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Editorial to the special issue: 'Aging and Spirituality'

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About The Society for Pastoral Counselling Research

The *Society for Pastoral Counselling Research* was inaugurated on May 6, 1994 at Saint Paul University, Ottawa, Ontario. It began as a Saint Paul University and Ottawa area enterprise. It held its first Annual Conference in May of the same year. Augustine Meier, Ph.D., the Founder, was the Society's first president. The Society, from its beginning, was bilingual, reflecting Canada's two founding cultures.

The second year witnessed the expansion of the Society to include scholars and researchers from the Waterloo/Kitchener area. Peter VanKatwyk presented a paper at the Second Annual Conference, was the Keynote Speaker the following year, and became the Society's Third President. Peter VanKatwyk is credited with the expansion of the Society beyond the Ottawa area and with the establishment of a strong network of scholars and researchers in the Waterloo/Kitchener district. By the end of the third year, the Society was well established in both Ottawa and Waterloo/Kitchener.

The Society for Pastoral Counselling Research is an unaffiliated and non-profit corporation and registered charity devoted to the practice of Pastoral Care and Counselling.

Mission of the Society

The Society represents a community of scholars, researchers and practitioners who aspire to integrate the human, social, psychological, and sacred dimensions of persons in their practice. The Society embraces this aspiration and supports the initiatives of scholars, researchers and practitioners to build models and theories and to conduct research which include these various dimensions of the human person. To encourage these activities, the Society provides a forum where researchers, scholars and practitioners interact, share and communicate their newly developed models and research findings with each other and with the broader community. The Annual Conference and the Pre-Conference Workshop are two of the principal forums for this scholarly and professional exchange. To promote and encourage research on part of the pastoral counsellor, the Society presents research awards to recent graduates, young researchers, senior researchers and to researchers with a distinguished research career. The Society is committed to extending research findings and knowledge beyond the conference by publishing its proceedings. Four of its publications are: *The Challenge of Forgiveness*, *In Search of Healing*, *Spirituality and Health: Multi-Disciplinary Explorations*, and *At The Heart of Conflict Resolution*.

About the 12th Annual Conference

The Society held its 12th Annual Conference in May, 2005, at Assumption University, Windsor, Ontario, Canada. The theme of this conference was *Ageing and Spiritual Care*. A Workshop on *Effective Programs for Senior Adult Ministry* was offered the day prior to the commencement of the Conference. Fourteen papers were presented at the conference. Each of the papers related spirituality to a specific topic. The topics included the care of seniors, the terminally ill, those retiring, dementia, amputees, and Australian Aboriginal, among others.

Introduction to Papers

Seven of the papers presented at the conference have been revised by their respective authors to meet the requirements for publication in a journal. The papers were peer-reviewed and submitted for publication.

In his article on *Holistic Applications of Counselling With the Elderly in Dialogue with Pastoral Care Concerns*, **Dr Randolph Bowers** makes the observation that in most Western nations the influence of institutionalized religion is waning and personal, spiritual, and subjective approaches to faith are on the increase. With this change in the practice of faith, the practice of pastoral care has been changing as well. Randolph contends that counselling as a secular and scientific modality is well suited to meet the needs of a highly educated and articulate ageing population whose values, in many ways, represent "post-Christian" and "post-Colonial" worldviews. The application of counselling in dialogue with pastoral care for the ageing is a new area for practice and research. In this article, Randolph explores these issues with reference to a holistic model of counselling that respects how meaning and spirituality are constructed in everyday life through personal and social experiences.

The article, *Encouraging Quality of Life for Aging Persons who have Developmental Disabilities* by **Dwayne Kennedy** is timely given that people with mental disabilities are being moved into community based living often without adequate support and services. As those with disabilities age, there is even a greater need that educators and caregivers develop programs that address the dual concerns of ageing and disability services. Dwayne strongly advocates for community based programs and services that encourage the quality of life and that address the need for psychological, social and spiritual needs and the needs for education and employment.

In their article, *Canadian Spirituality and Health*, etc., **Thomas St. James O'Connor & Elizabeth Meakes** reviewed the publications found on spirituality and health by pastoral counsellors and chaplains in five peer reviewed journals. They found that ten percent of the articles were published by Canadian chaplains, pastoral counsellors and/or theologians and that 20 percent of the articles were published in two Canadian-based journals. Thomas and Elizabeth encourage chaplains, pastoral counsellors and theologians to embrace research and to apply it to their profession. The authors point to some hopeful signs in the efforts made by conduct research with the field of spirituality and to publish the findings.

Seung-Hee Kang, in her article on, *Tending the Soul of the Terminally Ill*, used a phenomenological research method to study how one older terminally female patient preceived her journey of dying. To obtain the data for this study, Seung-Hee designed a semi-structured interview with items keyed to selected dimensions. The results of the study are reported in terms of eight themes directly related to the manner in which the woman transformed her terminal state into a life giving experience.

Annette Marche in her article, *Religion, Health and the Care of Seniors*, examined some of the research that found a relationship between religion and health in order to identify some points of consideration for the religious care of seniors. As a framework for her investigation, Annette used the interrelationship among the dimensions of health including spiritual, physical, psychological, emotional, and social aspects. Her investigation indicated that some studies point to negative outcomes of religion on health but a significant body of research reported a positive influence of religion on health. She concluded that for a number of seniors, religious beliefs and practices can provide means of coping with the aging process, a sense of meaning and purpose to life, and a system of social support.

Given that the people are living longer, *Retirement and Existential Meaning in the Older Adults: A Qualitative Study Using Life Review* is an important study undertaken by **Judith Malette and Luis Oliver**. Life Review was used with seven older healthy adults to help them to reflect upon their life in terms of Strengths, Retirement, Life Goals and Mission. The data obtained from this process was analyzed using a qualitative research method. The results from this study suggest that Life Review can facilitate the retirement process, contribute to older individuals' search for existential meaning, promote conscious ageing and the compassionate re-definition of self.

Rhonda Kane, in *Hope Beyond the Hurt, etc.*, investigated how nine adult people with the dual diagnosis of acquired brain and injury and psychiatric disorder, access, develop and use their spirituality. Rhonda developed a semi-structured interview to collect data regarding a person's perceptions of spirituality in the context of his or her diagnosis and every day life. A phenomenological qualitative research method was used to analyze the interview material. The main findings of the study were as follows: (1) the realization of the provisional nature of life, profound loss and grief, intergenerational impact, disenfranchisement, and despair and the simultaneous awareness of the spiritual dimension that provided a paradigm shift in core values, and (2) relatedness and connectedness become the context for spiritual development and transformation. Spirituality was found to be important in the recovery and rehabilitation of individual with acquired brain injury and psychiatric disorder.

Author Biographies

Randolph Bowers, PhD, is a sociologist, human ecologist, psychotherapist, and counsellor. He teaches at the University of New England in counselling and health sociology. His interests in pastoral counselling date back to study in the sociology of religion and in spirituality. He is an ordained minister with the United Ecumenical Catholic Church in Australia. Randolph is Qualitative Editor of *Counselling, Psychotherapy, and Health*.

Rev. Carlton F. Brown, M.Sc., M.Div., RMFT lives and works in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada (www.mftsolutions.ca). Formerly a physiological researcher, Carl is a Baptist minister, associate teaching supervisor in pastoral counselling (Canadian Association for Pastoral Practice & Education, CAPPE) and a clinical member of the American Association for Marriage & Family Therapy (AAMFT). Carl has worked extensively with psychiatric patients, hospital systems, and individuals, couples and families in private practice. His first thesis was on blood coagulation enzymes and blood pressure regulation and his second on the literary structure of Mark's Gospel. He is interested in the relationship between physiological development and spiritual wellbeing.

Rhonda Kane, R.N.BSc.N, MTS, has worked as a Pastoral Counsellor in private practice since 2001 and previously in the field of nursing and community development for 15 years. In 2004/5 she completed a 9-month counselling practicum in pastoral care on an Acquired Brain Injury Unit in a large teaching hospital in Southern Ontario where she conducted research on spirituality and was awarded the St. Joseph's Grant for Clinical Research in Spiritual Care. She received her Master of Theological Studies in Pastoral Care and Counselling in 2006 from Waterloo Lutheran Seminary, in Canada, and is published in *Pastoral Sciences*. Rhonda works primarily with traumatized and bereaved individuals and families.

Seung Hee Kang, MPhil, MDiv, is a chaplain, a spiritual director and a doctoral candidate in pastoral theology at Faculty of Theology, University of St. Michael's College. She is a certified member of Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, a certified member

of Ontario Multi-faith Council, an associate member of Society of Translators and Interpreters of B. C., a member of Spiritual Directors International and a member of Spiritual Directors of Ontario. Her clinical and research interests include theology of healing, healing methods at the end of life care, the significance of emotional narratives in spiritual growth, integration of psychotherapy and spiritual direction in spiritual/pastoral care, and post-modern appropriation of Carmelite spirituality in spiritual/pastoral care.

Dwayne Kennedy, B.Teach., B.Ed., B. Couns., M.Ed. Hon. (Candidate), is a counsellor and life coach, teacher, and community advocate. He is currently completing his Masters Honours research project looking at personal narrative and transformation as applied to the formation of identity among minority groups. He has worked in the disability field for almost two decades, and is a member of the Australian Counselling Association. He currently holds a position as Job Counsellor and Trainer at Jobs Australia, and works part time in counselling and educational consulting.

Judith Malette, Ph.D., is a clinical psychologist and has been assistant professor in pastoral counselling at Saint Paul University since 2001. She received a Ph.D. in experimental-theoretical psychology and did her post-doctoral studies in clinical psychology at the University of Ottawa. Her research interests include images of God, life review, learning styles, and reflective practitioner models.

Annette Marche, M.A., is currently employed at Luther College, University of Regina. The courses she teaches include an *Introduction to Religious Studies* and *Religion and Health*. She has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology and a Master's degree in Religious Studies. Her Master's research examined contemporary approaches to spiritual healing. Research interests she is currently exploring include: religion as a determinant of health, aging and health, alternative and complementary approaches to healing and community health.

Elizabeth Meakes, MTS, currently works as a pastoral counsellor and family therapist at K-W Counselling in Kitchener, Ontario, Canada. She has worked as a chaplain and supervisor for 13 years at Hamilton Health Sciences and St. Joseph's Healthcare both in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. She has published over 10 articles in peer reviewed Journals. She has extensive experience with the elderly. She is a clinical member of AAMFT and a Specialist in Pastoral Counselling in CAPPE.

Augustine Meier, Ph.D., is a certified clinical psychologist in private practice, a Professor Emeritus in the Faculty of Human Sciences, Saint Paul University, Ottawa, Ontario, and an Adjunct Research Professor in the Department of Psychology, Carleton University, Ottawa. He teaches a course and provides advanced training in object relations therapy and self psychology. He taught graduate courses in psychotherapy and psychopathology and trained graduate students in individual counselling. He has co-authored articles on psychotherapy and psychopathology in refereed journals and co-presented advanced workshops on the use of mental imagery in psychotherapy and on theme-analysis. He is the author or co-author four books: *The Challenge of Forgiveness*,

Meier A. (2006), Editorial to the special issue: 'Aging and Spirituality', *Counselling, Psychotherapy, and Health*, 2(1), i-vi, April 2006.

In Search of Healing, Spirituality and Health: Multidisciplinary Approaches, and At the Heart of Conflict Resolution. Professor Meier is the Founder and first President of *The Society for Pastoral Counselling Research*.

Luis E. Oliver, Ph.D., C. Psych, is a Professor in the Faculty of Human Sciences at Saint Paul University, Ottawa, Canada. His research interest include how human beings make meaning of their existence and death, and how individuals face loss and major transitions in their lives. Dr. Oliver is also in private practice, where he sees clients for existential individual therapy and marital therapy."

Thomas St. James O'Connor, ThD, is the Delton Glebe Professor, Pastoral Counselling at Waterloo Lutheran Seminary, Waterloo, Ontario. He is a supervisor in both CAPPE and AAMFT. He has published over 30 articles in peer reviewed Journals and two books. The latest is *Spirituality and Health: Multidisciplinary Explorations* which he co-edited with Augustine Meier and Peter VanKatwyk. He is currently the president of the Society for Pastoral Counselling Research.

Dr Joe Quinn is a Roman Catholic priest, a member of the Congregation of St. Basil, and was ordained in 1963. He received his PhD in English Literature from Purdue University in 1969. He was a member of the English department at the University of Windsor for thirty years, and took early retirement from the University to begin studying the spirituality of aging. He now offers religious retreats to the elderly as well as various workshops geared to spirituality and aging. He is a member of the American Society for Aging, and the Forum on Religion, Spirituality and Aging.