



Update, January 2012

Ageing and spirituality has taken off!

2011 was the year ageing and spirituality "took off" throughout the country, with requests for presentations and courses from Invercargill and Dunedin and many other centres between there and Auckland. The PowerPoint slides from my various talks are on The Selwyn Foundation website: www.selwyncare.org.nz/31/education



In November, we were lucky to have Graham Stokes (psychologist for BUPA worldwide) addressing a rather crowded room at Kenepuru Hospital about "Behaviour that challenges in dementia". Whilst this topic may not seem to relate particularly to spirituality, Graham's approach of understanding the whole person who has dementia fits well with my view of what we are about. His PowerPoint presentation is also available on the website, though reviewing this cannot compare with experiencing Graham in action! We are most grateful to BUPA for making Graham available to us yet again.

2012 is shaping up to be another busy year...

Education / workshops / courses

Taruni Falconer is in New Zealand again in March to run workshops on ageing and spirituality. These are aimed at health and aged care workers, though people from other disciplines have attended and appreciated them. This year, they will be run in Auckland (8 and 9 March), Wellington (12 and 13 March) and New Plymouth (15 and 16 March). Full details and registration information will be on our website shortly. Please contact me if you have any queries about these workshops.

Anne Russell-Brighty will again teach her certificate course in Pastoral care for Ageing People. This year, we plan to run it in Dunedin, Wellington and Christchurch and perhaps one other venue, depending on interest. Recent comments about Anne's courses include:

"Wonderful link of spiritual values and sharing of practical experience."

"Really helped me with pastoral care."

"Answered questions I hadn't thought to ask."

Dates and venues for Anne's courses will be on the website when arrangements are finalised. Once again, please contact me if you would like further information or to register your interest.

On Saturday, 25 February, we will have another aged care chaplains' and pastoral carers' seminar, this time looking at grief and loss, and focusing on coming into residential care. Again, details will shortly be on www.selwyncare.org.nz/10/the-selwyn-centre-for-ageing-and-spirituality. It will be held at Selwyn Village in Point Chevalier in Auckland. Registration can be made via trishp@selwyncare.org.nz



*Graduates of the Palmerston North
Certificate in Pastoral Care of the Aged*

There are also some exciting international speakers coming to New Zealand

On 19 March 2012, Dr Christa Gabler, a German theologian and academic will be speaking at Selwyn Village on spirituality and ageing. Her talk is most suitable for a Christian audience, but all are welcome. There is no registration fee, but please let Trish Purchase know if you are coming (at trishp@selwyncare.org.nz), so we can cater for morning tea. More details are available on the website.

In June, in conjunction with Otago and Auckland Universities and Mercy Hospice, we are bringing Dr Christina Puchalski to New Zealand.

Dr Puchalski is a palliative care specialist who has been responsible for introducing spirituality into the curriculum of medical schools in the United States. She is a great speaker and understands the challenges of bringing spiritual care into the medical mainstream. We hope to arrange a "mini-conference" around her visit, with New Zealand researchers in spirituality and health presenting papers relevant to the local scene. We plan for her to visit Auckland, Wellington and Dunedin.



In September, Dr Harold Koenig (Duke University, North Carolina) - perhaps the world's most prolific researcher in ageing and spirituality - will be in Christchurch as the main speaker at the Healthcare Chaplains' conference in September, (www.nzhealthcarechaplains.org.nz/Conference-Conference.html). He has agreed to also speak for a half-day in Auckland, outlining his major findings on the relationship between health, religion and spirituality in older people. This will be held at Selwyn Village in September 2012. Final details will go on the website closer to the time, but let me know if you would like to be kept updated about progress.

Also in September will be the NZ Association of Gerontology conference. The theme is "Ageing and Diversity". One of the streams is "End of Life" and the keynote speaker is Dr Bruce Rumbold from La Trobe University, who holds post-graduate qualifications in solid state physics, practical theology and health sociology and has a particular interest in spirituality in palliative care. For information on this conference, please visit www.nzag2012.co.nz.

The Centre for Ageing and Pastoral Studies (CAPS) conference in Canberra will take place at the end of September 2012. Visit www.centreforageing.org.au for details.

Research

We did not award any new postgraduate scholarships for research this year. However, we have funded a summer studentship through Otago University. Deborah Lambie, a third year medical student based in Dunedin, is investigating how much (if any) teaching of spirituality occurs at our two medical schools. This is relevant to our older people who make up the bulk of hospital admissions and are the most frequent attenders at most GP practices.

Revd Judith Hardie of Victoria University, Wellington, is continuing with her Masters research, focussing particularly on the issues of spirituality that confront the diverse carer groups who are associated with the ageing population.

Advocacy

Are we getting anywhere in the effort to have spirituality genuinely recognised as an important part of older people's lives?

There does seem to be a groundswell of interest around New Zealand, and I was heartened to be asked to speak to the Ministry of Health while I was in Wellington. My presentation to the Australasian Health Managers' Conference in Rotorua in August was also well received. We hope to publicise Christina Puchalski's visit nationally, but should we be doing something different? All suggestions would be appreciated.

Acknowledgements

Once again, I am grateful for the assistance of my Advisory group. Revd Duncan Macdonald, whose vision led to the establishment of The Selwyn Centre for Ageing and Spirituality, has recently announced that he will be stepping down from his position as CEO of The Selwyn Foundation in early April. However, I'm pleased to confirm that he will remain a member of the advisory board.

I should also like to thank my "unofficial" advisors at Bishop Selwyn Apartments. Our condolences go to Zoe Yearbury's family. Zoe was a lively and valued member of this group and her contribution will be greatly missed.

May 2012 bring joy and many blessings.

Chris Perkins



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for Ageing and Spirituality

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