

NEXT SIG MEMBERS' MEETING

Royal College of Psychiatrists Spirituality and Psychiatry Special Interest Group

Programme for Friday 24th November 2006

Venue: Royal College of Psychiatrists
17 Belgrave Square, London, SW1X 8PG

'Sanity, Sex and the Sacred: Exploring Intersecting Realms'

- 10.15 Coffee
- 10.45 Preliminary Notices: **Dr. Sarah Egger** (Chair)
- 11.00 **'Sexuality And Spirituality: Possible Conjunctions'**
Rev. Christopher MacKenna
- 12.15 Lunch
- 13.30 **'Sexuality and Religion - 'Two Flowers From One Stem''**
The Rev'd Thaddeus Birchard
- 14.45 Tea
- 15.15 **'The Snake In The Chalice And Other Stories:
Castration And Connectedness In Psycho-Spiritual Life'**
Dr. Cherrie Coghlan
- 16.30 Plenary
- 17.00 Close

**PLEASE NOTE – THIS PROGRAMME IS FOR
SIG MEMBERS AND INVITED GUESTS ONLY**

Programme Information:

Christopher MacKenna

‘Sexuality and Spirituality: Possible Conjunctions’

In this contribution, rather than focussing directly on psychopathology, I hope to look at some of the ways in which spiritually minded people, and religious traditions, have tried to embody the conjunction between spirituality and sexuality. Three possible relationships are in my mind: Sexuality in service of relationship – human and divine, Sexuality in service of nature – fertility cults, and Sexuality in service of the daemonic – the generation of energy for occult purposes. These may involve reference to the Christian mystical tradition, Tantrism, Goddess worship, and the darker reaches of witchcraft – which may bring us into the region of ritual satanic abuse.

About the speaker

Chris MacKenna is an Anglican Priest and a Senior Member of the Jungian Analytic Section of the British Association of Psychotherapists. Currently Director of St Marylebone Healing and Counselling Centre, and the Bishop of London’s Adviser on Deliverance Ministry and the Paranormal, he is an Honorary Member of the Spirituality SIG of the Royal College of Psychiatrists. Away from the shop, he enjoys reading, walking, gardening, and, most especially, family and friends.

The Rev’d Thaddeus Birchard

‘Sexuality and Religion - ‘Two Flowers From One Stem’

After an introduction from art and literature, this talk explores some of the connections between sex and religion. It explores in particular the relationship between sexual compulsivity and religious behaviour, looking at both of these as responses to narcissistic damage. Then there is a section on the relationship between sexual fantasy and religious imagery, looking at these as mechanisms for the management of trauma. The third section of the talk will focus on the affect-management properties of sexual and religious behaviour. The conclusion takes us to the search for connection and how this operates in sex, religion, and the therapeutic relationship.

About the speaker

Thaddeus Birchard has a BA in Anthropology / Sociology from the University of New Orleans and a Diploma in Theology from Nottingham University. He trained at the Whittington Hospital and has an MSc in Psychosexual Therapy from the School of Health and Social Care, London South Bank University

and a Doctorate in Psychotherapy from Middlesex University and Metanoia Institute. He is accredited for practice by the British Association for Sexual and Relationship Therapy and is registered with the United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy. He is an Anglican priest, non-stipendiary, on the staff of St. Marylebone Parish Church, London.

Dr. Cherrie Coghlan MB.BCh, MRCPsych

'The Snake in the Chalice and other Stories: Castration and Connectedness in Psycho-spiritual Life'

Sex is a part of each individual life: a 'given' from before birth, and throughout life, from the cellular to the societal level. Sexuality is critical to personal development. It is likely, therefore, as with all human concerns, to affect the personal experience of spirituality, and in turn to be influenced implicitly or explicitly by the spiritual dimension, in whatever way this is understood. In this talk I will touch on some of the difficulties that arise from the tension between sexuality and received religious ideas and teaching. I will also consider the creative spiritual power of sexuality as metaphor and symbol, which can enrich our work, and without which it might arguably be sterile.

About the speaker:

Dr Cherrie Coghlan is a consultant in general adult psychiatry with the Central and North West London Mental Health Trust. She also has a small private practice. She has a longstanding interest in psychoanalysis and an interest in spirituality rediscovered in recent years. In her personal life she enjoys cooking and writes poetry, some of which has been published on the SIG website.