

Meeting of the Spirituality and Psychiatry Special Interest Group in association with the Dutch Foundation for Psychiatry and Religion

‘SPIRITUALITY AND PSYCHOPATHOLOGY’

Warren Suite, Royal College of Psychiatrists

17 Belgrave Square London SW1X 8PG

Friday 2nd November 2007

9.30 Registration and Coffee

10.45 **Notices: Dr. Sarah Egger**, Chair Spirituality SIG

10.50 **Introduction: Dr Simon Dein**, Senior Lecturer in Anthropology and
Medicine, University College, London

11.00 - 12.00 **Professor Andrew Sims** Past President of Royal College of
Psychiatrists

‘Faith and Delusion’ *When posed as a statement, ‘faith is a delusion’, this is, of course, always hostile, but is there any truth in it? Faith is not, using the word ‘delusion’ in a precise, psychiatric sense, a delusion but there can be a connection between religious belief and psychiatric symptoms.*

12.00 - 1.00 **Dr. Peter Verhagen** Secretary of the WPA Section on Religion,
Spirituality and Psychiatry secretary of the Dutch Foundation on
Religion and Psychiatry

‘Sanctifying Personhood’ *Belief systems, religious and spiritual convictions and practices belong to the functions, roles, attitudes and inclinations of a person. Accordingly, religion and spirituality may be investigated in relation to mental health, for a person uses these functions and roles as he uses his religious and spiritual convictions. What can be used can also be pathologically misused, as in the case of religious and spiritual belief systems in relation to personality disorder. According to this approach, religiousness and spirituality can, if necessary, be treated. Does this instrumental approach really work? How do we conceptualize personality and personality disorder? How may religious and spiritual traditions help our understanding as clinicians?*

1.00 – 2.00 **Lunch**

2.00 – 3.00 **Professor Gerrit Glas** Leiden University Medical Centre, The Netherlands

‘Anxiety, anxiety disorder, religion, and spirituality’ *The relationship between religious and spiritual issues, anxiety and anxiety disorder has received less empirical examination than the relationship between religion and depression or psychosis. There is a tendency towards a negative relationship between intrinsic religiosity and level of anxiety or presence of anxiety disorder. However, it is unclear whether this is a direct effect of religious belief or mediated by other factors. Empirical findings and clinical material both suggest that anxiety is often a mix of daily worries, psychopathological forms of anxiety as described in psychiatric classifications, and existential fears. These three conceptual levels (daily anxieties, anxiety disorder and existential fears) should all be taken into account in the clinical situation and be investigated with respect to their mutual relationships. Clinicians and researchers need to broaden their perspective in order to become sensitive to the religious and spiritual dimensions of anxiety and anxiety disorder. Finally, there are implications for the DSM-V.*

3.00 – 4.00 **Dr Simon Dein** Senior Lecturer in Anthropology and Medicine, University College London

‘The voice of God’ *The experience of hearing God’s voice in religious settings has received little scholarly attention. This talk considers the findings of a recent qualitative study examining the experience of hearing God’s voice among a group of 40 Pentecostal Christians in London. The experience of hearing this voice both internally and externally appears prevalent in this community. Distinctions between religious ‘hallucinations’ and voices in schizophrenia will be discussed.*

4.00 **Tea Break followed by Plenary Discussion**

5.00 End of Meeting