



**The St Mary's Centre Annual Symposium
in
Practical Theology and Religious Education**

15 – 17 November 2017
Noddfa, Penmaenmawr, LL34 6YF

Abstracts

WEDNESDAY 15 NOVEMBER 2017

2.30 Collegial Session 1

Room 1:

Adam Stevenson (ajamesstevenson@gmail.com)

Methodist worship the experience of the people: Towards an ordinary theology of Methodist worship

In exploring the question ‘What makes Methodist worship Methodist?’ it is quickly discovered that the identity of Methodism is at the heart of the query. Methodist identity has long been shaped by the voices of Presbyters, church documents and the leaders of worship rather than by the voice of the Methodist people. This study takes seriously the theology that is voiced by the people called Methodists and assesses what different kind of Methodist identity emerges when they are heard. As part of this paper we explore the reason for the study, its literature, methodology (using both quantitative and qualitative methods) and explore the pilot of the Methodist Orientation Scale finally drawing together a framework of future work.

WEDNESDAY 15 NOVEMBER 2017 (contd)

2.30 Collegial Session 1 (contd)

Room 2

Giuseppe Crea (creagiuse@gmail.com)

Personality and vocational motivation among Catholic seminarians in Italy

This study examines how vocational motivation among Catholic seminarians is significantly correlated with their personality profile. The motivational aspects of vocation are assessed by the orientation theory and the personality dimensions are assessed by the Big Five Factor model. 170 seminarians in Italy completed the New Indices of Religious Orientation and the Big Five Questionnaire. The data demonstrated that the intrinsic orientation is high among seminarians and positively correlated with conscientiousness; the extrinsic motivation is low among seminarians and negatively correlated with emotional stability; and the quest orientation is quite high among seminarians, positively correlated with openness and negatively correlated with conscientiousness and friendliness.

The study attempts to clarify the nature of these correlations and their influence among this sample of seminarians. Particular attention is given to the distinctive strengths and weaknesses of the quest orientation within the context of formation for priesthood.

Room 2

Ann Casson (a.e.casson@gmail.com)

Pioneering new expressions of Catholicism: New ecclesial Catholic movements and communities in England

This paper sets out plans for an investigation into the mission and ethos of new ecclesial Catholic movements and communities in England, which are seeking to meet the needs and desires of individuals for spiritual formation, and to actively engage with and support the Catholic Church in its mission in parish, schools, and wider society.

The first part of this paper considers their Catholic roots and addresses the question of what is 'new' about these movements and communities. Secondly, drawing on experience of three new movements: the Lay community of St Benedict, Wellspring community in Brighton, and the Austin Forum in Hammersmith I explore three of these innovative features: a new understanding and form of community life; the prioritisation of on-going spiritual formation for young adults, in community, parish and in schools; and a focus on dialogue, partnership and collaboration with other faith communities, secular culture and the wider society. The final section of this paper reflects on the implications of these new expressions for the evangelization mission of the Catholic Church and the possible shape of further research in this area.

WEDNESDAY 15 NOVEMBER 2017 (contd)

4.15 Collegial Session 2

Room 1:

Owen Edwards (owen.edwards2@btinternet.com)

Learning from rural cathedrals: A case study of religious education outside the classroom among seven to 11-year-olds

Within the philosophy of education there has been much discussion of the proper approach to teaching religious education. In recent years, much of this debate has been rooted in the language of ‘learning about’ – concerned with the acquisition of religious knowledge, and ‘learning from’ – concerned with more affective aspects of knowledge, including experience. The growing consensus that educational spaces exist outside the classroom has given stimulus in England to the Learning Outside the Classroom initiative – a government-sponsored programme aimed at increasing opportunities for experiential education – and in Wales the National Exemplar Framework for Wales, which encourages learners to reflect on a series of ‘fundamental questions’. The present study seeks to examine the impact this approach to education has on participating learners, drawing on the written responses of 310 7- to 11-year old young cathedral visitors from 14 primary schools from across North Wales. Among the conclusions that emerge from analysis of these data is that educational activities of this kind do have an immediate and profound impact on the young people who take part, giving support to the idea that enabling further cathedral engagement in education is desirable for its effectiveness in providing young learners with unique opportunities for spiritual and religious reflection.

Room 2:

Neville Emslie (nemsle@diocant.org)

Emotional Intelligence according to Archdeacons

Archdeacons look for emotional intelligence in their appointments' processes, but they have many definitions and utilise many different techniques in identifying the phenomenon. They yearn for a reliable model, but are they looking for the same thing?

WEDNESDAY 15 NOVEMBER 2017 (contd)

5.30 Plenary Session 1

Room 1:

Leslie J Francis (leslie.francis@warwick.ac.uk)

Christian ethos secondary schools, parental church attendance and student attitude toward Christianity: Exploring connections in England and Wales

This study employs multi-level linear statistical modelling to examine the power of school level and individual level factors to predict individual differences in scores recorded on the Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity by 6,538 students in year seven, eight, nine, ten, and eleven classes within ten Christian ethos secondary schools. The data demonstrate the complex relationships between school admission policies, parental church attendance, and the students' age and sex. Overall parental church attendance emerges as a decisive factor in promoting a positive attitude toward Christianity among students. Christian ethos schools may wish to give greater attention to the importance of parental religiosity in maintaining the Christian ethos of these schools.

8.00 Public Lecture 1

Room 1:

The Rt Revd Dr David Walker (bishop.david@manchester.anglican.org)

Kicking the habit: A renewed vision for Anglican monasticism?

In recent years, whilst traditional monastic communities in the Church of England have continued to decline, a range of new entities has sprung up, often referred to as New Monasticism or Emerging Religious Orders. This paper sets out the range of such bodies, seeking to characterise them and identify key points of both similarity and difference. New communities are found to be diverse, dispersed, ecumenically open, mixed in sex and marital status, and bound together by a common Rule or Rhythm. Some have a particular call to mission or formation; others seek primarily to deepen the spiritual life of their members. Tensions have emerged around: whether membership enhances or replaces parish life; the balance between the dispersed life, community gatherings and the charism of the order; and the role and status of the founder. In conclusion it is argued that these communities are a genuine, if challenging, development in the history of monasticism.

THURSDAY 16 NOVEMBER 2017

9.30 Plenary Session 2

Room 1:

Tania ap Siôn (t.ap-sion@warwick.ac.uk)

Creating a place of prayer for the 'other': A comparative case study in Wales exploring the effects of re-shaping congregational space in an Anglican cathedral

Provision of spaces for personal prayer and reflection has become a common phenomenon within historic churches and cathedrals in England and Wales, offering an example of devotional activity that operates largely outside that of traditional gathered congregations, but also in relationship with them. Over the past decade, the apSAFIP (the ap Siôn Analytic Framework for Intercessory Prayer) has been employed to examine the content of personal prayer requests left in various church-related locations, mapping similarities and differences in prayers' concerns. Building on this research tradition, the present study examines whether changes to physical environment in an Anglican cathedral in Wales has an effect on the personal prayer activity occurring within it, with a particular focus on intercessory prayer requests.

THURSDAY 16 November 2017 (contd)

2.00 Collegial Session 3

Room 1:

Sylvia Baker (sylviaibaker@gmail.com)

Rejecting Darwinian evolution: the effects of education, church tradition and individual theological stance among UK churchgoers

A sample of 2052 committed churchgoers from a range of churches in the UK completed a questionnaire that included a measure of rejection of Darwinian evolution. Respondents with undergraduate or postgraduate qualifications had slightly lower odds of rejecting evolution than those without degrees, but whether qualifications were in non-biological science, biology or theology made no difference to the likelihood of rejection. Those who attended Anglican or Methodist (AM) churches were much less likely to reject evolution than those who attended Evangelical or Pentecostal (EP) churches, but the effect of education in reducing rejection was similar in both groups. Individual theological conservatism was strongly associated with rejection, but whereas liberals showed declining rejection with increased education, there was no such effect for conservatives. Frequent church attendance and Bible reading both predicted rejection, and the effect of Bible reading was most pronounced among AM churchgoers. Higher education of any kind may reduce the likelihood of rejection of evolution among many UK churchgoers, but theological conservatives from any tradition will tend to maintain their belief that Darwinian evolution does not explain the origin of species.

Room 2:

Randolph Ellis (randolphellis@hotmail.co.uk)

Standing in the shadow of nothingness: The place of place in learning to dwell

An exploration of place as a primary pre-given of what it is to be human and an exploration of ways in which that *a priori* condition may be undermined.

THURSDAY 16 November 2017 (contd)

3.15 Collegial Session 4

Room 1:

Stella Mills (stella.mills@methodist.org.uk)

Data from hidden situations – hiding the truth?

The social acceptance of certain behaviours and situations can vary from culture to culture but, in Western thought at least, there is a commonality of ethical judgment which forms a focus of correct ethical behaviour. In addition, these ethical considerations form a boundary of acceptability, the crossing of which can imply a 'hidden' situation. Using a real example, this paper discusses the problems when data present results beyond the boundary of current acceptability, but which still affect people's lives. One response by the researcher may be to take a prophetic approach while another may be to keep the results 'hidden'; thus, the choice becomes ethical.

Room 2:

Patrick Laycock (pjlaycock@manchester.ac.uk)

Distinguishing between atheism and agnosticism: Progress to date

A sample survey of 11,809 young people concerning religious diversity was based around a questionnaire containing 343 questions. The analysis presented here centres on one particular aspect of the data. The question asked of the data was whether it could demonstrate a difference between the world view of Atheists and that of Agnostics. The answer so far would seem to be a definite 'yes'. Using simple t-tests and stepwise discriminant analysis a clear and sensible pattern appears to emerge from the data. It is hoped that further analysis and exposition will confirm and strengthen this conclusion.

THURSDAY 16 November 2017 (contd)

5.30 Collegial Session 5

Room 1:

Christopher A Lewis (c.a.lewis@glyndwr.ac.uk)

Internal reliability, construct validity, and temporal stability over 7 days of the Purpose in Life Scale among UK undergraduates

The Purpose in Life Scale (PILS) is a relatively new self-report measure of purpose in life. The present aim was to examine the internal reliability, construct validity, and temporal stability over a 7-day period of the Purpose in Life Scale among a sample of 100 UK university students. Internal reliabilities for the PILS at both time one and two were satisfactory. Higher scores of the PILS were significantly positively associated with higher scores of the Purpose in Life Test – short-form and with higher scores on the Life Engagement Test. Data demonstrated that stability across the two administrations for the PILS was moderately high. Also, there were no significant differences in mean scores between time 1 and time 2 for the PILS. The PILS can be recommended for further use.

Room 2

Ursula McKenna (u.mckenna@warwick.ac.uk)

Resilience in Ministry: The voice of Church of Scotland ministers

From a survey of almost 500 Church of Scotland ministers 173 provided further information on the back page of the questionnaire in response to the invitation ‘offer your comments on resilience in ministry’. These responses have been categorised to illuminate ten main areas: the role of minister; definitions of resilience; positive experiences with resilience; everyday challenges to resilience; personal challenges to resilience; church related challenges to resilience; internal coping; external support; looking forward; and feedback on the questionnaire itself.

THURSDAY 16 NOVEMBER 2017 (contd)

8.00 Public Lecture 2

Room 1

The Revd Professor Jeff Astley (jeff.astley@durham.ac.uk)

“Spiritual vision” and religious experience: The contribution of philosophy of religion and of education

The notion of ‘spiritual vision’ and the ways in which people ‘learn to see’ in a spiritual way are frequently counted among the most important outcomes of Christian, theological and ministerial formation. This paper will analyse these metaphors, relating them to ideas about personal experience and spiritual transformation and the potential role of religious and spiritual experience within such ‘discipleship learning’. The discussion will draw in particular on recent scholarly work on religious and spiritual experience in Britain, developed within the context of the philosophy of religion. The paper will conclude with a critical evaluation of some of the issues raised by its claims, as well as some reference to their implications for the practical work of the teaching ministry of the Church.

FRIDAY 17 NOVEMBER 2017

9.30 Plenary Session 4

Room 1:

John Harper (jharper@icsmus.org)

Did anyone notice that choristers are children in the cathedral?

There are around 1500 children, mostly aged between 8 and 14, who are currently serving as choristers in cathedrals, collegiate foundations and greater churches in the British Isles. They represent a remarkable survival of the English Reformation, benefitting from the active protection of Queen Elizabeth I. Their fortunes have waxed and waned over the centuries, but numbers have increased in the past 20 years or so as more cathedrals have offered opportunities to girls as well as boys.

Recent cathedral studies have not paid much attention to the choristers, even if they deal with children in the cathedral setting. There is a case to be made for systematic investigation of the educational experience of being a chorister, and not just musically, as well as considering the place of Christian formation both within the crowded timetable of choristers during their time in the choir, and in the years after they have ceased to be choristers.

This paper is intended as a challenge to those in the field—both those who engage with cathedrals, and those who have research interests in Christian formation, education in a Christian milieu, and cathedral studies in general.