). A small minority, with the help of a holding community, consciously accept the discomfort of the liminal space.

Only those who are helped to stay in the liminal space will make it to Phase 2.

Phase 2 is experienced as largely initiated by God. God is offering invitations. And we choose to participate. Phase 2 is characterised by a series of liminal spaces. There will be multiple undoings. Images of self will shatter; images of community will shatter; images of God will shatter. The further one walks this path the less certain one is of anything other than the grace of God, and yet there are moments of profound consolation which give one the courage to submit to the next liminal experience. It is profoundly disorienting, but at the same time the centre of gravity shifts from trust in myself, to trusting God's initiative in me. This is the emergence of mysticism. It will necessitate a radical letting go of ego-control. This is profoundly counter-cultural in a western individualist mindset.

One can see then how something like the prosperity gospel utterly fails in this zone. Phase 2 is not about worldly success. Fundamentally it is about the beginning of the realisation that the Kingdom of God isn't primarily a promise for where we will go when we die, it is to be realised here (Alison 2013). We begin to see the emergence of an engaged spirituality – the

contemplative in action. Nonetheless, periods of withdrawal may be necessary for the transition through some of the liminal spaces.

Phase 2 is a series of letting-go events. As I begin to see that the whole of my life is slowly but surely being redeemed through the grace of God, I begin to actively engage the interior spaces of discomfort.

As the Sufi poet Rumi puts it: ‘Your task is not to seek for love, but merely to seek and find all the barriers within yourself that you have built against it.’

On finding a new barrier to love within myself all I can do is pray for the grace of God and wait until I am invited into the liminal space. The way in which we navigate through Phase 2 varies enormously. The reason for this is that we internalise and make sense of our world in different ways.

A slight that I might shrug off easily, may be experienced as a major blow to another. So the depth and variation in wounding and wounding patterns, is infinite. And thus the path through the barriers we erect to protect our wounded spaces is likewise infinitely varied. The only real path is a commitment to engage with the liminal spaces in the order in which they arise in myself.

Nonetheless, I would argue that there are two clear elements which must be addressed in Phase 2. They will take at least several attempts before the grace fully takes root. The first is coming to accept my own shadow. Our wounds shape us in particular ways; we normally resist these strongly. We must come to accept the wounded self as it is. Secondly, there must be some resolution and acceptance of the things that have shaped us – this will almost certainly take the form of some kind of forgiveness process.

Phase 3

Phase 3 is akin to what the Orthodox Church speaks of as divinisation. It is ultimately the lived experience of participating with God in order to bring

about God's Kingdom on earth (Kavanaugh and Rodríguez 1979; Thérèse and Foley 2005; Merton 1972). This is about being fully present in everything I do – there is no distinction here between the sacred and the profane. Everything belongs. Everything is necessary. Everything is redeemable.

Breaking into Phase 3 can be exemplified by Thomas Merton's experience in Louisville

In Louisville, at the corner of Fourth and Walnut, in the centre of the shopping district, I was suddenly overwhelmed with the realisation that I loved all those people, that they were mine and I theirs, that we could not be alien to one another even though we were total strangers. It was like waking from a dream of separateness, of spurious self-isolation in a special world, the world of renunciation and supposed holiness... This sense of liberation from an illusory difference was such a relief and such a joy to me that I almost laughed out loud... I have the immense joy of being man, a member of a race in which God Himself became incarnate. As if the sorrows and stupidities of the human condition could overwhelm me, now I realise what we all are. And if only everybody could realise this! But it cannot be explained. There is no way of telling people that they are all walking around shining like the sun (Merton, 2009a).

The transition into Phase 3 begins with the experience of a new level of disorientation. Where the Phase 2 transition is the shocking realisation that what I thought was God turned out to be an illusion, the Phase 3 transition is the realisation that the parts of myself I have never questioned turn out to be contingent. The very ground of my being, as I have understood it, collapses. There are no words for this experience – it is fundamentally disorientating. What I thought was a solid foundation turns out to be a trap door which has just collapsed under me. As I give into it, having learnt to trust God through liminal space over and over again, there is nothing to do but to surrender even to this.

What emerges is what Merton describes as a ‘hidden wholeness’ (Merton 1962). But it is only accessible through complete surrender even of the very idea I have of myself. And as I do that I learn the meaning of Catherine of Genoa’s words: ‘my deepest me is God’ (Flinders 2009). And for Augustine of Hippo: ‘God is more intimate to me than I am to myself’ (Flinders 2009).

It is worthwhile remembering that in the transition into Phase 2 I have already accepted that any image I have of God is temporary and limited. A new support and a new image forms which gives me a way of being in the world, but I never again think of it as being solid. And as happened in Phase 2, it is likely that the trapdoor experience will happen more than once. Pema Chödrön, the Buddhist nun, uses the term *positive groundlessness* (Chödrön 2002) for this. It is the discovery that at the very heart of my being is mystery, but it is mystery than can be trusted.

Here paradox is the most appealing form of truth (Rohr 2012) and these sorts of quotes begin to make deep sense.

Thomas Merton: ‘We cannot achieve greatness unless we lose all interest in being great’ (Merton 2009b). ‘Unless a grain of wheat shall die, it shall remain but a grain’ (John 12:24); Julian of Norwich ‘...all is well and all shall be well and all manner of things shall be well’ (Norwich 1998).

Rahner describes the deep essence of what is happening as follows:

When a person, in the Spirit and by grace, experiences himself as the one spoken by God to himself and understands this as his true essence to the concreteness of which the gratuitous grace of God’s self-communication also belongs, and when he admits this existence and freely accepts it in prayer as the word of God in which God promises himself to man (sic) with his Word, his prayer is already (in one sense, to be elaborated later) dialogic, an exchange with God. The person then hears himself as God’s address, heavy with God’s self-promise, in the grace-filled self-communication of God by faith, hope and love. He does not hear

‘something’ in addition to himself as one already presupposed in his dead facticity, but hears himself as the self-promised word in which God sets up a listener and to which he speaks himself as an answer (Rahner and Green 1975).

It is probably useful to note that whilst all phases of the spiritual journey may require an engagement with the psychological, the transition into phase 3 is the one which may be experienced as the most psychologically disorientating. But a purely psychological approach is unlikely to prove sufficient to navigating this liminal space. It is most likely that any major psychological event such as trauma or abuse will have emerged as requiring psychological attention before this point is reached. Nonetheless, one should not underplay the psychological component of the spiritual journey and appropriate professional assistance should be sought if such issues arise at whatever stage they emerge.

IMPLICATIONS FOR SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Because Phase 2 and 3 are essentially experienced as being initiated by God and are deeply personal, it is very difficult to provide any kind of programme which can reliably facilitate growth. Essentially all we can do is to provide examples – in other words encourage people to read the mystics. However, what does catalyse the process is having a holding space in which these ideas can be explored. At this point, although the initiation [initiative?] does come from God, spiritual growth is strongly linked to interpersonal relationships. It is here that ‘soul friends’ become vital. It takes tremendous courage to stay in the liminal spaces. We will try to avoid it every single time it happens, unless we have someone who is willing to stay with us in the dark. Most of us need someone who bears witness to the significance of unknowing, someone who trusts the process of sitting in liminal space. The most explicit form in which this takes shape is the ministry of spiritual direction.

In order to allow for the possibility of Phases 2 and 3 we must provide a very particular kind of scaffolding in Phase 1. This scaffolding must include prayer practice which leads to surrender, and it must have a theology which leads into mystery. It must also include explicit teaching on discernment of spirits. Phase 1 formation must lead the person into spiritual adulthood. It is not an end in itself, it is the start of the spiritual journey, but a strong formation is necessary. Rahner again is helpful here.

This person does not need to have undergone the transformation so that he is in pure harmony with God's decrees—which he does not know and indeed cannot know exactly—before he comes into God's presence. He may, in the act of surrender called prayer, place himself before God just as he is, the one who must give himself to God precisely in his concreteness, therefore the pressures and needs of whose life concern some particular thing which seems necessary to him as opposed to something else, and this the more so in that he cannot know whether, with his desire for this particular thing, he is not really willed by God in such a way that this divine willing is willed to be fulfilled in man's concreteness and merely as a willing sublimated into single-minded surrender (Rahner and Green 1975).

In terms of prayer practice, there are two distinct options. I am most familiar with the Ignatian paradigm. It clearly does provide the necessary scaffolding. In the final phase, the contemplation to attain the love of God, the anchoring prayer is the *suscipe*: 'Take Lord, receive, all my liberty, my understanding and my entire will, all that I have and possess. You give it all to me; to you I return it. All is yours, dispose of it entirely according to your will. Give me only your love and your grace for that is enough for me' (Ivens and Hughes 2004).

Ignatian spirituality then clearly affords the appropriate Phase 1 scaffolding. The prayer which it develops is ultimately an act of surrender as I am to a God who is mystery. It provides a solid framework for the discernment of spirits and is seated in the practice of spiritual direction.

The alternative is the practice of Centering Prayer. If one reads Thomas Keating (1994) or Cynthia Bourgeault (2009) it is clear that the act of letting [go?] of one's thoughts is understood as a practice of kenosis. It is the twice daily practice of 20 minutes of attempted kenosis which rewires the brain for the emergence of a life of surrender. It is also strongly encouraged that one should practice in a group, thereby subtly ensuring a community of practice to help one through the liminal spaces.

Spiritual direction in Phase 1 is tremendously useful. If one examines the gold standard of spiritual training in the form of *The Practice of Spiritual Direction* by Barry and Connelly (2012) it clearly points to a spiritual direction practice which encourages the directee to pay direct attention to God. This emphasis is not accidental. It is the shifting of attention towards God which will be the guiding rope through the first encounter with liminal space. The emphasis in this form of spiritual direction slowly moves from 'what am I doing?' to 'what is God doing in me?', thereby preparing for the emergence of Phase 2.

As Phase 2 takes hold, the spiritual direction conversation may change as language and/or imagery may become harder to access. There may well be a period of 'unknowing' where any attempt to put language on what is actually going on in fact moves one away from God. In Phases 2 and 3 there are no real do's and don't's with respect to spiritual direction. It becomes far more about this person in this space.

Discernment is the only guide. The task of the spiritual director is simply to hold the space to allow the person time to discover what God might be doing.

Carolyn Metzler using the image of the migration of cranes to shed light on finding our way in this Phase in 'But the cranes don't use maps either. They rely on instinct, deep wisdom and the leadership of others. And somehow, they span extraordinary distance to be who they are and do what they need to do' (Metzler 2016a).

If we are to communicate at all in Phases 2 and 3 we are almost certainly going to resort to metaphor of some sort. It is obviously insufficient to describe what is happening, but in the attempt to describe either the experience or the effect of experience we solidify the impact (Hanson 2009).

In the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius, there are rules for discernment of spirits for the first and second weeks, but none for the third and fourth (Ivens and Hughes 2004). The reason is not that the second week rules apply for the remaining two weeks, but rather that the experience is so particular that any rules written would be self-contradictory (Ivens 1998). Dryness in praying through the Passion (Third Week) can equally be a lack of engagement or a genuine spiritual gift. Not only is the grace experienced differently by different people, but it can be different for the same person at two different times. Phase 2 and 3 discernment is similar in nature. No guidelines can be given; the way through must be actively ‘felt’ and discovered through trial, error and collective wisdom.

IS ACTIVE FORMATION IN PHASES 2 AND 3 POSSIBLE?

It is my contention, based on over a decade of working in spiritual direction and spiritual formation, that if spiritual formation in Phases 2 and 3 is to be successful it must have four elements. Firstly, it must encourage a prayer form which is the practice of surrender. Secondly, it must have a theological framework in which the mystery of God is central. Thirdly, it must foster the discernment of personal experience. Fourthly, it must actively foster the development of the safety net of communal worship, spiritual friendships and possibly, but not necessarily, individual spiritual direction.

There is no formula to follow to help people move through Phase 2 towards Phase 3. However, *The Living School*, designed by Richard Rohr, Cynthia Bourgeault and James Finley is intended to do just this. Their method is worth noting. There is no ‘path’. They actively select people who have transitioned into Phase 2, or at the very least are in the

disorientation of liminal space after Phase 1. They supply a curriculum which draws on the perennial or wisdom tradition, essentially offering reflections and specific readings which provide a far wider frame for Christianity than the standard fare one receives in the pew on a Sunday.

It is explicitly and intentionally Trinitarian in its approach. I have no doubt Rahner would thoroughly approve of this foundation as it was a significant concern of his that the doctrine of the Trinity could be quietly dispensed of and few would notice its loss. This theological stance immediately scaffolds mystery. We have many metaphors for the Trinity but none leave us with a conviction that we ‘understand’ how it works in any rational sense.

Within *The Living School*, Contemplation, mysticism and non-dual consciousness are used almost as synonyms, certainly as metaphors for the unitive experience of God. The basic premise and outlook is that we are called to be disciples of Jesus, and this means to make manifest the Kingdom of God here and now. And in some senses the interweaving of the various terms is useful. The prayer practice most strongly endorsed is Centering Prayer although other kenotic apophatic methods are also encouraged.

The final piece of their method is the assembly of small groups of people who are encouraged to connect physically at the symposia and intensives and then are encouraged to connect virtually.

The geographical limitations definitely undercut the significance of the interpersonal dynamic which is a real drawback. Nonetheless, the impact of the interpersonal relationships is still substantial.

CONCLUSION

I hope it is evident in this paper that if we raise mysticism beyond the reach of the ordinary person in the pew, we do our world a tremendous disservice. Rahner’s view of ordinary mysticism and the movement of grace through our world open to all, regardless of confession of faith,

allows for the development of a robust model of spiritual formation which begins with those who would ask with Jesus' disciples 'Teach us how to pray'. If we take the possibility of the ordinary mystic seriously, our Phase 1 spiritual formation must be rooted in a prayer practice of surrender, a theology which accesses the mystery of God (a well formed Trinitarian approach will probably be the best starting point), a way of reading Scripture which allows for contradiction and paradox, and a community of like-minded seekers.

This simple model, inspired by Rahner's theology, gives us a way of critiquing existing spiritual programmes, and, I think, points to potential gaps which may exist in the training programmes for spiritual directors. Finally, it will also help those who are in Phases 2 and 3 to identify themselves and to more consciously seek connection with those who are on a similar path. Reading the mystics is tremendously useful, but for most of us it is insufficient in the absence of the community of practice regardless of how that community is constructed.

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Medical Science and Spirituality in Dialogue

MARLENE L. MARTIN

ABSTRACT

The significance of spiritual belief and counselling as an important component of medical science is contentious, and leads to powerful opinions pro and con. There are, of necessity, many interested parties involved in the debate, including doctors, medical staff, pastors and priests and even the patients themselves. This study examines the feasibility and desirability of spirituality being introduced into medical wards and doctors' consulting rooms in a South African setting. The effect of medical crises on spirituality is examined as are the recognised symptoms and causes of burnout in both pastors and medical doctors. Conclusions drawn are that even though dialogue between spirituality and medical science is desirable, it is impractical in South Africa due to diverse religious beliefs and extreme symptoms of exhaustion and burnout expressed by both medical practitioners and pastors who are unable and unwilling to take on extra tasks beyond their training and expertise.

INTRODUCTION

Two thousand years ago the Roman poet Juvenal said *mens sana in corpore sano*, which translates as “a sound mind in a sound body” (Coffey 1976:126). The Apostle Paul also recognised the importance of spiritual, psychological as well as physical wellbeing as recorded in II Timothy 1:7 “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.”¹

A recent conference hosted by the Spirituality Association of South Africa dealt with a number of aspects of spirituality. The theme for this particular conference was an exploration of holiness; I therefore felt that Pope John Paul II's paper on the *Theology of the Body* gave relevance to a discussion related to Medical Science and Spirituality. Holiness, the Pope points out is always expressed through the body. All human communication, Pope John Paul II says, is in fact conducted through our bodies; it is how we share our spiritual dimension. He states that Jesus taught us this lesson when He pronounced that "this is my body which is given up for you." It was also in this body that He expressed his love for his Father and it was the sacrifice of his body that brought about our redemption (Weigel 1999:1).

There is currently an initiative in South Africa and abroad to form a closer relationship between spirituality and medicine. The proponents hope to achieve this by introducing *spirituality*² or *religion* (the two terms are frequently used interchangeably)³ into medical wards and doctors consulting rooms, by training nursing staff and by introducing the subject of spirituality into medical and paramedical curricula. There are some (Puchalski 2001; McCormick 2011) who argue that religious beliefs and spiritual practices are powerful influences in the lives of many people who are diagnosed with serious illness⁴ and who struggle with decisions about end of life care or about their medical care and treatment options. Biggar (2015:229-233) argues that religion deserves a place in secular medicine. One of the suggestions made by those who would like to introduce religion into medical wards is that trainee doctors should have a spiritual element in their teaching curriculum in order to be able to engage with their patients regarding religion and spirituality. Puchalski *et al* (2009:885-904) suggest that primary palliative care, as well as nursing and medical professionals should include spirituality and health in their curricula. Koenig, Hooten, Lindsay-Calkins & Meador (2010) claim that recent statistics indicate that no fewer than 90% of US medical schools intimated that they have "courses" on spirituality and health in their curricula.

These “courses” are not well defined and can perhaps be just a short sentence or section on the subject or a lecture or two a year.

Strong opinions regarding the feasibility or the ethics of such a merging of medicine and spirituality are firmly held by scholars, ethicists, medical doctors and hospital chaplains. Earp (2015) for instance warns that there is no place for religion in a hospital ward. He goes on to question the feasibility of such a merger based on the vast amount of belief systems and religious customs that people hold and the dangers of making religious decisions instead of sound medical decisions that can lead to fatal consequences. He comes to the conclusion that what some of the proponents of a merger of religion and medicine are really suggesting is a merger with “moral philosophy” (Earp 2015:4).⁵ Vast amounts of research and publication are being released encouraging and promoting concepts such as “information on how health professionals can integrate spirituality into patient care” (Koenig 2013). These initiatives are targeting physicians, nurses, chaplains, pastoral counsellors, mental health professionals and social workers.

In this article, I rely on the research conducted as a part of my Master’s degree in Theology in Christian Ethics which focused on the sick and the dying in dialogue with the medical profession, and later a Doctoral degree in Christian Spirituality which also involved dialogue with care givers, medical professionals and the patients in their care (Martin 2014). There has been ongoing consultation with medical practitioners, nurses, and care givers over a period of 10 years during this research. Currently, it is being expanded by the writer during counselling sessions at Hospice as a volunteer with medical staff, care givers and nurses.

THE SOUTH AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE

The reality is that an emergency Intensive Care Unit (ICU) in any hospital in South Africa is generally totally overwhelmed with gunshot victims,

miscarriages, accident victims and seriously ill and dying patients.⁶ The doctors and nursing staff are singularly focused on saving lives and not souls. I am informed by medical doctors and have observed at Hospice that those who request the attendance of a spiritual advisor or their pastor or priest are generally accommodated but medical doctors feel that giving spiritual advice or guidance is not the role of the medical practitioner.

In the light of the drastic shortage of medical doctors in South Africa,⁷ and the continuing crisis in medical care across the country, even though the suggestion to introduce religion into hospital wards is being punted in conferences and colleges across the country, according to many doctors interviewed during my research as well as the study of articles in medical journals,⁸ the feasibility of bringing religion into medical training and medical wards and the suggestion that doctors offer spiritual support is not really possible or desirable. Doctors and nursing staff are currently leaving medicine due to total exhaustion and disillusionment (Phalime 2014) and they would be unable and unwilling to take on extra functions of religious advisor, counsellor, priest, pastor and spiritual advisor at hospitals bursting at the seams where patients sometimes wait for hours and even days to see a doctor. Mashile (2016:36) reports that there was only one doctor on duty in Barberton General Hospital on a busy Saturday morning when a near death experience that he witnessed necessitated urgent medical care. Whilst that one patient was being attended to, according to Mashile, many more patients were “pouring into the hospital” (Mashile 2016:36).

Examining the link between spirituality and medical science is one thing and perfectly acceptable to the medical fraternity. However, suggesting that medical doctors should practice a spiritual role in busy consulting rooms and emergency hospitals is being strongly opposed by the medical profession, ethicists and cognitive scientists (Earp 2015). Doctors understandably feel that they are not trained and in fact do not want to be trained as spiritual advisors. Many are not believers in the supernatural and they cannot respond positively to pressure to be religious priests, pastors and spiritual advisors.

EXAMINATION OF THE CLOSE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SPIRITUAL BELIEF AND PHYSICAL DISEASE

According to O'Connor, McCarroll-Butler, Meakes, Davis & Jadad (2002:227-232) significant research has been conducted in order to understand how spirituality affects the medical condition of the patient, and they confirm that there is a link between medical science and spirituality. They suggest that most of the research in this regard is being conducted by medical science and not by "chaplains" or "theologians" (O'Connor & Meakes 2005:12). The bulk of medical research on the link between spirituality and pathophysiology concerns itself with the effects of spirituality on health (Musgrave 2005:269-270). However, perhaps with a better understanding of how the medical condition of people impacts their spirituality, there would be more clarity in understanding how the two fields of study could complement each other.

Being persuaded by Schneider's (1989:693) argument that Spirituality is a holistic discipline in that its enquiry into human spiritual experience is not limited to religious fields or the "interior life," a study conducted for a doctorate degree sought out the participation of the medical profession in the search for understanding how sickness impacted the spiritual world of the sufferer and on the clergy who minister to them as well as the medical doctors who treat them physically.

Background

The human body is frail and the spark of human life can be snuffed out in a moment by accident or by sudden onset of terminal illness or there can be a diagnosis that leads to situations of long illness with concomitant suffering and pain.⁹ The physical part of humanity is temporal; it is not designed to last forever. It is subject to sickness, disease¹⁰ and ultimately death. The living organism is never static; instead there is a constant

process of change, influenced by many factors, some of which are entirely beyond our control.

Medical doctors consulted pointed out contributing factors to disease such as sedentary lifestyle causing diabetes, heart disease and hypertension and the devastation caused by the search for euphoria through the abuse of alcohol, prescription and recreational drugs and also the degradation of our environment. On the other hand modern biomedicine fads moralise by presenting claims about healthy living styles combating disease with diet, exercise and yogic practices. In addition, a factor of immense importance to the doctors consulted, were concerns of drug resistant bacteria and viruses.

Medical Emphasis on Empiric and Scientific Evidence

Historically, medical professionals have demonstrated a profound scepticism to the effects of spiritual belief on disease. Doctors insist that clinical medicine is *evidence based*, and that this does not include anecdotal evidence. In fact, Earp (2015) says that the mere mention of the subject of religion having a place in secular medicine is enough to make some people “feel a shiver going down their spines.”

Indeed, within the profession the current feeling is that, until a few decades ago, clinical medicine was paternalistic and based on so-called expert opinion, whereas today it is based on controlled clinical trials (Scharf 2014). The dogmatic adherence to clinical trials has been called into question by some leading medical experts (Muckart 2013).

Van Niekerk (2010:479), the Editor of *South African Medical Journal*, addresses the subject of “truth” in an editorial headed: *Delusions, what truth to believe*. He quotes Gardener who postulates that there are four established domains of truth: *rhetorica* - the truth resulting from debate, *mystica* – truth in spiritual and customary belief, *mathematica* – the application of scientific principles and *empirica* - which is truth arising from observation and experimentation. These principles are dogmatically

held by the medical profession who avidly seek the truth in their task of saving lives.

It has become increasingly evident that it is difficult, and perhaps unwise, to concentrate exclusively on empiric and scientific evidence in treating disease, while ignoring the mystic. McCormick (2011:1-8) has introduced the subject of spirituality and medicine into the curriculum of the Washington School of Medicine. Research shows, he points out, that a confident attitude to religion and spirituality leads to better health and psychological well-being, as opposed to the outcomes of those involved in spiritual struggle. The mystic element of religion and its relation to illness however is not always a positive one as can be witnessed by the Salem witch trials where the catalyst for the mayhem was the belief that there was an external force causing disease (Woolf 2000).

However, the actual merger of spirituality into hospital wards is hotly debated and some conclude that what is being brought into the hospital ward is “philosophy” and not “religion.” If it is just philosophy says Earp (2015), then it is inoffensive but unoriginal. Medical practitioners consulted on the subject are concerned about the conflict between some religious beliefs and good medical practice.

For instance the issue of blood transfusions is taboo for some religions where medicine would prescribe blood transfusion in certain instances as mandatory and in fact life-saving. In such instances it would be unwise to be confused by issues relating to spirituality when the result could mean death. Paediatricians are also concerned regarding religion and medicine forming an alliance, and are calling for exemptions granted on religious grounds to be repealed where the religion is causing confusion regarding the duty to provide medical treatment, stating that religion and medicine frequently conflict. Incidences of conflict mentioned are where parents refuse medical treatment for their children. They mention concern regarding religious exemptions to child abuse and neglect laws and are

concerned regarding the issue of public funding of alternative unproven religious or spiritual healing practices (Anntomaria & Weise 2016:962).

EFFECTS OF MEDICAL CRISIS ON SPIRITUALITY

The research conducted for a doctoral degree which aimed to establish the effect of medical crisis on spirituality did not tackle the issue of theodicy where the argument seeks to vindicate God, but rather it examined the mind-set of the sick when they feel abandoned by God (Martin 2014). The study sought to understand the impact of desperate illness on human spirituality in the light of the quotation by Koenig (2008:21):

Doctor, you say that I have a terminal cancer and there isn't any more that you can do for me. You say that I have two or three months left. What happens then? I'm afraid of the pain and suffering ahead. I'm afraid that I haven't been a good person. I'm afraid that God doesn't love me, since my prayers for healing have gone unanswered. I'm afraid of where I'm going after I die. I'm afraid of leaving my daughter and son, and never seeing them again. I'm afraid doctor; I'm so afraid.

Kubler-Ross (1969) in dealing with the psychological responses to illness suggests that there are stages in dealing with a diagnosis of terminal illness which are denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance.

However, doctors, medical staff in hospitals and hospices as well as pastors who participated in the research agreed that in addition to these responses, imminent death or a diagnosis of illness are frequently the catalysts for a sense of abandonment or a sense of hopelessness on the part of the individual.¹¹ Pargament *et al* (2001) suggest that patients involved in a "religious struggle" have a higher risk of mortality. They identify forms of struggle that are predictive of early mortality. Patients who believe that they are alienated from God or being punished by God and that is the reason they are sick, and those individuals who have been led to believe that their

sickness is the result of demonic activity, have a 19% to 28% higher risk of dying during the 2 years that the research was being conducted. These reactions are common to Christians and non-Christians alike.

However, a phenomenon mostly unique to Christians is the feeling that they deserve more or better from God and they are disappointed, angry or hurt that they should be sick. They are worried that this situation could be as a result of their “lack of faith”¹² and they frequently run from healer to healer in an attempt to manipulate God into changing His mind. This phenomenon is frequently a side effect of the trait of narcissism where the individual is convinced of their eternal youth, beauty, power, wealth, admiration and even their superior position “in Christ” (II Corinthians 5:17). The patient has a sense of entitlement¹³ to perfect health and the lament is frequently heard that God has promised and they are “claiming” (Johnson & Clark 2011) their healing.

The syndrome of a sense of entitlement from God is encapsulated in the *prayer* by Tony Kushner at the 1994 Episcopal National day of Prayer for AIDS in the Church of St John the Divine in New York City:

God, a cure would be nice. Reconstitute the shattered... Return to the cattle, the swine and the birds the intestinal parasite, the invader of lungs, the eye blinder, the brain devourer, the detacher of retinas. Rid even the cattle and the birds of these terrors; heal the whole world. Now. Now. Now. Now.

Protect the injection drug user, the baby with AIDS, the sex worker, the woman whose lover was infected, the gay man whose lover was infected; protect the infected lover, protect the casual contact, the one night stand, the pick-up, the put-down, protect the fools who don't protect themselves who don't protect others: YOU protect them. The misguided too, the misinformed, the ambivalent about living, show them life not death (...)

You can. You, after all, are God. This is not too much to ask...We had a pact; you engendered us (Bouchard 1999:24-25).

As shocking as the above *prayer* by Kushner may be, he is not alone in this attitude of entitlement. Yeomans (Hollenweger 1988:358) suggests that asking God for healing¹⁴ but also stating in your prayer directed to God “if it is your will” is not acceptable; these words show a distinct lack of faith and in his opinion there should be no ifs or buts but only demands in your prayers for healing. He claims that David in Psalm 6:2-9 was entitled to healing and that he claimed his healing the way that Christians should demand healing from God today.

There is another danger in some religious teaching. Some preach that sickness and disease is the result of the activity of Satan in their lives and patients often feel shattered at the thought that they are “demon possessed or oppressed” and that this is why they are sick (Hagin 1984). This is a particularly cruel teaching by some preachers as the psychological, spiritual and physical reactions are to create a sense of alienation from God at a time when they are most desperately in need of comfort.

Spiritual desolation is the result of this attitude for the patient and for those responsible for their medical treatment and spiritual care.

A common thread noted throughout the research was that medical doctors and pastors admit to exhaustion caused by the incessant demands of those who are sick, particularly those who were told to “live victoriously” (Gifford 2011:67) by their teachers and pastors over the years. The condition described is known as burnout as detailed by the Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach, Jackson & Leiter 1996). The possibility of burnout brings into question the feasibility or desirability of adding extra pressure on either side, to pastors or to doctors, by merging the two functions and suggesting that the doctors perform a spiritual role or that the pastors participate in dialogue with the medical practitioner. Instituting these dual roles is likely to increase the likelihood of burnout in both

pastors and doctors. Selye (1956:375) argues that it is not so much the stress of life that is the killer, but an inability to deal with that stress. The inability to deal with stress will be heightened if the doctor is called upon to practice a dual role of medical person and spiritual advisor and if the pastor is expected to become involved in medical matters. In order to gain more clarity on the condition of burnout and how this condition could be compounded by the additional work load of spiritual advisor in the hospital ward, consulting room or hospice ward, or even the counselling room of the pastor, the diagnosis of burnout is discussed more fully below.

BURNOUT

Maslach *et al* (1996) address three general scales in their measurement of burnout made up of exhaustion, cynicism and inefficacy. Symptoms are similar to depression according to some psychologists (Bianci, Hingray, Truchot & Laurent (2013:782-787). In a career path chosen as service to others, the state of burnout renders the sufferer with a devastating diminished capacity to perform even standard functions or to show compassion towards the sick (Schaufeli, Leiter & Maslach (2008:207).

Burnout and depression in doctors, pastors and clergy is well documented. The issue of clergy burnout has been hotly debated by some (Fichter 1984) who deny the existence of clergy burnout, and others (Coate 1989; Davey 1995; Evans 1993) who suggest that stress and burnout in the clergy is a very real problem (Francis, Loudon & Rutledge 2004:5-19). Medical doctors likewise face increasing pressure in the workplace leading to stress and burnout.

Selye (1956) maintains that nursing staff and medical doctors have the highest stress levels of all professions, particularly medical staff in intensive care units. Medicine is frequently perceived as “magic” and the cure¹⁵ should be instantaneous.

Cole & Carlin (2009:1414-5) give a rather sad definition of burnout in medical practitioners;

burnout is the index of dislocation between what people are and what they have to do. It represents an erosion in values, dignity, spirit, and will and erosion of the human soul.

Freudenberger & Richelson (1980:159-160) define burnout as

to fail, wear out or become exhausted by making excessive demands on energy, strength or resources.

These symptoms of burnout were witnessed during research over a period of 10 years in hospices firstly as a volunteer and later for a Master's degree in Theological Ethics where the topic was women and children infected by HIV/Aids, and the Church as being active in ministry to them. The research was conducted with the sick and the carers in St Francis Care Centre in Boksburg and Sparrow Village in Maraisburg. There was further research conducted during this time for a Doctoral degree in Theology in Christian Spirituality where interviews and meetings were held with management and staff at Afmin (African Ministries Network) in Springs, an organisation that trains pastors, under the guidance of Pastor Mkandawire as well as the Bedfordview Methodist Church under the guidance of Pastor Ockie van Niekerk. The symptoms were also detected in medical consulting rooms in private clinics and particularly at Hospice East Rand where I am a volunteer counsellor to the caregivers and the nursing staff.

Causes of Burnout

Doctors consulted for the research mentioned that Christians were often some of their worst patients as they failed to understand human fragility, the temporal nature of life and the effects of environmental factors.

They failed to take cognisance of contributing factors to sickness and disease such as family dysfunction, ignorance related to self-care and the issue of HIV transmission. Drug and alcohol abuse is a factor not restricted exclusively to unbelievers as are violence and obesity which are sometimes contributing factors to their illness.

There is a tension between medical science and religion where doctors bear the brunt of unreasonable demands based on what Christians' believe to be their right to be healthy. Human habits are frequently the cause of disease and in many instances Christianity does not guarantee correct behaviour in the individual who continues to smoke and drink to excess, swallow vast amounts of pain killers and tranquilisers and who is not averse to activities leading to diseases of lifestyle.

So what are the effects of illness on spirituality? This research came to the conclusion that there are those who exercise a spirit or attitude of entitlement to healing and perfect health, and this spirit of entitlement is spiritually destructive to the pastor ministering to them and to the medical doctor responsible for their care and treatment. The research also found that teaching that encourages these attitudes of entitlement to healing, is to a large extent responsible for desolation at times of sickness and many times, imminent death.

It was noticed that there was little teaching regarding the carnal physiognomy, which is the reality of the nature of life to be subject to a natural lifespan, even in the event of good health. There is little focus on the natural human event called death and most distressingly, there is very little hope taught and preached regarding the real promise of God to those who remain faithful to Jesus Christ:

And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me; 'Write! Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth.' 'Yea', saith the Spirit, 'that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them' (Revelation 14:13).

Pastors tend to steer away from the subject of their congregants' eternal destiny as they struggle with the day to day running of churches and as they deal with the myriad of problems faced by their congregations. Their focus is frequently on fund raising and feeding schemes and the immediate needs of the administration of their church and there is little if any talk or preaching on what comes at the end of life. This function cannot be handed over to the medical profession and to the staff working on the wards and at a stage when the person is already facing death as has been suggested by Puchalski, Biggar & McCormick and others who support the initiative to merge medical science and spirituality; the function belongs in the pews and counselling rooms of the church and the person relegated to attend to this function is the pastor or priest.

There are also certain personality types that lend themselves to a sense of entitlement from God and from the system. These people are a tremendous drain on the medical profession, taking up valuable time and resources and demanding their dues. Exhaustion and frustration are the result as can be witnessed by Maria Phalime, a young qualified doctor who felt totally hopeless by the demands which she was incapable of meeting due to several reasons including a chronic shortage of doctors and medical staff, lack of resources, inhuman hours, overflowing emergency rooms and a sense of total hopelessness. Maria just walked away from medical practice in absolute frustration and a sense of hopelessness (Phalime 2014).

The entitled personality is also destructive to pastors and ministry staff who are under pressure to meet all the demands of busy congregations and church programmes as well as being responsible for the care of the sick, to be confronted with people demanding to be seen and attended to, visited on a regular basis and, of course, healed, when logistically and many times physically, impossible.

The research concluded that yes indeed, God does heal broken bodies and broken lives. During the years spent talking and interviewing in hospitals,

churches, and at sites renowned to be healing sites, time and again people were anxious to disclose their stories of being healed by God.

The *Medical Bureau of Authentication* at the Sanctuary in Lourdes, headed up by a committee of twenty members have meticulously investigated and documented 69 miraculous cures in Lourdes after rigorous and systematic investigation into the history and the circumstances of those who claim to have been healed. A man interviewed in a Methodist Church showed me his forehead where I saw a mark that looked like an old bruise. He told me the story of how he had been diagnosed with cancer and had been prayed for by a minister and how God had healed him of his disease. A shy young charismatic pastor told me how he had been praying a general prayer at the end of a sermon and God had laid it on his heart to pray for a young boy in the congregation wearing spectacles that had thick lenses. He told of his excruciating shyness in having to approach the mother and ask for permission to pray for the boy when neither the child nor his mother had asked for prayer. The next time he saw the child there was no longer any need for the spectacles as God had healed him.

There was one thing that all the stories of healing that were told to me had in common. In none of the cases mentioned was there any sign of the arrogance of entitlement but rather a gentle gratitude to God for his healing touch.

The effects of medical crisis on spirituality vary. There are those who overcome their fear of death. Many who are confident in their relationship with God draw closer in times of illness, leaning heavily on God. During several visits to healing sites worldwide I have been fascinated to notice the contentment of many who visit a healing site - many of them remain physically unhealed but spiritually awakened and refreshed as they come face to face with the reality of their faith in God, as they walk the streets where Jesus walked in Jerusalem or Galilee or take communion or Mass at the site of the Tomb. There are those who rail and rant and run from healer to healer and exhaust their medical practitioners, their medical aids as well

as their pastors. It seems to all depend on the relationship and understanding of the heart of God and his purposes and plans for humanity (1 Peter 1:3-7).

CONCLUSION

Nunn (2002) observes from ancient history that Medical Science and Spirituality have been in dialogue since the beginning of recorded history. Observations from a more modern paradigm indicate a continuing dialogue in obedience to the injunction by Jesus (Luke 10:30-37).

On my third visit to Lourdes I was privileged to be invited to spend a day in the care facility at Lourdes, the *Accueil Notre Dame*, which is exclusively reserved for the sick and disabled, where up to 1,400 people are hosted daily in the care facility. Some are physically well but they accompany a sick person on their pilgrimage to Lourdes. I was given the opportunity to interview *The Sisters of the Order of Malta* who were on site with a group of pilgrims and I interviewed Sister Felix and Sister Lisna who informed me that many patients arrived at the hospice depressed, talking of suicide. All of the patients were terminally ill. They told me that as they spent time with those who were sick, they began to be more relaxed and happy. They talked of giving the patients “active love.” This was a revelation to me, particularly at the end of the day as people made their way to the chapel and the sound of their singing rang through the hospice. The question was how were they changed from suicidal thoughts and depression to an acceptance of the will of God in their lives?

Perhaps, I thought, what the hordes of people who visited this site had wanted by coming to the healing waters of Lourdes, above everything else, was some kind of *experience* of the divine (Meyer 1972:21). Perhaps also the words of Nathan (1993) were quite accurate that “there is a *lovelessness* that characterises contemporary Christianity” and that Christians are desperate for signs and *experiences* of this love which is dispensed in large doses at the healing site of Lourdes by various Christian

organisations and the Disabled Persons Service on site. All are welcome at Lourdes and the sight of thousands of children on World Youth Day as they gathered at this place of love, all in various situations of sickness, disability¹⁶ and disease but all perfectly comfortable in the environment of acceptance and love, is quite a moving spectacle. The elusive grasp of the meaning of the word *holiness*, because like gossamer in the sunlight as you reach to touch it the meaning disappears, was right before my eyes.

Most people, who are desperately sick, maimed or declared terminally ill, are afraid of the future and afraid of the outcome for their families and those they love. This fear is a recurring lament in hospices and cancer wards. Often the fear is verbalised as a terror of not knowing where they will go when they die. They feel they haven't been good enough or done enough or been a "good" enough person. But as Moltmann (1992:188) observes;

the charismata of the Spirit are present wherever faith in God drives out these fears of life and whenever the hope of resurrection overcomes the fear of death. The sick can be sure that they have consecrated themselves faithfully, firmly and fully in holiness and have passed from great peril to life eternal by the dispensing of a gift of grace in complete holiness *ἐπιτελέω* (2 Corinthians 7:1).

NOTES

¹ Biblical quotations in this article are taken from the KJV.

² According to Waaijman (2003:1-4) there are various classifications of spirituality: secular, post-modern, primordial, and indigenous amongst others. He concedes that classification is a work in progress as the subject receives more scrutiny. Christian Spirituality is defined as that particular actualisation of the capacity for self-transcendence that is constituted by the substantial gift of the Holy Spirit establishing a life-giving relationship with God in Christ within the believing community (Schneiders 1986:266).

³ McCormick (2014) and Koenig (2004) as well as several other authors and scholars use the two terms 'religion' and 'spirituality' interchangeably, though they do give separate definitions on occasion. However, the two terms have distinct interpretations according to Kearney (1996) who argues that he understands the term 'spiritual' to be the essence of what it means to be human and that 'spiritual' issues are those of the soul and concern humanities deepest values and meaning. 'Religious' he understands as "that particular belief system which enables an individual to conceptualise and express his spirituality" (Kearney 1996:48).

⁴ Boyd (2000) defines illness as "a feeling, an experience of unhealth which is entirely personal, interior to the person of the patient." On occasion illness is experienced in the absence of disease which according to Boyd is met by deafening silence by traditional medical education.

⁵ Earp's fears are well founded when one reads recent literature (MacIsaac 2016) suggesting that since religion and spirituality are being merged into medicine why not also merge Science and Spirituality giving the doctor additional skills by using Telepathy in medical practice.

⁶ The process of dying is a hugely traumatic event for most people who are diagnosed with a terminal medical condition. The Hospice care givers in my counselling sessions are deeply affected each time one of their patients dies. As a Christian I find C.S. Lewis' description in his Narnia series extremely helpful. The image of the children who cross over and say farewell to Shadowlands brings me, as well as those I counsel, great comfort. "The term is over: the holidays have begun. The dream is ended: this is the *morning*" (Lewis 1984:205-211).

⁷ Breier (2008), in research commissioned by The Department of Labour in South Africa, identifies medical doctors as being in a category of a "Scarce and Critical Skills" shortage in South Africa.

⁸ The South African Medical Journal (2016) reports on the tragic death of Dr Ilne Markwat who died in a collision after she had allegedly fallen asleep at the wheel following a lengthy period of time on duty. The same article suggests that medical doctors wear colour coded armbands in public hospitals to identify the number of hours they have been on shift to prevent exhaustion tragedies.

⁹ Lewis (1978) speaks of *pain* as an "event that insists on being attended to." In a work of this nature it is impossible to give an explanation of the meaning of pain as it relates to the terms presynaptic, postsynaptic, epicritic and protopathic pain. Volumes of medical documentation exist relating to the subject; suffice to say that the Christian is a fellow participant in pain in Jesus Christ. The pain He suffered was acute, demanding massive tolerance as he suffered death on the cross (Oates & Oates 1973:19). Sternbach (1968:1) explains that "pain is a hurt we feel. That is the essence of the definition. The experience of pain, which most of us have had, is a subjective sensation which we can only imperfectly communicate to one another."

¹⁰ Disease in this paper is interpreted as being a pathological condition of a body part, an organ or a system resulting from various causes such as infection, genetic defect or environmental stress, and characterised by an identifiable group of signs or symptoms (Guyton & Hall 2006).

¹¹ Goodman *et al* (2013) argue that definitions for chronic conditions or long-term illness vary widely as the definitions exhibit heterogeneity in several characteristics, such as the duration or latency, need for medical attention, effect on function, pathology, and departure from well-being, noncontagious nature, multiple risk factors and non-amenability to cure. The heterogeneity leads to compromised accuracy and precision in definition.

¹² Some Charismatic and Pentecostal teachings take Mark 6:6 "And He marvelled because of their unbelief" as the basis for their belief that failure to be healed is a result of a lack of faith by the person requesting prayer.

¹³ Fenichel (1946:499) argues that an exaggerated or unrealistic sense of entitlement is frequently associated with a personality disorder identified as narcissism and features of the syndrome are aggression, manipulation and ingratitude.

¹⁴ Healing as used by Yeomans is a demand for divine intervention to bring about a physical, mental or spiritual miraculous cure and is also referred to as "faith healing." Medical Science defines physical healing as a process of returning to a previous state of health or the natural state of tissue repair (Youngson 2005).

¹⁵ Miller, Abraham, Rhodes & Roberts (2013) after extensive study into the subject of *cure* in Oncology come to the conclusion that clinicians are hesitant to tell patients they are *cured* even after 20 years in remission. The word is interpreted as "restored to health" and this can be a broad claim which could give a diagnosis difficult to reverse should there be a recurrence.

¹⁶ The children were suffering from physical and mental conditions that impaired their movement, senses and activities. Most were in the care of Sisters, pastors or care givers.

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Pope Francis and the Creation of *Evangelii Gaudium*

JEAN EVANS

ABSTRACT

Pope Francis' *Evangelii Gaudium* calls Christians to “embark upon a new chapter of evangelisation,” one that is marked by the joy of encountering the Risen Christ and sharing that good news with others. The document reflects the thought of previous episcopal synods and papal writings incorporating the worldview, pastoral priorities and Jesuit spirituality of Pope Francis. *Evangelii Gaudium* challenges church and society to include the poor and vulnerable in all aspects of life, especially by offering to them “a privileged and preferential religious care” (*Evangelii Gaudium* 2013:200), with opportunity for personal accompaniment.

INTRODUCTION

Evangelii Gaudium, *Joy of the Gospel*, is Pope Francis' attempt to re-energise and re-focus the efforts of Pope St John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI to engage all the Church in a new moment of evangelisation, following on the 1983 call for a New Evangelisation by St John Paul II. In its edited form *Evangelii Gaudium* reflects the work of the XIII Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops held in Rome from October 7-28, 2012, documents from previous episcopal synods such as *Aparacida* (2007), and the editorial additions of Pope Francis. While written in language accessible to ordinary people, Pope Francis' message is consistent with previous Church teachings.

THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH: TO SHARE THE GOOD NEWS

Pope St John Paul II introduced the term “New Evangelisation” in a discourse given to the Latin American Conference of Catholic Bishops (CELAM) in Port-au-Prince, Haiti on March 9, 1983 (Taborda 1994:7). The New Evangelisation was to be an Evangelisation characterised by “newness” in ardor, methods and expression. Its content would comprise all the constitutive elements of integral human development, (*la Promoción humana*) that is justice, liberation, development and peace in the world, as Taborda argues.

To ignore the need for human development, especially in its social, political and cultural aspects would be a “mutilation” of the Gospel (Palmes 1996:165). Finally, the New Evangelisation would remind people of the final message of the Medellín Conference of 1968 that the Church should take a preferential option for the poor (Taborda 1994:8).¹

Contributing further to the Church’s understanding of Evangelisation, Pope St John Paul II issued his encyclical, *Redemptoris Missio* in 1990, twenty-five years after the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council. The Holy Father invited the Church to renew her missionary commitment (*RM*, 1). Missionary activity, the Pope affirmed, is good for the Church: it strengthens faith and Christian identity, encourages commitment of newly formed Christian communities, fosters and upholds missionary vocations.

After the death of Pope John Paul II on April 2, 2005, Cardinal Josef Ratzinger, a German theologian who had served as Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith since 1981 was elected pope. Taking the name of a pope who reigned from 1914-1922 during and after the World War I, Pope Benedict XVI announced his Euro-centric focus.

Nonetheless, in May of 2007, Pope Benedict XVI travelled to the Fifth Latin American Episcopal Conference held in *Aparacida*, Brazil (a Marian Shrine of pilgrimage) to give the Opening Address of the Conference on May 13. In Cavassa’s view, (2013:3) Pope Benedict’s opening speech was

significant for the conference's future. It summarised in one phrase what has been a constant in Latin American theological reflection: "the preferential option for the poor is implicit in the Christological faith in the God who became poor for us, to enrich us with his poverty (2 Corinthians 8, 9)" (Benedict XVI 2007:7).

The meeting at *Aparacida* chose Cardinal Bergoglio from Argentina to chair the important committee charged with drafting the final document from the episcopal conference. In addressing their concern that the church acknowledge the needs of a rapidly changing continent, including the erosion of religious traditions in Latin America, the bishops called for a personal encounter with Jesus Christ to give meaning and orientation to the lives of the faithful (*Aparacida*, 1,18,39). Thereby they underscored the direction set by Pope Benedict XVI in his initial remarks at the Conference quoted from his encyclical *Deus Caritas Est* (2013).

Weigel notes the Conference was a positive experience of bishops working together, that Bergoglio contributed significantly to the work of the committee, and that the experience of the bishops hearkened back to the Upper Room inspired by the Spirit rather than to a Board room (2012:1).

Much of what was included in *Aparacida*, Chapter 8, appeared before in the *General Directory for Catechesis*, (1997:190-192). Besides focusing on the tasks of catechists, the document mentions the "special situations, mentalities and environments" for catechesis: the disabled, marginalised, that is, immigrants, refugees, nomads, travelling people, the chronically ill, drug addicts, prisoners.

It adds this observation: "Urban catechesis must take account of a variety of social conditions, sometimes so extreme as to extend from exclusive areas of prosperity to pockets of poverty and marginalisation. Stress can dominate the rhythm of life... oppressive anonymity and loneliness are widespread."

Instrumentum Laboris, 2012, (XIII General Assembly for the Synod of Bishops, October 7-28, 2012), summarises the Bishops' responses to the *Lineamenta* as well as the formulation of their perceptions and concerns for society and the future of the Church. The Bishops' were concerned that urgent action be taken to stem the rising tide of secularism which has led to "widespread disorientation, distrust and weakening of the faith" (*Instrumentum Laboris*, #7). On this point, *Evangelii Gaudium* addresses the bishops' concerns about secularism and individualism: "The process of secularisation tends to reduce the faith and the Church to the sphere of the private and personal. Furthermore, by completely rejecting the transcendent, it has produced a growing deterioration of ethics, a weakening of the sense of personal and collective sin, and a steady increase in relativism" (2013:64).

THE TASK OF EDITING

Not only was Pope Francis present at the XIII General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops in 2012, he was also active in his diocese preparing the *Lineamenta* for the Synod. He was the beneficiary of the Synod's labours, the work of collecting all the information from the *Lineamenta*, and the worldwide Catholic consultation. He sought advice from numerous people and then decided to express his own concerns about the church's work of spreading the gospel (2013:9).

Not meaning to be definitive and aware of the need to de-centralise, Francis nonetheless expresses his vision for the work of evangelisation: "I have chosen to present some guidelines which can encourage and guide the whole church in a new phase of Evangelisation, one marked by enthusiasm and vitality" (*EG*, 9). The areas concerned related to mission outreach, pastoral workers, People of God as Evangelisers, the Word of God, the homily (*IL*, 143), spiritual accompaniment, the inclusion of the poor in society, peace and dialogue, and spiritual motivations for mission.

Perhaps most significant is his insistence on the “style” of Evangelisation: “All of them (practical implications) help give shape to *a definite style of Evangelisation* which I ask you to adopt in *every activity which you undertake*.”

The “style” Pope Francis wants from catechists, preachers and all Christians is the style of joy: joy in the midst of sorrow, joy in a personal relationship with Jesus, joy at being chosen to announce the good news. “Consequently, an Evangeliser must never look like someone who has just come from a funeral!” chides the Holy Father (2013:10). No, someone who preaches the Gospel of Jesus Christ must look happy.

The result of Pope Francis’ editorial interventions is a document that provides a valuable social analysis of everything from economics to the training of seminarians. Not an academic treatise, *Joy of the Gospel* is impressionistic, direct, and at times, colloquial. It is poetic and sometimes decidedly mystical: “The Son of God, by becoming flesh, began a revolution of tenderness” (#88). Above all, *Joy of the Gospel* reflects the spirituality, pastoral priorities and experience of its editor, our Holy Father, Pope Francis.

IGNATIAN SPIRITUALITY

It would not be difficult to see in the writing and editing of Pope Francis the influence of Ignatian spirituality. Two activities are characteristic of Ignatian spirituality: the Spiritual Exercises and the practice of spiritual accompaniment.

The purpose of spiritual accompaniment is to listen as someone articulates his/her experience of God (Birmingham and Connolly 1995:1). Spiritual accompaniment takes place both within and outside the Spiritual Exercises *per se*. In his directives to catechists while Archbishop of Buenos Aires, Bergoglio is adamant on the catechist’s need to listen: “We have to train ourselves to listen so that our evangelising action takes root in that interior

sphere that shapes the authentic catechist, who beyond his activities, knows how to make his ministry a loving service of accompaniment” (Bergoglio 2014:43).

The Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius are a four-week period of self-examination, using active imagination and prayer in view of making an important decision to bring order to one’s life. Its intent is overcoming “worldly influences, and setting aside inordinate affections” (Martini 1993:20). Today we would speak about setting aside consumeristic values and addictive behaviours and inclinations.

According to Martini, there are two levels of development in the Exercises – the ascetical and the mystical. The ascetical element consists of the discipline of engaging in the activities, reflections and prayers suggested by the retreat director in order to gain more personal freedom (English 1978:126). The other aspect is the mystical level which consists in “experiencing directly the embrace of the mystery of God” through opening oneself unconditionally to God’s presence (Martini 1993:13).

Specifically, one enters into the activity of each “week,” not necessarily a calendar week, but a period of time determined by the person administering the Exercises.

The activities of the first week centre on the appreciation of one’s creaturehood, repentance and remorse for sinful attitudes and behaviours. The second week contains meditations on the life of Christ. These meditations are designed to promote an experiential understanding and identification with Christ, leading to a decision or call to follow him more closely (Nelson 2009:450).

The contemplations of the third week lead the retreatant to “ask for heartfelt sorrow and confusion because the Lord is going to his Passion for my sins” (Ganss 1991:174). The grace of the fourth week is to “be glad and rejoice intensely because of the great glory and joy of Christ our Lord” and to consider “the office of consoler which Christ our Lord carries out, and

compare it with the way friends console one another” (1991:174). While the grace of the third week is to feel sorrow for what the Lord is about to experience, the grace of the fourth week is to rejoice intensely *because* of the Lord’s glory and joy.

POPE OF THE FOURTH WEEK

Taking the Fourth Week of the Spiritual Exercises as his point of reference, Pope Francis shows us the Risen Jesus in his office as *consoler*. “Consider the office of consoler which Christ our Lord carries out,” writes Ignatius in the Exercises, “and compare it with the way friends console one another” (1991: 174).

As pope, Francis has strived to present himself in the image of his master – a *consoler* and *friend* to all the peoples of the world. Whether it is his concern for the victims of maritime trafficking, “marrying” his unmarried Roman parishioners, welcoming refugees, providing ablution and tonsorial facilities for homeless persons around the colonnade of St Peter’s, kissing endless numbers of babies, or simply saying, “Who am I to judge?” Pope Francis has been an image of a consoling friend to millions of people around the world.

From the moment of his election on March 13, 2013, Pope Francis has emphasised *joy*, in particular the joy of encounter with Christ. Just days after his election, on Palm Sunday March 24, 2013, he set the tone of joy for his pontificate:

This is the first word that I want to tell you: ‘Joy!’ Do not be men and women of sadness: a Christian can never be sad! Never give way to discouragement! Ours is not a joy that comes from having many possessions. But it comes from having encountered a Person, Jesus, who is among us (Francis 2013).

The pontiff who issued *Misericordiae Vultus*, the Bull of Indiction of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, (Francis 2015:3) sought to make God's compassion more accessible to people so that they would experience the tender mercy of God, particularly through the sacrament of reconciliation. Looking at the face of Jesus Christ, Christians behold the face of the Father's mercy and this is a source of incredible solace. "From the heart of the Trinity, from the depths of the mystery of God, the great river of mercy wells up and overflows unceasingly...a spring that will never run dry, no matter how many people approach it" (2015:43)

In his recent visit to the newly-elected superior general of the Jesuits, the Venezuelan, Fr. Arturo Sosa, on October 14, 2016, Pope Francis reminded his Jesuit brothers of St Ignatius' image of Jesus from the Fourth Week of the Exercises and of their task as Jesuits:

It is the specific task of the Society to console the Christian faithful and to help them in their discernment so that the enemy of human nature does not distract us from joy: the joy of evangelising, the joy of the family, the joy of the Church, the joy of creation... Let us never be robbed of that joy, neither through discouragement when faced with the great measure of evil in the world and misunderstandings among those who intend to do good, nor let it be replaced with vain joys that are easily bought and sold in any shop (Francis 2016:1)

Pope Francis encourages his brothers to ask for the grace of consolation from the Risen Christ. The Pope wishes that Jesuits will bring this grace of consolation to people who suffer, that they will minister by active help, by listening, by celebrating the Sacraments, by offering personal accompaniment.

POPE FRANCIS' VISION OF HUMANITY

Francisco Taborda, a Latin American Jesuit writing about the spirituality of the New Evangelisation says, "The human being is moved by

transcendence, attracted by something that is beyond himself, either by being the other, the different, or for not getting there yet. This is the engine of the train” (1994:71, *own translation*).

Jorge Bergoglio shared the same appreciation of transcendence. In a message to educators in 2007, he said: “Our status as unfinished beings, always open to something more, on the move, is revealed to us. And to our believing consciousness is added the certainty of a God who puts himself in our life and helps us along the way” (2014:123).

One indicator of Pope Francis' vision of humanity and its destiny comes from *EG*, 167 which states that human beings are born to discover and proclaim Christ who is beautiful and “capable of filling life with new splendour and profound joy.” Furthermore, the “path of beauty can be an acknowledged pathway leading to an encounter with the Lord Jesus.” For Pope Francis a renewed appreciation and esteem for beauty is a means of touching one's heart and enabling the truth and goodness of Christ to radiate within, for we love what is beautiful (St Augustine). Francis writes:

Proclaiming Christ means showing that to believe in and to follow him is not only something right and true, but also something beautiful, capable of filling life with new splendour and profound joy, even in the midst of difficulties (2013:167).

As Archbishop of Buenos Aires, Bergoglio revealed his personal beliefs about human life and a “God who is profoundly involved with humanity” (2014:84). Speaking to his fellow Argentines, Bergoglio places himself among them in this affirmation of their humanity and he celebrates the gifts that express sensitivity to God's presence and love, “celebration, friendship, and beauty.”

We are men and women with a capacity for the infinite, with a critical conscience, with a hunger for justice and fraternity; with the desire to know so as not to be manipulated; with a taste for celebration, friendship,

and beauty. We are a people who walk, sing, and praise. We are a wounded people and a people with arms wide open, who walk with hope, with “staying power” in bad times and occasionally, a little too quickly, spend wastefully. We are a people with a vocation to greatness (2014:84).

Bergoglio depicts the complex and noble nature of the human person—someone with a capacity for the infinite and a “critical conscience,” someone who hungers for justice and peace. At the same time, he acknowledges and laments the paradox of human life—the wounds of human beings, their fragility and sinfulness. All the while, he is aware of human potential when it freely moves in harmony with God’s grace.

Placing himself alongside transcendental theologian and fellow Jesuit, Karl Rahner, Bergoglio celebrates his belief in humanity’s call to greatness, in its transcendent nature, and in the conviction that human beings are “intrinsic openness to the infinite” (Rahner 1997:2). Perhaps this is the reason why Pope Francis advocates “a pedagogy which will introduce people step by step to the full appropriation of the mystery” (2013:171).

The gradual appropriation of *mystery* is the way to a maturity in faith and to the realisation that one is destined to be with God for time and eternity. Such a realisation creates an attitude of reverence for “*la Présence qui suscite l’adoration silencieuse*” (Varillon 2000:71).² In the discovery of one’s mystery, “each person’s situation before God and their life in grace are mysteries which no one can fully know from without” (EG, 172).

PERSONAL ACCOMPANIMENT

Within the long chapter entitled “Proclamation of the Gospel,” and nestled between “Kerygmatic and Mystagogical Catechesis” and “Centred on the Word of God,” there are five paragraphs on the topic of personal accompaniment, sometimes called “spiritual direction” (EG, 169-173). These sections in *Evangelii Gaudium* reference and support the practice of

personal accompaniment within the Catholic Church. They recognise the legitimate ministry of spiritual accompaniment offered not only by clergy but also by the laity and religious within the Catholic Church.

A man who has the heart of a pilgrim, Pope Francis wishes for everyone the benefits of personal accompaniment. It uplifts and heartens believers:

The Church will have to initiate everyone—priests, religious and laity—into this art of accompaniment which teaches us to remove our sandals before the sacred ground of the other (Ex. 3:5).³ The pace of this accompaniment must be steady and reassuring, reflecting our closeness and our compassionate gaze which also heals, liberates and encourages growth in the Christian life (2013:169).

It is the aim of spiritual accompaniment to lead others to God and true inner freedom, says Francis (2013:170). He is concerned about people who remain rudderless drifters, spiritually homeless and self-absorbed even as they avail of spiritual accompaniment (2013:8). The art of accompaniment can be a means of healing, liberating and encouraging persons to grow in the Christian life (2013:169).

Pope Francis is grieved that the poor receive so little spiritual care: “Our preferential option for the poor must mainly translate into a privileged and preferential spiritual care” (*EG*, 200). He regrets deeply the discrimination that they experience, deprived of the sacraments and personal accompaniment.

Finding in the poor “a special openness to the faith,” Francis speaking from his own experience says, “They need God and we must not fail to offer them his friendship, his blessing, his word, the celebration of the sacraments and a journey of growth and maturity in the Faith” (2013:200). Pope Francis insists that people who are economically, mentally, emotionally, or physically challenged receive the benefit of spiritual accompaniment.

People need to experience the closeness of God. They need healing, liberation and reassurance. These gifts, says Francis, come through the

compassion and closeness to Christ of the person who offers accompaniment. Obviously, this has been a concern of Pope Francis for many years – how to support people in their struggles.

In his August 2004 address to Buenos Aires catechists, “Spirituality of the Journey,” then Archbishop Jorge Bergoglio spoke of the benefits of personal accompaniment:

More than ever we need your sensitive catechist’s heart, which brings, from your experience of accompaniment, the wisdom of life and of the processes that nurture prudence, the ability to understand, the art of waiting, the sense of belonging in order to guard the sheep entrusted to us from the erudite wolves that are trying to pull the flock apart (2014:29).

The heart of personal accompaniment is listening, listening to the person who is revealing his/her depths. In his March 2007 address, “Model of the Tireless Pilgrim,” Bergoglio reveals his own spiritual depths and his experience of purification:

In the life of every Christian, of every disciple, of every catechist, there cannot be lacking the experience of the wilderness, of interior purification, of the dark night, and of obedience in faith, which our father Abraham lived. But here too, lies the root of discipleship, of abandonment, of the people’s experience, which allows us to recognise ourselves as brothers and sisters (2014:48).

Reminiscent of Francis’ reply relative to homosexual persons, “Who am I to judge?” we read in *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013:172), “One who accompanies others has to realise that each person’s situation before God and their life in grace are mysteries which no one can fully know from without.” He continues the encouragement for personal accompaniment of others as it “will teach us to be patient and compassionate with others, and to find the right way to gain their trust, their openness and their readiness to grow.”

POPE FRANCIS ON INCLUSION

Exclusion, an long-time concern of Bergoglio, is mentioned in a homily to catechists in March 2005 “... a subtle temptation of the Evil One is to make us forget our common belonging that has its source in Baptism” (2014:31). In his 2007 message to Educators in Buenos Aires, Bergoglio speaks more insistently that no human life is “inconsequential” (2007:114). The theme of exclusion appears in the *Aparacida Document* (2007:391) as well: “the Preferential Option for the Poor and Excluded.”

In *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis pleads for “the inclusion that characterises the style and pace of our journey” and is emphatic that the emphasis on inclusiveness has practical implications for the life of the Church, that believers must say “NO” to an economy of exclusion (2013:53).

This theme is developed in *Evangelii Gaudium* as “The Inclusion of the Poor in Society” (2013:186-216). The Pope takes a hard look at today’s society. He is distressed at the emptiness and desolation that pervades our societies. “Anguish born of a complacent and covetous heart, the feverous pursuit of frivolous pleasures, and a blunted conscience” characterises so many people (2013:2). He wants Christians to transform political processes and to overcome the casual indifference of our “throw-away” cultures (2013:203).

Pope Francis challenges society’s de-personalisation of the poor, their exclusion and their relegation to the rubbish heaps of the world. He observes that Church communities that do not act collaboratively to help the poor live with dignity are in danger of collapse. Without solidarity and outreach such a community “will easily drift into a spiritual worldliness camouflaged by religious practices, unproductive meetings and empty talk” (2013: 207).

Pope Francis wants every Christian to become a bearer of good news, to Evangelise in the manner of Jesus who identifies himself with the little ones—the hungry, thirsty, sick, homeless, incarcerated, bereaved ones of

Matthew 25. Not only does Francis want the vulnerable to be cared for, but he says, “It is essential to draw near to *new forms* of poverty and vulnerability, in which we are called to recognise the suffering Christ” (EG, 209).

After all, as Archbishop of Buenos Aires, Jorge Bergoglio had said to all the clergy and people of Buenos Aires: “I prefer a Church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a Church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security” (EG, 49).

HUMAN DIGNITY AND THE COMMON GOOD

Two essential features of Pope Francis’ vision are respect for human dignity and promotion of the common good (2013:65). In his pivot toward the world, Pope Francis laments the loss of concern for the common good and the individualism that characterises our world: “Our world is being torn apart by wars and violence, and wounded by a widespread individualism which divides human beings, setting them against one another as they pursue their own well-being” (2013:99).

As Pope Francis sees it, individualism affects and perverts the ends of the common good. Individualism has created a global sense of indifference—indifference to misery, to death, to others. “The individualism of our postmodern and globalised era favours a lifestyle which weakens the development and stability of personal relationships and distorts family bonds” (EG, 67).

In his speech to the Joint Session of the United States Congress on September 24, 2015, Pope Francis called for solidarity, cooperation and concern for those at risk in society. He urged American lawmakers *no fewer than six times* to promote the *common good* of our society, “You are called to defend and preserve the dignity of your fellow citizens in the

tireless and demanding pursuit of the *common good*, for this is the chief aim of all politics” (Francis 2015).

Pope Francis relies on the Church teaching on social justice to make his case. Papal documents are replete with references to the *common good*. According to Pope St John XXIII, the *common good* includes the basic social conditions that make it possible not only for individuals and groups of people to survive, but also to reach their human fulfillment (*Pacem in Terris*, 55). The common good is good for everyone.

At the heart of Francis’ vision for the Church is his conviction that every person is a child of God, that Christians must commit themselves to a preferential option for the poor, and that a new solidarity must be nurtured within the Church. This is the message from the Pope of the Fourth Week:

It is essential to draw near to new forms of poverty and vulnerability, in which we are called to recognise the suffering Christ, even if this appears to bring us no tangible and immediate benefits. I think of the homeless, the addicted, refugees, indigenous peoples, the elderly who are increasingly isolated and abandoned, and many others. Migrants present a particular challenge for me, *since I am the pastor of a Church without frontiers, a Church which considers herself mother to all.*

CONCLUSION

Evangelii Gaudium is a document that covers a wide range of concerns in the Church and society. Its purpose is to engender in believers the joy that the good news brings: “Jesus Christ loves you; He gave his life to save you; and now he is living at your side every day to enlighten, strengthen and free you” (2013: 164).

The apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* comes at the end of a long period of struggle to ignite the fire of Evangelisation through synod meetings and diocesan consultations. In *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis

calls all Christians to the joy of the gospel to be found in a personal encounter with Christ. He challenges everyone to be mindful of those who are at risk in society and condemns those who exclude others in society through economic or political means.

Pope Francis' emphasis on the training of spiritual directors is particularly encouraging and significant for many religious and laity engaged in the practice of personal accompaniment. It is clear that his Jesuit training and spirituality have been positive factors in support of a culture that values the practice of personal accompaniment within the Church.

Evangelii Gaudium is a document that warrants reflection and prayer. It has its pulse on the needs of people and at the same time guides its readers to the sources of faith. It gives evidence of a very wise and compassionate leader who wants people to experience that they and their concerns are important to God and to people of good will.

NOTES

¹ This theme of integral human development appears again in the *Aparacida Document* (2007:399): "Any evangelisation process entails human promotion and authentic liberation, without which a just order in society is not possible."

² "The Presence which arouses silent adoration" [*own translation*].

³ This author surveyed papal documents as far back as Pope Pius XII and found no previous papal reference to the practice of spiritual or personal accompaniment. In *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis calls upon the Church "to initiate everyone – priests, religious and laity – into this 'art of accompaniment'" (2013:169). Why? It is because people need to experience the healing and compassion of Christ on their journey through life.

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Holiness Integrated into the Field of Spirituality:

Seeking Fresh Hermeneutic Foundations for the Discipline of Spirituality as Existentially Supported by the Life of St Francis of Assisi

CORNELIS (KEES) THÖNISSEN

ABSTRACT

Holiness can range from being vaguely ethereal ('super'-natural) to being over-simply personalistic ('my' standing before God). It will benefit from being situated in the more encompassing field of Spirituality. Spirituality currently exhibits subjective 'pluriformity' within unstable postmodernism. Thus spirituality must first be grounded on *foundational theology*. To this end this paper suggests a *foundational hypothesis*. Central is that any major 'reconstructive hermeneutic' building up spirituality requires fresh foundational *categories* different to those of a past static and deductive, scholastic type of metaphysics. Instead, three new categories are proposed to effect a sublation: *experience* (as phenomenological), *relationality* (versus abstract 'substance thought') and *spiritual-intuition* (balancing a reason-based tradition). These categories can remedy damaging bifurcations ('spirituality versus formal religion') and open up remedies for many challenges facing the Church. They underpin a metaphysical *synthesis* built on deeper mystical spirituality – one that rests on the rich *experience* of saints, especially the life of St Francis of Assisi.

THE INSTABILITY OF THE DISCIPLINE OF CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY

Many have expectations that 'holiness' or 'lived spirituality'¹, will provide new hope as it makes fresh impact on a battered world and a Church seeking reform² whilst it struggles to transform the world. As argued in the

next section, unfortunately, the entire discipline of spirituality can be deemed to be *unstable* because it has been unable to anchor itself in any *foundational* theological bedrock.³ Lacking foundations as ‘ground’, spirituality has struggled to claim the right to be an independent discipline. If such lack of grounding and any structural deficiency for the discipline is exposed, then the discipline will be able to build-in foundations and supports. To this end a metaphor of a *defective building* will help uncover five such deficiencies to be remedied.

AN IDIOMATIC METAPHOR WITH FIVE MAJOR CRITICISMS, AND THE SUBSEQUENT ‘FOUNDATIONS’ REQUIRED

What are these deep failings? First, that the discipline is deemed to be an *unstable* structure as it displays poor self-definition and is unsure of what it should include.⁴ Second, because of *pluriformity*, with so many loosely claiming some ‘unique’ spirituality, spirituality seems *ramshackle* – there are no firm inter-reliant levels helping integration and no sound major *categories* or ‘core pillars’ that can supply any sound framework.⁵ Third, spirituality is further *fragmenting* because it has no ground *context* on which to construct. The Church and its tradition are required to be this cohesive context.⁶ Fourth, spirituality when deprived of developed *foundational theology* or fundamental theology⁷ finds itself on *shaky* ground. Thus spirituality asks for a *theological synthesis* on which to *ground* itself.⁸ Fifth, to offer a *universal* contribution, spirituality has to be deeply earthed in a fresh *metaphysics* for want of it ‘toppling over’ as it over-reaches its own erections that are incapable of reaching such high purposes.⁹

Such dense analysis of spirituality as a discipline must be unpacked, but essentially, to establish its *foundations*, spirituality must be well delineated and defined, and be placed in a sound context and systematic framework under foundational theology, and ultimately, be settled within a broad metaphysics. These are demanding endeavours undertaken by a full thesis. This paper can only offer some insights as stimulation towards further explorations.

PRESENTING A STIMULUS TOWARDS MORE THOROUGH INVESTIGATIONS

This author submitted a rather ambitious thesis¹⁰ entitled ‘Foundations for spirituality: a ‘hermeneutic of reform’ for a Church facing crises inspired by St Francis of Assisi’. Its aims were to unearth and consolidate *foundations for spirituality* through an encompassing hermeneutic synthesis. How to re-couch such foundational theory in this short space in order to stimulate fresh endeavours reinforcing foundations – hopefully any efforts will grow out of deep spiritual self-involvement?

RECOVERING FOUNDATIONS FOR A SPIRITUALITY UNDERPINNING A CHURCH STRUGGLING TO SERVE THE WORLD’S PRESSING NEEDS

(Thönissen 2014:7 Section 1.1.4 4; see also Waaijman 2002)

How did it come about that the ‘generator’ of change and growth in the Church, the ‘power of the Spirit’, plainly, *vital spirituality*, has been so neglected, diminished and weakened?¹¹ What caused these major spiritually-based blockages that prevented the Church from freeing its latent spiritual power? Again, spirituality has been disregarded as a major player largely because it is so weakly *grounded in foundations*. As a merely personal, devotional (emotional?) domain - that was obviously lowlier than theology and Church governance - it couldn’t stake any serious claim to be foundational. Any thought that it might even ground theology itself was beyond its scope. If it becomes a ‘free floating’, pluralistic ‘Cinderella discipline’, it will not be able to unleash itself to make any divine impact. Fresh foundations will lend confidence in, and can therefore *open up to*, transcendent impulses in the Spirit, what we might call spirituality ‘in action’. We recognise that: paradigm shifts are required in the Church’s assumed foundations; a revised understanding of epistemology must sublate older models (Thönissen 2014:106,156); and the Church’s whole acceptance of its self-limiting anthropology has to be revised and rejuvenated in order to facilitate a new receptive openness to transcendence in contemporary society.

A HERMENEUTIC AND HEURISTIC ASSUMPTION TOWARDS A FOUNDATIONAL THEORY FOR SPIRITUALITY

At this point, various new ‘shifts’ are presented in order to build up hermeneutic theory and the ability to build new foundations.¹² These will include: the turn to subject; the turn to experience; a shift to (Biblical) anthropology; a shift to relationality and the feminine and a shift to love and mercy (Popes’ Benedict, Francis *Evangelii Gaudium* henceforth ‘EG’ 2013:32 No.49, No. 87). (See second column Appendix B; see also Thönissen 2014:163-164,186,189).

THREE OVERALL SHIFTS REQUIRED THAT WILL RE-ORIENTATE ANY HERMENEUTIC APPROACH

1. Foundational Approaches Assumed¹³

A past *substantialist approach* under dry *metaphysics* (see first column, Appendix B; Thönissen 2014:306; 2014:190 &192) must shift from a cognitive approach to a *subject/personalist* or *relational/feminine* emphasis (Thönissen 2014:35,612,613 & 2014:308-311; Ratzinger 1971:124,125). Such ‘depth relationality’ will include: contact with God; dialogical faith; participation in the Trinity (perichoresis) and pneumatic Church reform including a ‘personalising’ of her sacraments and very structures (see 2:6; Thönissen 2014:296-298).

2. Epistemological Models Employed

When a revised epistemological model is fully accepted, the Church will realise that any and all *theory/theology* has always to *build on experience* (cyclically so, Thönissen 2014:155 Model C-C; 2014:510 Model T-I; see multi-methodology, Faix 2012.). Any such *experience* must rest on a phenomenology that is able to recognise *transcendent* influences (Thönissen 2014:155). Only *spiritual experience*, as somehow ‘being moved’, can receive God’s *immanence* as action/presence/power (Marion 2002:5). Experience can occur without *theory* but the Church has privileged theology

while, at times vehemently down-playing *experience* (Thönissen 2014:244; 408; 162; Chenu 1968:8-11; ‘A synthetic foundation’ Thönissen 2014:7; see third column, Appendix B). Once it has lost the capacity for experiencing, the Church will feel shackled in its own ineffectuality. Experience must be rehabilitated (Thönissen 2014:262).

3. Anthropological Capacities Harnessed

People want to see a Church able to effect change in real life. God is always active, but *openness* - able to *receive* the impact of the divine, has to be awakened. Long dormant inner personal *capacities* must be stirred-up once more (Thönissen 2014:34). Past (and present) Church Teaching and formation built on, and stressed, ‘static’ intellect and reason and not any such dynamic interaction with God experienced through the *spiritual senses* (Thönissen 2014:153, see also 2014:292,392,375,488). Even as a ‘governing’ reason must remain core,¹⁴ the question that lingers is whether the Church has (unwittingly?) been ‘mired’ in an over-emphasised reliance on ‘reason alone’. Teaching/dogma demanded an obedience that *assumed* ‘personal entry’ into living faith, (Thönissen 2014:306 & 310). Reason neglected to *first* assure a lived faith *experience* as an engaging ‘contact with God’ (see ‘humble metaphysics’:9; Thönissen 2014:629; ‘from below’ Pope Francis, *EG* 2013, Nos. 149, 165, 262, 268). This tradition dominated by mind/intellect/reason must now be broadened to fall under *affect/love*. Love entered into is ‘felt’ or *intuited*, not thought. But we want to marry *both* sound reason and intense love. It is the *capacity* of *intuition* that can *synthesise all* inner processes ranging from mathematical judgements (Lonergan 1992:334) to philosophical logic (Lonergan 2001:264) to mysticism, *into* meaning. Only *intuition* can gather into insightful love and full meaning.

Truth in some way **emerges out of love**. The *Spirit’s* activity inflames such *deeper intuition* and sparks this *innate capacity for loving faith*. This available intuition in people must be ‘fired’, freed and then consolidated. A ‘relational faith’ that *participates* in God who is love, is now through that love, spontaneously nested in an all-reasonable *truth* (this is now the

mystical theology St Bonaventure promoted).

The nature and capacity of the *category of intuition*, from the purely human to the sublimely spiritual, must be underpinned by anthropology, psychology, neuro-biology, philosophy and mysticism/spirituality (Thönissen 2014:320). What is now accepted as a *faculty* of spiritual intuition (3:7; EG 2013:67 No.119) is at long last able to redress the past imbalanced, rationalistic orientation that has so straightjacketed the Church on many levels.¹⁵ A ‘heady’ Church is now freed to open up and become creative, attractive, warm and generative.

ESTABLISHING FOUNDATIONS FOR SPIRITUALITY: UNCOVERING FOUNDATIONAL CATEGORIES

The thesis attempts unearthing *foundations* for spirituality that can provide sound theoretical grounds, hermeneutics,¹⁶ heuristics, essential categorical tools¹⁷ and effective approaches as supported by phenomenological data gathered from the ‘lived’ lives of the saints. Spirituality cannot construct its foundations on its own. It depends on other major disciplines in an objective, heavy-weight endeavour.¹⁸ The thesis attempts to find freshly *creative* ‘breakthroughs’ (that recent Popes have asked for¹⁹) to ultimately offer an *alternative synthetic* approach²⁰ uniting and subsuming past approaches to proffer fresh ‘solutions.’²¹ These can then be tested against 14 thesis problems the Church faces.²²

To ensure a sound ground, *foundational categories* must be *theoretically* constructed (multi-disciplinary research, epistemology; see ‘path of reason’ below), but must also be *experientially* arrived at to have any profound personal meaning (St Francis and the saints). Uncomfortably for many, experience ‘comes first’ before interpretation and deepening by theory/theology (Thönissen 2014:247).

Through a sound hermeneutic the thesis takes up the experiment of forming universal foundational credentials for the discipline of spirituality. Appendix A as model, offers a preliminary foundational model of what spirituality should support - and what it should be grounded on.

TWO APPROACHES TAKEN: A LONG-HELD METAPHYSICAL TRADITION BUILT ON REASON, AND THE LIVED HOLINESS OF THE SAINTS²³

1. Abiding Confidence in Reason as the First of the Two Paths (John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio* 84, 1998:78).

Even if over simplistically advocated here, there are two ‘basic paths’ approaching God: one through *the mind’s perceptive reason* (God as first mover/cause, Whelan 2014, Marion 2002:6); and the other, through the *heart’s experience of love* (see Thönissen 2014:639).

The first path builds a ‘hierarchy’ on trusted reason (first column, Appendix B; see also Egan 2009:11, *Dei Filius* 1870 no.39). Thus a theology based on ‘being’ has shaped the tradition of the Catholic Church (Thönissen 2014:32). This approach, that claims to assuredly ‘attain to’ God, rests on adapted Aristotelian categories²⁴, and on an (abstract) Scholastic framework where the mind thinks or ‘contemplates’ (as St Thomas argues in his 5 demonstrations of God, Woods 1998:71; Thompson 2010:106-126; Thönissen 2014:212 & 213). Thomism’s problem is that after this ‘reasonableness’ of God’s real existence has been established, we still really have to (learn to) *love* him (Thönissen 2014:283; see also 2014:249). ‘Being loved’ changes us *most* radically.²⁵ Rather than side-line the ‘philosophy of being’ (Kasper 2013:85-87; Whelan 2014) we see how the ‘abstract notion’ of being can instead be elevated by a sense of transcendent *mystery* revealing *self-donating love* (Bonaventure in Kasper 2013:88; Thönissen 2014:163,168; i.e. without being *reified* so that Being becomes ‘beings’ or a substantial ‘thing,’ Lane 2003:7; Thönissen 2014:194).

A *dynamic* ‘Being’ is to be *experienced* as *action* and *presence* of God (in history) (Kasper 2013:48,49; Thönissen 2014:75,193, 194 & 630).²⁶ A dilemma to be teased out asks what *kind* of reason can *transcend* mere rational processes, i.e. as being *illuminated* (as *sharing* in the *logos*, Ratzinger [1969]2004:59; Thönissen 2014:376).

The *category of spiritual intuition* naturally engages *all* of cognition, but when this is raised to *inspiration*, such ‘refined insight’ can meld into a

relation of love and even *eros*.²⁷ Love *in-spires* (breathes-‘in’) love. Ratzinger profoundly elucidates how logos/thought and creative freedom/love elevate each other (1971:109-112; 2010:108-117; Ratzinger in Thönissen 2014:274).

2. The Saints’ Second Way: *Experience, Relationality* and *Spiritual intuition* in St Francis as Forms of Direct Loving-Communing with God

The thesis (Thönissen 2014:116, 3.4.3) examines more closely the mediations Francis did and did *not* use to ‘access’ his God. A phenomenological study (the appearance/presenting of ‘Godself’) of Francis’ major *experiences* (Thönissen 2014:411) reveals that a *direct revealing* was given him (e.g. Christ speaking to Francis from the crucifix, receiving the stigmata etc.). Francis’ way to God was not through detached intellect and reason using ‘steps’ that ‘reason to God’ (as first cause/first mover, Mathew 2010:108-129; Thompson 2010:102-116). Instead he *begged* God to *touch* him *affectively* - via a *depth faculty* possessing a kind of receptive *spiritual intuition* that enables total openness to God. Thus Saints like Francis, instead of drawing on the *theology* of the Trinity (he follows no intellectual path or scholarly method²⁸) were *mystically connected* to the Trinity through their *contemplation*. They ‘knew’ the Trinity through *intimate love and intense union*.²⁹ The ‘epistemology’ Francis employed reveals how *love birthing theology* meet in a *contuited*, mystical knowledge (Thönissen 2014:318). As example of this one can read Francis’ praise of the Trinity as beautiful ‘poetic *theology*’.³⁰ Bluntly put, the Saints *live their relationship with God* rather than merely ‘*thinking* God.’ If Francis and others did *live* the *experience* of intimate life with *God*, we can begin to consolidate ‘*experience*’ to be employable as a *foundational category*. Love possesses its own relational knowledge.³¹ The thesis demonstrates that love is more directly *contuited* than any ratiocination or discursive thinking (see distinctions in Komonchak 1987:1015,1016a; Egan 2009:11,12; von Balthasar 1989:18; McGinn vol. I 1991:306,307; Thönissen 2014:320).

In other words, Francis uses his ‘mind’ in a *highly integrative, intuitive, spiritual way* and so arrives at the results that sound reason could (supposedly) attain (i.e. ‘God’), but with enormously heightened meaning, humaneness, intense affectivity and deep mystery. Francis hereby offers a fresh ‘way.’ Recognising and harnessing this sea-change can reform the Catholic Church – and also, help direct all ecumenical efforts.

St Bonaventure built a powerful schema on the life-witness of Francis’ mysticism (Delio 1998 & 2001).

ST FRANCIS: A MODEL EXEMPLIFYING THE THREE FOUNDATIONAL CATEGORIES OF EXPERIENCE, RELATIONALITY & SPIRITUAL INTUITION (Thönissen 2014:28; 2014:112 ch.3; 2014:140).

St Francis as a currently popular Saint is developed into a *model* by the thesis. As *icon* (Thönissen 2014:140), he radiates an *intuitive* direct loving *relationship* that was *experienced* ‘in Christ’ as a direct mystical route to God (Thönissen 2014:119). Thus Francis’ real-life witness confirms and consolidates the proposed three foundational categories, namely the centrality of *experience* of God, which draws into intimate *relationship* and which is inwardly received in an *intuitive* and *spiritual* manner (see Thönissen 2014:638).

The Three Foundational Categories as Evidenced by St Francis

1. What does the spiritual *experience* of Francis (as supported by other Saints) teach us?

A phenomenological study of Francis’ main experiences (Thönissen 2014:408-411) can build theory that reveals that Christ increasingly gives *himself* to Francis *directly* (in the apophatic emptiness of his heart in ‘naked,’ receptive emptiness³², Delio 2004:22; Thönissen 2014:188); in other words, in what may purposely be called ‘pure experience’ of God³³ that was as *unmediated* as is possible.³⁴

If Francis as model *sublates* other ‘mediations’ to God - such as reasoning, conceptual content of faith or objective belief - one has to come back to what one may call pre-thematic experience of God (primitive, raw impact, deep impress, Thönissen 2014:242, 599).³⁵ Plumbing this personal inner *process* (also called conversion, or simply faith) will obviously be key for a distressed Christian spirituality today.

2. If experience *moved* Francis so, what kind of *relational quality* of the experience did so?

Francis’ evidences a *highly affective, relational* experience which allows one to bypass past (burdensome) mental methods attaining to God.³⁶ This Franciscan ‘way of love’ can well be called a ‘shortcut to God’ (see Lekeux’s 1962 book of that title, Thönissen 2014:116). A more direct (preconceptional) *relational* route soberly ‘relativises’ the ‘single-minded’ place of intellect and reason as traditionally attaining to God,³⁷ offering as option, an easier, accessible, attractive, direct, but ‘ever-sound path’ of love for connection (Thönissen 2014:116; see also 2014:282³⁸).

Appreciating this process obliges one to accept an equally valid, orthodox (and more fulfilling) route to that of reason’s habitually laborious efforts, that is, the ‘*direct experience* of faith.’

3. How was this loving relationality *intuitively* entered into by Francis - through what faculty?

Respectfully ‘leaving at rest’ the traditional Catholic path of ‘reason-intellect’ as a ‘way working itself to’ God (in the scholastic, Aristotelian and Thomistic sense³⁹ through analogy⁴⁰ and noting, Francis was ‘uncontaminated’ by such Medieval *theology*), leaves room for Francis to show the only alternative path – a direct *experiential relating* to God. This intimate encounter can only be *intuited by his spirit* (Thönissen 2014:410 Section 6.3).

Francis can relate with his unseen Lord because his ‘soul’ is *spiritually* elevated, infused or illuminated (Thönissen 2014:479 section 6.3.9.2.6;

2014:481).⁴¹ Such intuition or ‘inner awareness in the Spirit’ makes *loving relation* with God possible. Thus this *faculty*, aptly called *spiritual intuition*⁴² renovates human and biblical anthropological faculties in a way that cooperatively *integrates* insightful reason with faith and love/*eros* (as well as emotion, imagination and creativity). Popes John Paul, Benedict (*Caritas in Veritate* 2009 No. 4; *Deus Caritas est* 2005:10-19) and Francis (*Lumen Fidei* 2013:26-28 nos. 2-4) have deeply fathomed such a synthesis.⁴³ If the phenomenological way taken by Francis (the saints) can reveal the ‘ground’ of living faith (as *sensus fidei/fidelium*, see *Lumen Gentium* No.12 in Flannery 1964:363, note this *capacity for faith* remains *undeveloped* by the Church, Thönissen 2014:307; *EG* 2013:67 No. 119) then it surely deserves to be comprehensively probed, deeply understood and fruitfully propagated. The thesis delves deep to uncover such an ‘instinct of faith’⁴⁴ (Thönissen 2014:320).

A SYNTHETIC FOUNDATION FOR CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY BUILT ON SOUND *THEORY* AND ‘HOLY’ *EXPERIENCE*

St Francis spiritual path shows how ‘rising through these phases’ of love (close, passionate, even ‘fiery’) can be the *normative* path for every person’s ‘spiritual map.’ In short, researched *hermeneutic theory* when reinforced by the *spiritual experience* of Francis and others, proposes a synthesis that can deliver a *foundational theology* able to ground Christian spirituality. This foundation is underpinned by three ‘metaphysical’ foundational categories: 1) religious *experience* (the existential event encountering transcendence); 2) *relationally* (the loving quality and state of such dynamic interchange); and 3) *spiritual-intuition* (the graced human and pneumatic *capacity, faculty* and *process* in which the divine personally donates itself⁴⁵; Thönissen 2014:27, 1.2.3.2). Each category, as it is shown to be *metaphysically* grounded, becomes universally valid and applicable.⁴⁶ Spirituality can now claim to be a discipline and can be fruitfully used by all.

THE THREE FOUNDATIONAL CATEGORIES AS IMPACTING REFORM OF A CHURCH SERVING THE WORLD

A ‘new pastoral style’ beyond static doctrine and structure must be found to bring transforming experience to needy, seeking *subjects*.⁴⁷ Instead of deducting from (metaphysical) truth and *applying* this to situations, we ‘induct’ to God *relationally* ‘from life below’ (as he acts on us).⁴⁸ The ‘phenomenon’ ‘God’ allows *God's own self* to be personally *contuited* as he gives *himself* to our historical life-experience. Such an approach inducts towards a ‘humble metaphysics’ (the subject loved by God, not an *a priori* one).

HOW SUCCESSFULLY THE SYMPTOMS FACING THE CHURCH CAN BE RESOLVED USING THE SUGGESTED HERMENEUTIC, MUST BE TESTED (THÖNISSEN 2014:542). HELPFUL POINTERS TO THAT END WILL INCLUDE:

- A rediscovery of an innate, deeper ‘openness’ to transcendence. Unless this *faculty*⁴⁹ of *spiritual intuition* becomes (pneumatologically) ‘attuned’ to transcendence, there can be no personal ‘break-through’ to God (or God in us, as faith) in youth-work, catechesis, adult formation or seminary training.⁵⁰
- A *fresh pedagogy / mystagogy* (EG 2013:64,65, No.166,167) encompassing the ‘spiritual journey’ (EG 2013:90-92 No.169-173) must fire the ‘new evangelisation’ (EG 2013:13-15 No.14,15) and also an easily appropriated personalised *kerygma*.
- *Experientially alive* spirituality aimed at a more *spiritual* Church, with *effective* leadership (for the poor, EG 2013:133 No. 270). Grounding Church *structures* (through care/service⁵¹) and its *worship/sacraments* in vibrant *relationality* (reviving ‘dead,’ listless liturgy).
- Learning to pray deeply: *contemplation* as *relational* entry into mystery⁵² and all God’s creation.

**THREE INCISIVE QUESTIONS JUDGING
ANY SOLUTION TO CONCRETE PROBLEMS:**

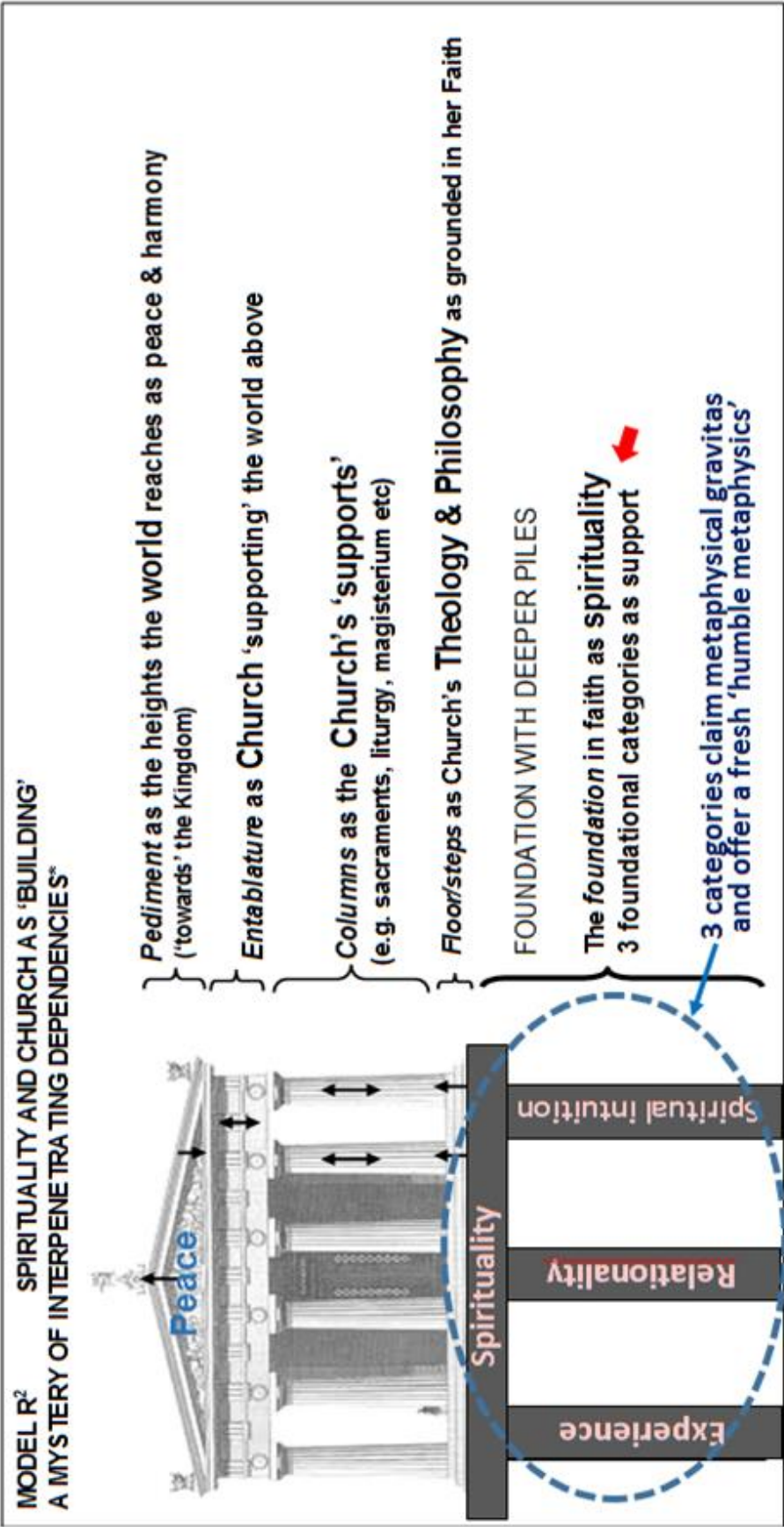
(see Thönissen 2014: 619 section 7.3.6)

1. Was there real *experience* of God? Was there *experiential* evidence of the *Spirit* at work?
2. Did this experimental phenomenon make for *relational change* as a *form of growth*? (eliciting the harmony of the Kingdom in the world, and/or closer union with God, and each other).
3. To what extent was 1 & 2 above worthily received through *spiritual intuition*? Was the subject's (subjects as group) *spiritual intuition* open enough to the Spirit's impulses to be maximally fruitful?

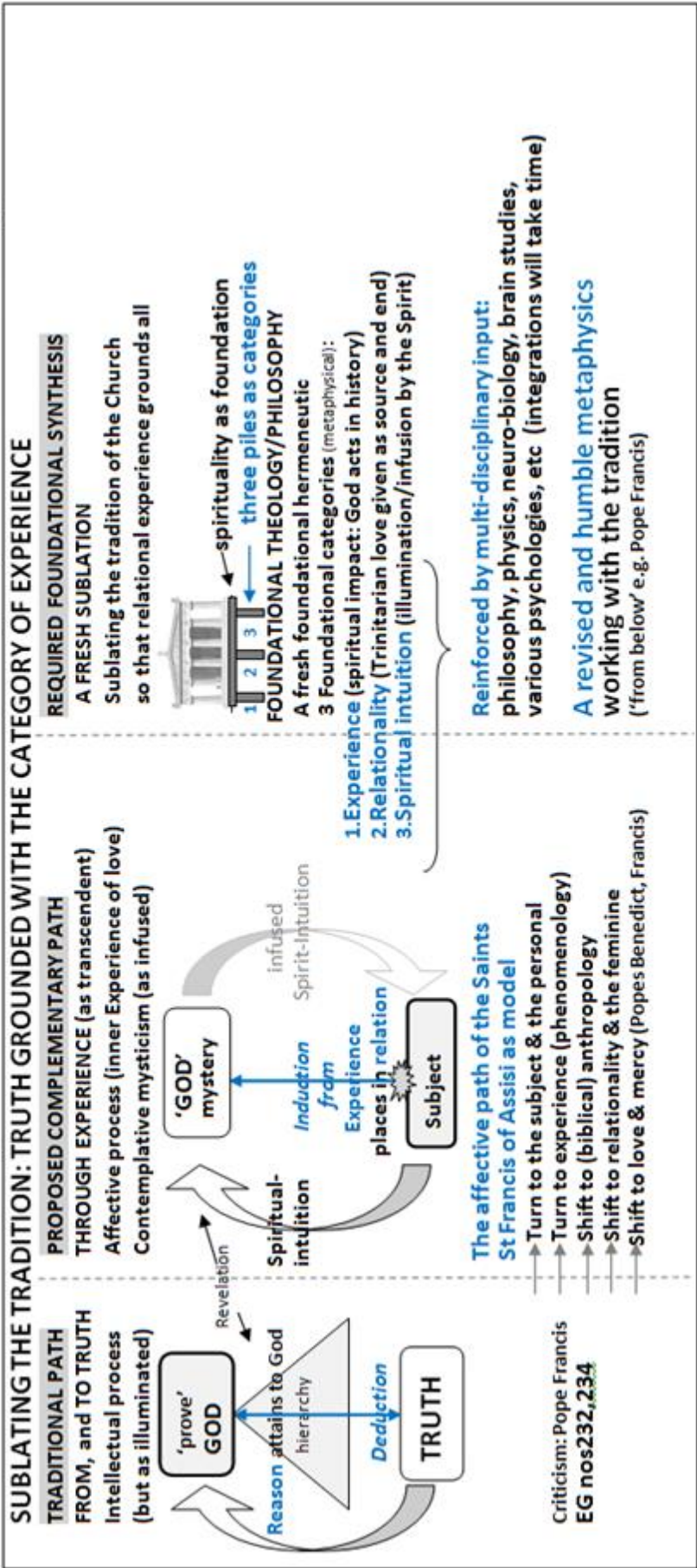
**SOME ULTIMATE AND ABSOLUTE DECLARATIONS:
THE INDISPENSABILITY OF THE CATEGORIES
ENDORSES THEIR FOUNDATIONAL WORTH:**

1. Without the category of *experience*, God is *distant and powerless*, and may as well not exist.⁵³
2. Without the category of *relationality*, the Trinity doesn't *love us* its creation, and is irrelevant.
3. Without the category of *spiritual intuition*, God is an *unsatisfying idea*, and is not accessible.⁵⁴

APPENDIX A



*see Models R & S. Thönissen, C.J. Foundations for Spirituality. A 'Hermeneutic of Reform' for the Church Facing Crisis
Inspired by St Francis of Assisi. UNISA 2014 Pgs 58, 81



NOTES

¹ Spirituality entails ‘the total domain,’ holiness the personally possessed, real-life dynamic that is part of the gift of faith and new life. Spirituality has very much to do with this fundamental impulse of *faith*. Both Chenu (1968:8; Bergson 1946) and de Lubac (1967:xiii) indicate that the *foundations of faith* require important study ‘before it is too late to be of help’ (Thönissen 2014:67). Both Pope John Paul II and Benedict XVI (2011b:8,31) agreed that retrieving a *spiritual reform of faith* is the most pressing challenge that the Church faces (Thönissen 2014:97).

² See Thönissen 2014:82-85.

³ See Thönissen 2014:66, section 2.5.2.2 & 62; 2014:67; 2014:518.

⁴ See Downey (1997:41 & 118,119) regarding the ‘imprecision’ and ‘ambiguity’ of the term spirituality and experience (Downey 1977:13,41,117-119; Thönissen 2014:71-73,73,74; Holder 2005:240; McGinn 1991:xi; see De Villiers, Kourie & Lombaard, 2008).

⁵ See Thönissen 2014:73 & 73; 2014:22 &; Egan 2009:91; Schneiders 1986:253, 1989:696. Shallow, even egocentric, and excessively local lifestyles often claim to be a ‘spirituality’ (Bevans 1992:17, 23).

⁶ See Thönissen 2014:70 for other contexts; 2014:71 section 2.5.3.1; 2014:72 section 2.5.3.3. The *context* of spirituality has to be the *tradition* of lived spirituality, which is the lived faith of the *Church itself*. See Osborne 2009:ix,xiv; Lane 1990 for the Church’s identity ‘in Christ’ understood through her ecclesiology and Christology.

⁷ Fundamental theology, or foundational theology (‘the latter is also called philosophical or historical theology, that explores symbol and common experience’ Thönissen 2014:102), uses ‘critical and rational argument’ as a ‘methodic reflection’ on Christian faith (Dulles 1992a:xvii). McBrien (Vol.2 1980:xxx; Thönissen 2014:102) defines fundamental theology as ‘that area of theology that deals with the most basic introductory questions: e.g. revelation, faith, authority, the ways of knowing God, the nature and task of theology itself.’ Foundational theology seeks *categories* for systematic theology, see Komonchak 1987:1019).

⁸ Lacking both inclusive *breadth* and capacity to *focus* well, spirituality cannot ‘consolidate’ her own spiritual experience. Spirituality became historically ‘truncated’ from its foundations (Thönissen 2014:87-94). Without foundations any over-hasty and unconsolidated attempt by spirituality at independence as a discipline will undermine its standing. Schneiders in arguing for the autonomy of Spirituality, has maintained a monological reference to (single) experiences she believes to be core. Such an approach asks for ‘individual foci’ on concrete experiences (Lescher & Liebert 2006:2006; Thönissen 2014:280). This *start* is sound, but spirituality is required to *first* substantiate a major hermeneutic *category* (gained through both *existential* surveys and *theory-building*) called ‘experience.’ Such a sound foundational hermeneutic can then filter (Davis-Floyd & Arvidson 1997:128), allocate and interpret the *individual* experiences (see Thönissen 2014:274 section 5.1.7.1). Another difficulty emerges when Schneiders tries to retain focus on the instigation experience catalyses so that the *individual* ‘text’ determines the *method* selected. This approach bypasses any need for foundational theory. Not employing sound theology will isolate and impoverish a naïve, ‘free-floating’ ‘Cinderella’ spirituality (Thönissen 2014:71,102). We must unravel the intersection of *both* a *broad*, inclusive, grounding *theory*, as well as the *individual* deep, intense ‘*experiences*’ as phenomena (Lonergan 1973:24, Egan 2009:161; Thönissen 2014:279; EG no234). If a foundation is not solidly established, spirituality will undercut the very value of those ‘experiences’ it instinctively leans on, thereby forfeiting opportunity to build ‘experience’ into a foundational *category* that (with other categories) can adequately ground spirituality as a discipline (Thönissen 2014:244,249). Thus, John Paul II makes the ‘urgent’ and ‘great challenge’ plain: ‘to move from phenomenon to foundation...We cannot stop short at experience alone...’ *Fides et Ratio* 1998:77-78 No. 83, Thönissen 2014:103. All ‘divine’ spiritual *experiences* fall under a *unified, coherent*, economic ‘providence’ with an intentional origin (universal love), an overall (soteriological) cosmic plan and a glorious end (eschatological telos).

⁹ John Paul II (Thönissen 2014:103; 2014:32 & 103) explicitly seeks a *new foundationalism* when he asks that our ‘speculative thinking must penetrate the *spiritual core and ground from which it arises*’ (*Fides et Ratio* 1998:77,78 No. 83 italics added). He recognises the import of finding ‘a philosophy of genuine *metaphysical range* capable...of transcending empirical data’ (‘experiences’) ‘in order to attain something absolute, ultimate and *foundational* in its search for truth’ (No. 83, italics and brackets added). Ratzinger (2006:90 italics/brackets added) deems a macro-theory result to be essential: ‘One’s ‘search for knowledge must aim not only to collect a large number of individual details, but...to grasp the totality as such.’ The thesis tries to establish this ‘foundation of all rationality’ (Ratzinger 2006:90 Thönissen 2014:104) as it is built on universal transcendental grounds. See a metaphysic offered by Thönissen 2014:629.

¹⁰ Thönissen, C.J. 2014. *Foundations for Spirituality: a ‘Hermeneutic of Reform’ for a Church Facing Crises Inspired by St Francis of Assisi*. Pretoria: UNISA. [<http://uir.unisa.ac.za/handle/10500/19100>]

¹¹ The ignoring, diminishment and forgetting of spirituality is a result of many factors, see Thönissen 2014:61-79.

¹² See also: the anthropological turn (Losinger 2000; Thönissen 2014:264, 5.1.6.2); the turn to experience (Rahner's basic turn to experience and turn to the subject in his 'existential,' Kilby 2004:49); and a shift to anthropology and phenomenology (Dupré 1977, Daniélou [1956]2003, and Von Balthasar's works. For a background see Klein 1990; see also Thönissen 2014:160-162).

¹³ A broad, inclusive and encompassing, idiographic and interpretive-synthetic method is used by the thesis, Thönissen 2014:40, all of 1.4.1.4.

¹⁴ It is held that confidence in reason as a form of wisdom is the Church's great strength and can never be diminished or relegated (see *fideism* in McBrien 1980:xxx). How *reason* shares in the divine *logos* must be argued elsewhere, see Ratzinger 1995:73-98; Sikka 1997:29; Thönissen 2014:123. In order to promote ecumenism, how reason helps ground the Church's faith must be deeply investigated (Thönissen 2014:578 & 255).

¹⁵ A classical reason that 'demonstrates' the 'real' is different to what Maritain (1922:64) calls the 'reason' of rationalism' (physical-mathematical) which 'can know or say nothing at all about God.' See Maritain's 'creative intuition' as connatural, mystical, 'non-conscious knowledge of God' (1948:69-71, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/maritain/> [accessed 23.3.15]).

¹⁶ A fresh metaphysics starts with *experience finding meaning*, not an *a priori* 'God-schema' (almost provable; see Thönissen 2014:108 all of section 2.13).

¹⁷ Categories refer to concepts of existence (Gk *kategorēin* - to make a statement), a term introduced by Aristotle. He distinguished ten categories (substance, quantity, quality, relation, place, time, position, state, action, affection), while Plato distinguished four (identity, difference, persistence, and change), Delius 2000:112. See Thönissen 2014:6).

¹⁸ See Thönissen 2014:50 Part II No. 4, and 2014:72 for a list of disciplines that have to work in interdisciplinary ways that aim to synthesise towards foundational concrescence.

¹⁹ Pope Benedict XVI seeks a 'broad reason' (Thönissen 2014:314,320). Groome & Daley (2010:xii) encourage constructive (imaginative) attempts. Maloney (1978:15, Thönissen 2014:112) called for a 'new vision' to complement the Church's *rationalistic* framework. John Paul II put such a fresh drive under '*new evangelisation*', Thönissen 2014:227.

²⁰ The Church is presently at an impasse that looks for: attractive drawing into faith; holistic integration; a fresh paradigm; and a way of reviving a pertinent philosophy. The thesis seeks a synthetic hermeneutic through *sublation* (Dulles 1992a:127, see Thönissen 2014:29,33,106,110,156,169) that is, to produce something new by a fresh synthesis of the old, so that, with new input, a creative hermeneutic model emerges.

²¹ Considerations as to method is deliberated. It is necessary to *contrast* in order to bring out the difference between the processes of *reason* and *love* (see Thönissen 2014:639). Love offers *more* than reason, so that in higher ecstatic love, reason gets in the way. Reason's philosophically based approach ('God of the philosophers', Thönissen 2014:504) will use discursive, analogical and dialectic methodology. It is necessary to *unite* reason and love to show how they can be mysteriously connected. Reason transmutes into love - a synthesis unites both so that *mystical theology* can explain such a *synthesis*. *Illuminated* reason (Thönissen 2014:31,120,313,595) as for the case of (Biblical) *inspiration*, *infused* with spiritual insight, goes beyond any slavishly strict philosophical method or rules; see Thönissen 2014:160-164.

²² See Thönissen 2014:15. 1) training Church leadership/seminary training; 2) Church's 'inadequate' communications; 3) scandal of ecumenical separation; 4) separation of spirituality from the Church; 5) Church in terms of her liturgy/Eucharist; 6) 'spiritual hunger/thirst' of the world; 7) needs of today's youth; 8) relevant catechesis; 9) evangelical thrust; 10) Church *leadership* that will pass on faith; 11) Church imparting a sound *basis* of faith; 12) social justice/poverty; 13) Church and loss of world respect for ecology, cosmology and a guiding morality; 14) bad fundamentalism (2014:537-612).

²³ See Ratzinger 2010:108-117 on integrated paths to faith. La Nave (2005:9) reveals that even as recent popes invited theologians to explore holiness leading to doctrine by naming Saints as doctors of the Church (Thérèse of Lisieux) 'only a few contemporary theologians have explicitly turned to the Saints as sources for understanding the dogmas of the faith.'

²⁴ Mathew succinctly reveals the abiding problem Aristotle bred as he 'tried to reach being through the analysis of the *things of nature*,' namely, 'entities, manufactured goods,' or '*artefacts*, the basic category being *substance*' (2010:26 italics added), where persons too are just an entity. 'His interpretation of man was not derived from a *fundamental experience of human life itself*,' rather, 'When an artefact is completed, matter is formed...' (Mathew 2010:26 italics added). Here then 'Being is being at rest (i.e. static) being completed.' Aristotle *generalises* these *concepts* and applies them in his analysis of human existence (2010:26 brackets added). Heidegger will thus claim that the notion of substance does not fit *Dasein* (Thönissen 2014:210; Sadler 1996:175). See, 'attack on substance theology,' Thönissen 2014:192 and 'a humble metaphysics,' 2014:629. However, see Lonergan's positive argument for transcendence as arrived at by transcendent knowledge, which interestingly, can be seen to employ intuitive and synthetic drives, 1992:663-666. The process though has to be researched.

²⁵ The question (directed at Neo-Thomism, Thönnissen 2014:180,181,397) remains: can one really *think* one's way to God (through concepts) in a way that is satisfying enough? (Maritain uncovers the poverty of metaphysics in McGinn Vol.I 1991:306). The last 3 popes have made insightful efforts to unite the avenue of *reason and truth* to the *love* that is part of faith. Benedict XVI *Deus Caritas Est* 2005:14-23 No.7-17; Francis' *Lumen Fidei* 2013:29,30 No.23; 2013:31,32 No.25; 2013:32,33 No. 26; 2013:33-35 No. 27; 2013:35,36 No. 28; see Greek 'static contemplation' and Hebrew personal 'hearing,' 2013:36-38 No.29.

²⁶ The Franciscan Bonaventurian tradition believes the co-working mind will eventually get in the way of love (Thönnissen 2014:334; 2014:478 & 484). The *difference* between a 'closed' philosophy and a truly transcendent one is strikingly displayed when comparing Kant's understanding with Bonaventure's *intuitional* understanding. Bonaventure's final synthesis is not primarily rational but of a 'visionary' kind 'whereby the mind is *simplified* and *illuminated*' (Sikka 1997:36; Dulles 1992b:55). For Bonaventure the mind has a 'latent innate knowledge' (intuitive) of the divine being (Thönnissen 2014:205). Sikka sees Bonaventure holding that any grounds for *categories* are 'utterly transcendent to the *mens*' (mind). They are '*beyond* reason' (Lachance 1984:29). Sikka asks that 'reason be transcended because it cannot penetrate the ground that supports it' (Thönnissen 2014:480). Thus 'For Bonaventure only in and through this unfathomable ground, only with its support at every step, is it possible for thinking to occur at all' (Sikka 1997:30 in Thönnissen 2014:255). If one accepts Bonaventure's approach, all cognition, all reasonable thinking, any fuller meaning is *intuitively* (1997:36) upheld and enabled by a transcendent ground. Understanding emerges out of 'earthly' contact with things, but *under* 'divine' *illumination*. In acknowledging this underlay as a transcendent grounding 'in the Spirit' (Thönnissen 2014:254 & 255), *spiritual intuition* must be accorded its rightful place as *overarching* a past rationality that asked too much of itself (Thönnissen 2014:235). The thesis attempts the unravelling of the deep and holistic workings of spiritual intuition using neurobiology (Thönnissen 2014:370), psychology, and philosophy.

²⁷ This capacity of spiritual intuition explains how *morality* and *values* can possibly be *universally* discerned; and how we can arrive at *general laws* in common. Maloney (1983:3) expands that the 'root meaning' of *ecstasy* describes God's 'movement out of Himself...a burning, driving force toward someone else to be gift to the other.' See Bonaventure's contributions in Thönnissen 2014:480 & 481.

²⁸ Francis had no access to university thinking, libraries, Scholastic thought or any wise spiritual director, or clerical friend or tutor guiding into Church literature or theology, Thönnissen 2014:116. In his *Letter to the Entire Order* (Armstrong Vol.I 1999:119). Francis describes himself as '*simplex et idiota*': 'an ignorant, uneducated person' (see Thönnissen 2014:455). His Latin was very poor.

²⁹ The connection was *intimate* and *passionate*: the stigmata is an absolute sign of co-suffering with Christ, Thönnissen 2014: 465-472.

³⁰ See St Francis in Armstrong Vol.I 1999:81-86,118,121,161; Thönnissen 2014:165 section 4.16; Delio 1998:75.

³¹ See Pascal, Thönnissen 2014:219; Thönnissen 2014:311 Section 5.2.9. Pope Francis (*Lumen Fidei* 2013:35, No. 27) cites *Gregory the Great*: 'Love is itself a kind of knowledge possessed of its own logic.' The very notion of the love of God implies that it should be exchanged and thus received; be 'experienced'; and enjoyed as generosity. How can love have any meaning if the *very expression* of love is permanently inaccessible? The expression of love must be that which is intended to be communicated and 'given' across distance so that it can be felt as 'impact' (Thönnissen 2014:204; Delio 1998:98). As Ratzinger (1971:125 in Thönnissen 2014:232) states, 'Only by entering does one experience; only by co-operating in the experiment does one ask at all, and only he who asks receives an answer.'

³² Johnston 1995:181. Francis' emptiness or inner 'poverty of spirit' as being 'empty for God' (*vacare Deo*) is 'symbolically epitomised by the dark caves in which he searched so desperately for God' (Thönnissen 2014:118; see Bodo 1972:9-11 for a description).

³³ The impact of an event is always an emotionally felt extension of the impact of the other (Dilthey in Palmer 1996:104,105, Thönnissen 2014:321). See *intentionality* in Marion, 2002:44-49; Thönnissen 2014:402 section 6.2.6.1; 2014:518 section 7.1.11 & 2014:519). Fuller (1990:39 in Thönnissen 2014:118) confirms: 'Meanings...have a structure, logic and dynamics of their own.'

³⁴ Bonaventure expresses the direct Franciscan route: 'The best way to know God is the experience of his sweetness; it is far better, nobler and sweeter than intellectual research' (Bonaventure 3 *Sentences* 35.1 cited in Wakefield 1983:54). '*When it sees it's Spouse and hears, smells, tastes and embraces him, the soul can sing like a bride. No one grasps this except him who receives since it is more a matter of affective experience than rational consideration*' (*Itinerarium* I 4.3 in Thönnissen 2014:124).

³⁵ See the thesis' substantiation (Thönnissen 2014:271-276; Francis' 'raw' experience, Thönnissen 2014:115). The terms 'pure' and 'raw' are used provocatively. Many argue that experience is always mediated, (see Katz 1978; See Schneiders in Lescher & Liebert 2006:202). The word 'raw' is 'meant to displace the excessive emphasis on a long-

held tendency emphasising (subjective) mediation (particularly by ‘thought’ in theology) that dilutes’ and ‘casts doubt on the *transcendent* itself/herself instigating’ the experience. (Thönissen 2014:116; 115,118).

Mysticism is defined as ‘consciousness of the *direct* and *immediate* presence or encounter of God (McGinn Vol.1 1991:xiv; xvii) without ‘internal and external mediations’ found in other forms of consciousness (1991:xix; see Thompson 2010:1; see Heidegger’s *aletheia* as unveiling of God in Komonchak 1987:1013; Lonergan (McGinn 1991:xx in Thönissen 2014:116) calls this ‘mediated immediacy’. *Faith* that includes love cannot but include what Komonchak calls ‘disclosure experiences’ (1987:1012). Chenu (1968:8) strains for the possibility ‘to dispense with the intervening stages to attain...the purity of revelation through direct dialogue with God’ (Thönissen 2014:556).

³⁶ Chenu (1968:8 in Thönissen 2014:556) calls this a ‘system of laborious concepts’, a ‘wearisome’ apparatus of concepts.’ Rather than using the abstract language of Scholastic categories expanding *being*, such as *substance* (the ‘thingness of the thing’ as existing), *essence*, and *accidence* (its external manifestation, Thönissen 2014:179, 2014:191), we should talk about ‘*participation* in being’ that might handily delineate ‘being for us’). After all, *being* (God) is *more* than an *idea* of something (God is ‘no thing’; see ‘negative theology,’ Woods 1998:50-55,69,82-86). Beyond making mental analogies, and the leap of the mind to *being*, only the vehicle of experience allows God to present *himself as he wants to* ‘to us’ – that is, God ‘as he is in himself’ (see Thönissen 2014:238; 2014:618; Kasper 1986:122,123). Religion has to be tied to Gods *self-revelation* in *history*; in our experience of *relating* (Kasper 2013:29). What can actually exist without love? A ‘substantial being’ as ‘thing’ makes no sense unless it is also a ‘loving being’ (Bonaventure’s case, Delio 1998:75; Marion in Thönissen 2014:379-380; 2014:271 & 282 section 5.1.8.3). *Love* must necessarily be part of the definition of being. This asks for ‘shifts’ that theologians like Bonaventure (Thönissen 2014:167) Heidegger (in Maloney 1987:85), and Kasper (in qualitative ‘mercy’ of God, 2013:74-128) have made through a more *mystical theology*, different to an intellectual approach as largely upheld by St Thomas. This author believes it is Bonaventure with his affective, contemplative and mystical dimensions that can surpass and ‘save’ Aristotelian based theology (Thomism, see Delio 1998:75,76) resting too much on the *senses* and *intellect* (and therefore later, the sciences and a tainting by rationalism. Descartes and Kant also fell victim to this path so as to lead the West into unproductive philosophical ‘dead ends’; see Thönissen 2014:192). Palmer for instance (1969:102) instead sees Dilthey holding ‘that the dynamics of man’s inner life are a complex matter of cognition, feeling, and will.’

³⁷ The *experience* of faith can never be ‘reduced to knowledge’ says Benedict XVI ([1968]2004:72, Thönissen 2014: 115,119).

³⁸ See Thönissen 2014:282 section 5.1.8.2. Love sees that existence is ‘for others’: it is creative existence *with* others that is *dynamic* (Maloney 1987:29; 2004:32). It always has an *affective* compass. Beings *act* on and *touch* or *move* others, and thus must also be *historically* imbedded (Downey 1993:485) beyond an ‘abstract’ realm (no matter how ontologically validated. Rahner 1975:812). The *Modernist* crisis, returning to experience, elicited vehement Church reaction. Mouroux in the 1950’s (see Thönissen 2014:217) reopened the prickly case of experience. Admitting excesses by *Modernism*, experience is not meant to degrade or replace reason as always integral, but places reason in a wider and deeper *sublation* (in sound anthropology, see Thönissen 2014:266; Hunt 1997:35) so that reason can find its rightful place and even fuller meaning in *love* (see Thönissen 2014:121 & 119).

³⁹ A sense seen in Shahan & Kovach 1976:8 and Osborne 2003:11-30.

⁴⁰ As *ananoetic* intellection, McGinn 1991:306; see Western rationalism’s dismissal of intuition, falling back on ‘objective laws’ and ‘external observations,’ ‘dualistic ontology’ and ‘epistemology of rational/mental consciousness’ as opposed to relational processes and imagination (Burneko in Davis-Floyd & Arvidson 1997:84,85,90,91), where intuition is part of the *officina omnium* as *all* is ‘united’ in humanity as the ‘workshop of everything’ (1997:94) in what is an *intuited synthesis* (1997:126).

⁴¹ Gerken (1990:93 in Thönissen 2014:335) sees Bonaventure revealing ‘that to be a human being -to be a spirit- is a vocation to personal, intuitive communication - a vocation to the discovery of unity and identity in an ascent to the first, personal origin.’

⁴² The thesis research details how spiritual intuition is not only *viable* but a *critically required faculty* on the basis of brain studies, psychology and philosophy and anthropology (see Thönissen 2014:366,369,379).

⁴³ ICor 2:13-15. See the Bonaventurian ‘ladder’ (McGinn Vol.III 1998:106): a synthesis of ‘*sensus, imaginatio, ratio, intellectus, intelligentia*,’ where the *affective power* is at the top of the ladder (*apex mentis-apex affectus-synderesis scintilla*), Thönissen 2014:495).

⁴⁴ This unavoidably opens up a vital debate that must resolve past approaches based on reason alone (natural theology); one that is still taught by the Church (TCCC 39-43) through Vatican I. The thesis makes space for, and subsumes, reason in the more inclusive and employable *faculty* and *function* of spiritual intuition that *relates*. In this way the dictum can be coined: ‘all truth is relational’ (Thönissen 2014:35,280).

⁴⁵ Von Balthasar’s lamenting of the ‘loss of fertile receptive ground’ (or crucial ‘objective spiritual medium,’ where ‘spiritual consciousness could grow into doctrinal truth’) cited in McIntosh 1998:63. The categories are explained as follows:

Relationality (Thönnissen 2014:34 section 1.3.6.1) ‘includes all *origins* motivated by love as well as the final desired *telos* that consummates love, and *Relationality* is thus, as ultimate meaning, the ‘holder of all meaning’ in all reality, as this is ultimately to be found in affectivity/love as it emanates out of the life of the Trinity.’ *Relationality* (see Thönnissen 2014:35) expects that ‘all *experience* of others is ordered in a divine manner for right and loving relations’ as is reflected in the Trinity. Hunt (1997:114) elucidates relations in the Trinity through Durrwell: ‘A renewed sense of the *perichoresis* (or circumincession) also emerges. Instead of the traditional notions of unity of essence, nature, or substance, God is these Three - Father, Son, and Spirit - existing in an eternal perichoretic communion of life and love.’ ‘We find that the reasoning is reversed. The divine persons as persons reveal what it is to be a person...It is to be in relationship with others...’ (Hunt 1997:118,119). Thus, relationality (as expanded, Thönnissen 2014:292), deserves to be called an *arch-category*. As the *end* of spirituality, full loving relationship is called intimate *union*. Relationality will ask a paradigm shift in the Church as Pope Francis has been promoting (see EG 2013:119).

Experience (Thönnissen 2014:34) ‘is the *revelatory event* carrying meaning that is of an affective relational nature - as it *shares* in the very loving and creative interaction between the persons of the Trinity.’ Experience (Thönnissen 2014:34, 1.3.6.2.1) ‘is the phenomenological event of interaction between persons and/or God as imbued with *qualitative meaning* in a fecund unfolding that is *felt* as *impact* by the anthropological capacities or faculties of the whole human subject’ (including those transcendental). Experience ‘has a *metaphysical* dimension to it’ in terms of divine energy (‘uncreated energy’ see Thönnissen 2014:273 & 329). Such religious experience is at once deep *human* discovery and *divine* gift sharing in the Trinity. Classically this is ‘the *perichoresis* of the three persons of the trinity... it is equivalent to saying that God is love (1Jn 4:8)’ (in Bracken & Suchocki 1997:85; Rahner’s grace is ‘Godself,’ Hunt 2005:171). Hunt points out that, Durrwell moves us beyond ‘the opposition of substantialist and personalist categories’ (1997:35). The thesis exonerates experience to be a valid category (Thönnissen 2014:194).

Spiritual Intuition (Thönnissen 2014:34) ‘is the innate human *capacity* of a *transcendent faculty*, that is, under the Spirit, able to receive and absorb transcendent meaningful communication - as bestowed in the inner experiential relational event.’ Spiritual-intuition (see Thönnissen 2014:35) is the ‘integrative process of discernment that harnesses all faculties of mind/reason, heart-psyche/emotion, and soul-spirit/spiritual sense’ (thesis’ anthropology, Thönnissen 2014:323 & 266), ‘by which one comes to be exposed to and find deeper meaning and purpose.’ God can be intuitively ‘felt’ ‘as lovingly directing his activity in marvellously creating, mercifully regenerating and generously sustaining ways’ (Eph 3:19). All this partakes in *logos*, and ‘as wisdom, subsumes all forms of reason hitherto considered.’ *Spiritual-intuition* is dependent on the activity of the Holy Spirit which as *divine* action called *Spirit-intuition*, directly (Myers 2002:1) intrudes upon lowlier, innate *natural intuition*. See schema of the various levels of intuition, Thönnissen 2014:538, Model Q-Q). The forms of intuition are expanded in Thönnissen 2014:320, all of 5.3.

⁴⁶ See a metaphysical basis for: experience, Thönnissen 2014:262; relationality, Thönnissen 2014:306; intuition, Thönnissen 2014:375-387.

⁴⁷ See likewise Pope Francis EG 2013: 22, No 28; 32, No 49; 51, No 87; 55, No 95; 61, No108 & 63,64 No 113,114.

⁴⁸ See EG 2013:29, no43. Bracken & Suchocki (1997:222) ask whether a phenomenological understanding of God ‘as exclusively ‘for us,’ there is not a ‘grave danger’ that God will be seen ‘simply as a projection of human wishes and desires...’ This author counters that phenomenology has claimed to be a *science*: it can uncover in human life, and *systematically* codify, *God’s* intrusion as the phenomena being investigated.

⁴⁹ If *internal intuition* is not receptive, stimulated and overall, eagerly ‘desiring’ or searching in the areas of catechesis evangelization, adult faith formation, sacramental reception, valuing the Eucharist, or conscientisation for justice, then what *other* equivalent faculty (or combinations of faculties) remains open to the pull of inspirational faith bringing us closer to God?

⁵⁰ The kind of *process* described, as ‘self-involving, life-promising and personally and emotionally attractive’, should be encouraged in those to be catechised or being evangelised (Thönnissen 2014:629). Their ‘inner openness’ is critical so that focus shifts on to *them* and *their* transcendental capacity’ (*capax Dei*, or *sensus fidei* Vatican II *Lumen Gentium*, 1977:397, No 12; see Pope Francis, EG 2013:66 No119) ‘and *their* openness - not only the *content* of teaching’ (Thönnissen 2014:642). How to ‘open persons’ (to transcendence) is the challenge the theoretical and phenomenological exploration of the category of experienced *intuition* that the thesis works through. See: Thönnissen 2014:624. See seminary training, Thönnissen 2014:544,551.

⁵¹ Pope Francis EG 2013:58 No102. See Thönnissen 2014:612, 7.2.12.5. ‘FitzGerald enthuses, ‘There is a thrilling intersection between the love-knowledge of the contemplative and the participatory epistemology Richard Tarnas believes has been slowly surfacing in philosophy’’ (FitzGerald, Culligan & Jordan 2000:341 in Thönnissen 2014:296). This feminine ‘Sophia-God’ comes to the forefront at a time when many believe the dominant and pervasive masculinity of the Western intellectual and spiritual tradition is dying’ (Thönnissen 2014:270). Love-knowledge is the equivalent to a contemplative spiritual-intuition as ‘insight through love.’ ‘Participatory epistemology’ (FitzGerald, Culligan & Jordan 2000: 342,343) is precisely the meaningful *relationality* as *intuited* that the thesis forwards as a *mystagogical* model (see T Models Q-Q 538, 7.1.24, and diagram T-I, Thönnissen 2014:510, 7.1.5; 2014:612, 7.2.12.5; Jung and the feminine, Thönnissen 2014:177, 2014:309, 5.2.7. See Waaijman on mystagogy, 2002:870.

⁵² See Thönissen 2014:617, 7.2.14.4. The Recurring Value of Mysticism.

⁵³ See Thönissen 2014:269.

⁵⁴ Ratzinger (1971:102 in Thönissen 2014:504, Thönissen 2014:503& Ratzinger [1968]2004:99 in Thönissen 2014:504) who says: 'love is higher than mere thought... Absolute thought is a kind of love; it is not unfeeling idea, but creative, because it is love.' Gerken (1974:92 Thönissen 2014:318) has shown Bonaventure as seeing 'the *centre of one's being*' (i.e. synthetic intuition) to be 'integrative of all faculties

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BOOK REVIEWS

BAM, Brigalia. 2015. *Democracy More than Just Elections*. Sandton: KMM Review Publishing Company. x + 226 pages. ISBN 978-0-9922329-3-1.

Establishing a democratic state was at the heart of the struggle for freedom from the apartheid regime in South Africa. In 1994 democracy was ushered in with free and fair elections as its engine. The question that many in South Africa, both Black and White, continue to pose, is whether democracy has delivered or is delivering its promises or what is the meaning of democracy in post-apartheid era?

From the cover to the content, *Democracy more than just elections* comprehensively responds to these critical questions both biographically through the author's rich account of her personal life journey of struggle and the upbringing and experience which prepared her for leadership, and politically through the successes, weaknesses and challenges of the South African electoral democracy and its proportional representation system. The intertwining of the personal and political is not only impressive but gives this book its distinctive character.

The book is divided into three sections. Section One; elections, harbinger of democracy, focuses on Bam's upbringing and leadership qualities acquired from her parents, such as honesty, integrity, trustworthiness and vision. It also contains the account of her 14 years at the helm of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC). From her humble beginnings in Goqwana village in the Eastern Cape, Bam states, "The lessons that I had learnt from my parents gave me a great deal of inspiration" (p.39). It then discusses the question of women and voting: "there never will be complete equality until women themselves get involved in creating or making laws as well as in

electing lawmakers” (p.40). This section examines the relationship between elections and democracy. In a key statement, Bam says

Democracy is far more than just elections. It requires independent courts; non-party civil servants; robust institutions, such as churches and universities; the rule of law and property rights; a free press; constitutional checks and balances; above all a culture of openness and tolerance, especially of minorities. But voters’ ability to throw our non-performers out at regular intervals is still the indispensable *sine qua non* (p.63).

This goes to the heart of the matter.

There are many successes in the democratic South Africa, such as the independent judiciary, 2.7 million low-cost homes housing around 10 million people and some 80% of all households connected to electricity and clean water. There are also many weaknesses and challenges such as corruption, political patronage and marginalisation of the electorate. Some of the challenges raised here are similar to those discussed in the Book *Democracy for the Few* by Michael Parenti. By design the electoral system in South Africa has shown its limits in terms of accountability and transparency. The fascinating encounter between Bam and Colonel Mohamar Gaddafi also reveals many challenges of electoral democracy and leadership in Africa, such as the understanding of elections as an end in themselves and abuse of state resources for that end.

To deal with current challenges posed by the South African electoral democracy, Bam suggests a change of the Proportional Representation system. The new electoral system will seek to answer the question posed by the Roman poet, Juvenal, ‘*Quis cutodiet ipsos custodes?*’ (who will guard the guardians?). After more than four consecutive elections, time is ripe to review the electoral system.

The limitation of the book is the analysis of the electoral system. This limitation, however, is also a strong point insofar as it clearly points to an area of research. With this in mind, Bam suggests the establishment of an Electoral Democracy Academy. Among its functions will be the conducting

of research on electoral issues in order to improve the quality of the electoral democracy.

Section Two is about building voting blocks. The book explores key building blocks of an effective Electoral Management Body (EMB) as one of the eleven key components of the electoral cycle. Trust in the EMB and professionalism stand out as main elements. The section examines questions of prisoners' participation in election, boundary demarcation and floor crossing which challenge the electoral management. It links elections, democracy and development. The analysis is deep on the issue of service delivery and the causes of service delivery protests. Bam poses an important question, "Why would people vote for a government and immediately embark on destructive protests against the same government they helped put into power?" (p.100). Answers reveal that people are frustrated and angry since it would seem nobody really cares about the plight of the poor, and those who suffer from the legacy of apartheid. Bam rejects the idea that service delivery protests are an attempt to undermine the government. Conversely, they result from genuine grievances and the type of participatory democracy in the country which poses the challenge of accountability. For many South Africans, the promise of a better life for all remains a distant dream because of inequalities caused by corruption and the inefficiency of the administration. Thus, Bam advocates for civic education and politically neutral and delivery-driven administration.

Section Three deals with delivering on an election mandate. To the credit of a democratic government from President Nelson Mandela to President Jacob Zuma, through President Thabo Mbeki and President Kgalema Montantle, South Africa has made great progress in the transformation of electoral democracy. Institutions of democracy exist such as the impressively independent judiciary, vibrant civil society, robust media, and robust Independent Electoral Commission (IEC). According to Bam the IEC has succeeded in ensuring that elections in South Africa are free, fair and credible. On the African continent and beyond, IEC has provided expert and technical support to many countries. Such an experience is analysed in this book. It offers many lessons to electoral administrators.

The book under review poses a challenge not only to South Africa but also to the continent as a whole:

We owe Africa a huge favour in enhancing the meaning of electoral democracy, in moving from regularity of elections to quality of democratic moment (p.92).

In brief, Bam's book is a timely and critical response to the challenges facing the electoral democracy in South Africa and on the continent. It proves that "elections are not an end in themselves" (p104). The points and examples presented here only sketch the content of the analysis, which should be read in detail. For those interested in democracy, elections and leadership, this is from the horse's mouth, Brigalia Bam, the mother of the South African elections. Therefore: *Tolle, lege* (pick up and read)!

Reviewed by:

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HADDAD, Beverley (ed.). 2015. *Keeping Body and Soul Together: Reflections by Steve de Gruchy on Theology and Development*. Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications. xviii + 333 pages. ISBN 978-1-9206-2007-3.

This book is Bev Haddad's tribute to a valued friend and academic colleague. It is comprised of a number of the late Steve de Gruchy's writings, lectures and addresses which established him as a leader in the field of theology and development in South Africa some of which are published here for the first time. De Gruchy's work was grounded in the local parish, a missionary institute and the university which all contributed to him becoming a theological practitioner or a practising theologian. This gave him his holistic approach to both ministry and the academy. He was no remote scholar who surveyed and analysed the world from a distance. His writings demonstrate the coalescence of intellectual rigour and authentic experience.

Haddad introduces de Gruchy in the Introduction as an incisive scholar who enjoyed the cut and thrust of theological debate and employed this to the benefit of both colleagues and the students he mentored. He emerges not as an isolated thinker but one who needed engagement as a stimulus. The contributions are organised into five sections; *Pursuing the dialogue* which introduces significant theological concepts; *Development visions, conceptualising frameworks* which indicates a critique of fundamental development visions and emerging visions; *Theologising economics, ecology, and food sovereignty* in which he responds to these issues theologically; *Theologising health* which reflects de Gruchy's later work and which was co-pioneered with Jim Cochrane; and *Steve's final word* relating to his latest contribution dealing with the urgent and vital issue of water.

What does not emerge in these essays is the breadth of his theological skills. Steve was a broadly based scholar, not a specialist who lacked the courage to step outside his field of specialisation. This is clear from his contributions to the history of South African Christianity as is evident, *inter alia*, in his

co-authorship with his father and mentor, John de Gruchy in the 25th anniversary edition of *The Church struggle in South Africa* (2005).

Despite his historical sensitivity, what is clear is that he was a truly contextual theologian. His work demonstrated a distinct contemporary concern for Africa and its future. In looking at Part One alone, we find *Doing theology in the Kalahari* where he began with the question ‘How do we do theology in rural Africa?’ (p.2). From this point he engages immediately with the role of the laity and leadership issues before engaging with the Bible and issues of power. In the essay *Like Moses, we always perish outside the Promised Land: Reinhold Niebuhr and the contribution to theology of development*, he directly challenges traditional concepts of development to motivate a democratic approach. His work in *Integrating mission and development: Ten theological theses* is an excellent example of his ability to work in an inter- and trans-disciplinary context beyond the theological encyclopaedia.

The poem *When I think of Olive*, contributed by Steve’s mother, Isobel, demonstrates her own deep and personal understanding of Steve’s theological journey and is insightful for readers. His olive theology was one of his most innovative contributions to theological discourse.

The growth of theology of development in South Africa owes so much to Steve de Gruchy’s work that it is difficult to conceive of it without him and yet it has, largely due to his insightful vision. Haddad has performed a great service by collecting and offering these essays in his memory. *Soli Deo gratia!*

Reviewed by:

Emeritus Professor Graham A. Duncan
University of Pretoria

HAYES, Christine. 2015. *What's divine about divine Law: Early Perspectives*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. xv + 412 pages. ISBN 978-0-691-16519-6.

The topic of this book and reading the sections on rabbinic law within it is like watching paint dry and/or counting sheep while trying to fall asleep. The author is to be congratulated for seeing this project through. She is a committed scholar of some note. The title of the book is extremely apt. She is asking and attempting to answer a basic question in the field of church polity (canon law) from scripture and the period of the early church.

The aim of the book is explore divine law in its varied conceptualisations in the Mediterranean and Near Eastern world in the millennium prior to the rise of Islam and its relevance for the development of Western ideas of divine law. The author argues that Western approaches to this task have not been capable of engaging the paradigms which have arisen in these contexts during this defined period. The issue is based on a lack of clarity regarding whether divine law finds its origin in reason or will, whether it expresses universal principles or the command of a sovereign and other consequent questions.

Divine law is explained as the idea that the norms that guide human actions are based on the concept and expression of a divine which gives it its historical base. This is found in Christianity, Judaism and Islam. It first appeared in ancient Greece and the Hebrew Bible. The Greek conception of divine law was based on intrinsic qualities of rationality, truth, universality and immutability while for the Biblical writers the divinity of law was ascribed to Revelation.

The first part of the book describes the various discourses of divine law that were current in antiquity. Chapter one examines the Biblical discourses with the dominant Sinaitic law. Chapter two takes us to the ancient Greek and Roman theories and practices of law with their assumed dichotomy between natural or divine law and positive human law. Parts

two and three offer responses. The first relates to the similarity between the Biblical and Greek conceptions. The second, based on Pauline thinking separates and distinguishes them (chapters three and four). The third response is found in classical rabbinic writings and practice (Part three). This is a relatively undeveloped area, but is necessary to understand how rabbinic law as divine is constructed and its importance for Western legal discourse. Chapter four focuses on Paul specifically who accepts this dichotomy and challenges Philo's conception. Hayes argues that Paul's representation of Mosaic Law formed '*a strategic accommodation to his audience*' (p. 5) which included Gentiles.

This is a volume for experts and those with a specific interest in the origin of legal matters within the faith system of the three faiths of the book. The author has devoted considerable energy to this work and is to be strongly commended for it. She has offered novel and legitimate interpretations of the focus areas of her study and has contributed not only to legal discourse but also to biblical, historical and religious studies discourses. Her mastery of detail and the lucidity with which she writes compensates to a large degree for the arid nature of the topic.

Reviewed by:

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MR PAUL FALLER taught in Catholic primary and secondary schools before taking up his present position of National Coordinator of Religious Education at the Catholic Institute of Education in Johannesburg. His work includes policy, curriculum and materials development together with training of teachers in the field of Religious Education in both primary and secondary contexts. His current work includes the promotion of meditation in schools, the development of distance learning in Religious Education, and research into a new curriculum for Catholic primary and secondary schools. He holds a BA in Mathematics and Philosophy from the University of South Africa, a Masters in Theology from St Augustine College in Johannesburg, and a Master of Religious Education degree from the Australian Catholic University. Born in Cape Town, he is married with a fourteen year old son.

DR MARGARET A.L. BLACKIE has diverse research interests ranging from medicinal chemistry through higher education to Christian spirituality. She teaches on the M.Div and M.Th. programmes in the Faculty of Theology at Stellenbosch University. She is also highly involved in spiritual formation in the Western Cape. She is affiliated with the *Center of Christian Spirituality* and the *Jesuit Institute South Africa*.

DR MARLENE L. MARTIN attended Summit College in Canada, and obtained a 3 year Diploma in Systematic Theology in 1969. Subsequently she attained a Master's degree in Theological Ethics in the subject of the Church's responsibility toward women who were infected with HIV/Aids. A dissertation on the subject of Medical Science and Health, the spiritual effects of a sense of entitlement in the Ministry of Healing in the Christian Church earned her a Doctorate in Christian Spirituality. Currently her area of interest is the subject of Spiritual Pain, which according to Kearney (1996) is distinctive from physical, psychological and social pain.

DR JEAN EVANS, RSM, is Vocation Minister for the Sisters of Mercy West Midwest Community in Burlingame, California. She is a spiritual director at Mercy Center, Burlingame and assists with Taizé Prayer Around the Cross. After teaching high school in California, she volunteered with the Sisters of Mercy of Johannesburg from 1984-2012, mainly involved in the academic and vocational education of marginalised youth. In 2002, she completed a DTh in Christian Spirituality at the University of South Africa. She continues to write and publish articles on spirituality, faith and society.

REV DR CORNELIS (KEES) THÖNISSEN, OFM Cap, completed his doctorate at UNISA in 2014 and enjoys working in ecumenism. Born in Indonesia of Dutch parents, Fr Kees studied Architecture at the University of Cape Town. He joined the Capuchin Franciscan Order in 1978 and was ordained in 1987. He worked as a formator while studying at the *Franciscan International Study Centre* in Canterbury. He designed and built *Padre Pio*, now a Pretoria retreat/conference centre of which he is director (pdpioretreatsconferences.com). After many leadership positions, he is currently director of the *Damietta Peace Initiative* working in Africa.

ABOUT ST AUGUSTINE COLLEGE OF SOUTH AFRICA

The idea of founding a Catholic university in South Africa was first mooted in 1993 by a group of academics, clergy and business people. It culminated in the establishment of St Augustine College of South Africa in July 1999, when it was registered by the Minister of Education as a private higher education institution and started teaching students registered for the degree of Master of Philosophy and Doctor of Philosophy.

It is situated in Victory Park, Johannesburg and operates as a university offering values-based education to students of any faith or denomination, to develop leaders in Africa for Africa.

The name 'St Augustine' was chosen in order to indicate the African identity of the College since St Augustine of Hippo (354-430 A.D.) was one of the first great Christian scholars of Africa.

As a Catholic educational institution, St Augustine College is committed to making moral values the foundation and inspiration for all its teaching and research. In this way it offers a new and unique contribution to education, much needed in our South African society.

It aims to be a community that studies and teaches disciplines that are necessary for the true human development and flourishing of individuals and society in South Africa. The College's engagement with questions of values is in no sense sectarian or dogmatic but is both critical and creative. It explores the African contribution to Christian thought and vice versa. Ethical values underpin all its educational programmes in order to produce intellectual leaders who remain sensitive to current moral issues, who 'think rigorously so as to act rightly and to serve humanity better' (*Ex Corde Ecclesiae*).

The College is committed to academic freedom, to uncompromisingly high standards and to ensuring that its graduates are recognised and valued anywhere in the world. Through the international network of Catholic universities and the rich tradition of Catholic tertiary education, St Augustine College has access to a wide pool of eminent academics, both locally and abroad, and wishes to share these riches for the common good of South Africa.

AUTHOR GUIDELINES

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St Augustine Papers is a biannual multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary journal published by St Augustine College of South Africa. This academic journal publishes scholarly, refereed articles and book reviews in all the fields in which academic programmes are offered at the College, including Theology, Philosophy, Applied Ethics, Peace Studies, Education, Social Sciences and the Humanities in general. Interdisciplinary articles are especially welcome. All manuscripts submitted for review undergo a double-blind peer review process. Final publishing decisions are made by the Editorial Committee.

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Original research articles should be between 5000 and 9000 words in length in a particular field within or related to the focus and scope of the journal. Articles may be e-mailed to Prof Jakub Urbaniak at j.urbaniak@staugustine.ac.za using software that is compatible with MS Word. The first page of the manuscript should carry the proposed title and author's name with highest degree. Under the name, an identification line, giving title and position held, the institution and its location, should appear. Personal details and a short biography (max. 100 words) should also be submitted. A brief abstract (no more than 150 words) should follow the author identification data.

NOTES

Notes should be numbered serially throughout the text by superscript numbers (without parentheses) to the right of any punctuation marks. The notes themselves should appear at the end of the manuscript but before the references, under the caption 'Notes'.

REFERENCES

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