

Spirituality and Wellbeing

One-day conference of the Religious Experience Research Centre, the School of Theology, Religious Studies and Islamic Studies and the Research Cluster “Spirituality, Health and Wellbeing” of the Faculty of Humanities and Performing Art

3rd July 2016 (Old Hall, Lampeter)

10.00 Tea/Coffee

10.30 Welcome by Prof Bettina Schmidt, Director of the Religious Experience Research Centre

The Alister Hardy Lampeter Lecture

10.45 The Revd Canon Dr Joanna Collicutt, Karl Jaspers Lecturer in Psychology and Spirituality at Ripon College Cuddesdon
Being mindful and Christian

11.30 Discussion

12.00 Rev Dr Jeff Leonardi, UWTSD

Psychological health, wellbeing and the importance of spirituality.

12.45 lunch break (lunch will be not provided)

2.00 Prof Chris Roe, Northampton

Clinical parapsychology: The interface between anomalous experiences and psychological wellbeing

2.45 Dr Penny Sartori, Swansea

How we can all benefit from the message of Near-Death Experiences (without having to nearly die!)

3.30 Respondent: Dr Thomas Jansen

Final Discussion

4.00 End

Abstracts

The Alister Hardy Lampeter Lecture

Revd Canon Dr Joanna Collicutt, Karl Jaspers Lecturer in Psychology and Spirituality at Ripon College Cuddesdon

Being mindful and Christian

Abstract:

In the last 20 years there has been a phenomenal rise in professional and public interest in mindfulness as an approach to mental and physical wellbeing. Mindfulness has its origins in Buddhist spiritual practices but also has many resonances with the Christian tradition. The lecture will explore some of the points of connection and distinctiveness between Christian meditation and mindfulness together with some implications for the approach taken to wellbeing by faith communities.

Biographical statement

Joanna Collicutt is the Karl Jaspers Lecturer in Psychology and Spirituality at Ripon College Cuddesdon. She studied experimental psychology and theology at Oxford University, and clinical psychology at the Institute of Psychiatry, University of London. She is a chartered clinical psychologist and specialist neuropsychologist, registered as a practitioner with the Health Professions Council. After many years working in the health service, Joanna moved into the field of psychology of religion and was director of the MA programme in psychology of religion at Heythrop College, University of London until 2010 when she joined the staff at Cuddesdon. Her interests are wide ranging, reflected in publications on cognitive behaviour therapy, brain and behaviour, natural theology, psychological approaches to the Bible, psychological trauma, the spirituality of children and people with special needs, and medical ethics. Her most recent book *The psychology of Christian character formation* was published by SCM last year. She currently has three books in press: *Neurology and Religion* with Alasdair Coles (CUP), *Thinking of you: A Christian approach to dementia* (BRF), and *Being mindful, being Christian* with Roger Bretherton and Jennifer Birckman (Monarch). Joanna is an associate priest in a west Oxfordshire parish.

Rev Dr Jeff Leonardi, UWTSD

Psychological health, wellbeing and the importance of spirituality

Abstract:

Health, healing, holiness and wholeness all share a common root meaning. In psychological terms healing amounts to being made whole i.e. it is about psychological *wholeness*. In the Person-centred Approach to counselling and psychotherapy, one of the essential *core conditions* of a therapeutic relationship is *congruence*, the matching of the inner and outer being of the therapist, and this is

the goal for the client (who is conceived, initially at least, to be in a state of *incongruence*). In the presence of the other core conditions - empathy and unconditional positive regard - the client can move from incongruence to congruence, from divided to whole. Spirituality is a vital part of wholeness and can be defined so as to exclude no-one, unless they wish to be. Much of the research into personal spirituality is focused on individual experience. My present research seeks to broaden that focus to include the spiritual dimension which can be present in therapeutic relationships.

Biographical statement

Jeff Leonardi is a Person-centred Counsellor and an ordained priest of the Church of England. His doctoral studies explored the spirituality of the therapeutic encounter in relation to Christian spirituality and his continuing research, as an Honorary Research Fellow of the Religious Experience Research Centre at Lampeter, develops the theme of relational spirituality.

Prof Chris Roe, Northampton

Clinical parapsychology: The interface between anomalous experiences and psychological wellbeing

Abstract:

Parapsychology is concerned with the scientific study of experiences which, if they are as they seem to be, are in principle outside the realm of human capabilities as presently conceived by conventional scientists. Such experiences are often termed 'paranormal', and although surveys show that they are relatively common across different cultures and time periods, they are typically dismissed by the academic mainstream. As a consequence, members of the public who have experienced parapsychological phenomena find it difficult to access accurate and balanced information about them or to have their experiences taken seriously, which can exacerbate any psychological distress they are feeling. In this talk I will discuss new developments in parapsychology that are focused on the therapeutic benefits of developing an understanding of parapsychology that can be shared with mental health professionals so that they can better meet experiencers' needs.

Biographical statement

Chris Roe is Professor of Psychology at the University of Northampton. He is the Perrott-Warrick Senior Researcher, and Director of the Centre for the Study of Anomalous Psychological Processes. He is President of the Parapsychological Association, Chairman of the British Psychological Society Transpersonal Psychology Section, a Council Member of the Society for Psychical Research and the International Affiliate for England of the Parapsychology Foundation. He edits the Journal of the Society for Psychical Research. His research interests are around understanding the nature of anomalous experiences and includes research on the phenomenology of paranormal experience, particularly as it affects wellbeing, the psychology of paranormal belief and of deception, as well as experimental approaches to test claims for extrasensory perception and psychokinesis, particularly

where they involve psychological factors. Recent research has been concerned with unconscious measures of psi and predicting performance using a composite personality measure called 'lability'. He has published over 80 journal papers and book chapters and given over 100 invited and conference presentations.

Dr Penny Sartori, Swansea

How we can all benefit from the message of Near-Death Experiences (without having to nearly die!)

Abstract:

Since near-death experiences (NDEs) were popularised by Dr Raymond Moody in 1975, there has been much debate about these anomalistic experiences. Unfortunately, the debate has focussed on finding a cause for this phenomenon which has greatly detracted from the empowering message within the NDE. This paper will consider ways in which the message of the NDE can be conducive to good health and well-being.

Biographical statement

Dr Penny Sartori worked as an intensive care staff nurse for 17 years and undertook the UK's largest and first long term prospective study of near-death experiences (NDEs) under the supervision of Professor Paul Badham and Dr Peter Fenwick and was awarded a PhD for her research at Lampeter University, in 2005.

Dr Thomas Jansen, UWTSD

Respondent

Biographical statement

Thomas Jansen is Ass Professor in Chinese Studies and Director of the Confucius Institute at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David. He received his academic training at the universities of Freiburg i.Br. and Munich, where he obtained a Ph.D. (Dr. phil.) in Sinology, History, and Japanese in 1997. From 1987-89 he studied Chinese language and history at Beijing University with a grant from the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). Between 1991 and 2006, he researched and taught at the universities of Munich, Leipzig, and Marburg. In 2004-2005 he was a member of the School of Historical Studies, Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, USA. Before joining UWTSD in 2008, he taught Classical Chinese language and Chinese History at Cambridge University.