



World Community for Christian Meditation (South Africa)



Newsletter 8

August 2018

WELCOME

Welcome to the EIGHTH newsletter of the World Community for Christian Meditation (South Africa) (WCCM-SA).



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INTRODUCTION

In this edition, we report on past and coming events in 2018 and 2019.

The keen-sighted might have noticed a change above in telephone number for Johan van den Heever. He has relocated to Cape Town and ministers there to his community in Rondebosch.

My hope is that with this move Cape Town will experience a new local flourishing of the World Community.

Paul Faller



35th JOHN MAIN SEMINAR

A CONTEMPLATIVE RESPONSE TO THE CRISIS OF CHANGE

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SPIRITFEST – NATIONAL ARTS FESTIVAL

Grahamstown, 2-6 July 2018 (16:00 – 17:00)



This daily meditation group was led on Monday, Wednesday and Friday in the Commemoration Hall of the Methodist Church by Paul Faller of the Catholic Institute of Education, Johannesburg, and on Tuesday and Thursday by Chris Ahrends of the Centre for Christian Spirituality based in Cape Town.



Different approaches to meditation were offered, ranging from the mantra-based way of ceasing all thought and entering the silence within as taught by John Main, to employing the mind and/or the senses in meditating on Scripture or on carefully selected material objects, such as precious stones.

The metaphor of the sculptor chiselling away to expose the “elephant” was used to describe the effects of repeating the mantra faithfully, where there is no focus on success or failure, but on fidelity and perseverance.

The attendance was unfortunately well below what was hoped for. While there were posters placed in the window of the hall and in an A-frame sandwich board in the street outside, there were no participants who walked in out of interest or curiosity.



Of the participants, which varied in number from 5-8 on any given day, only two had no previous experience of meditation, and, besides the presenters, only three were from outside Grahamstown.

There were a number of challenges that had to be met. There was no power until late in the session on Monday. There was constant daily competition with the noise coming from the songs of Abraham, the blind organist on Church Square, who had very powerful speakers. Despite the intervention of Hitec and Square officers, the noise persisted due to the crowd’s encouragement of Abraham. The venue itself, having to be approached via the marketplace, was perhaps not an encouragement for festival goers. Because of these difficulties, the group negotiated a space in the Cathedral for the Thursday session.

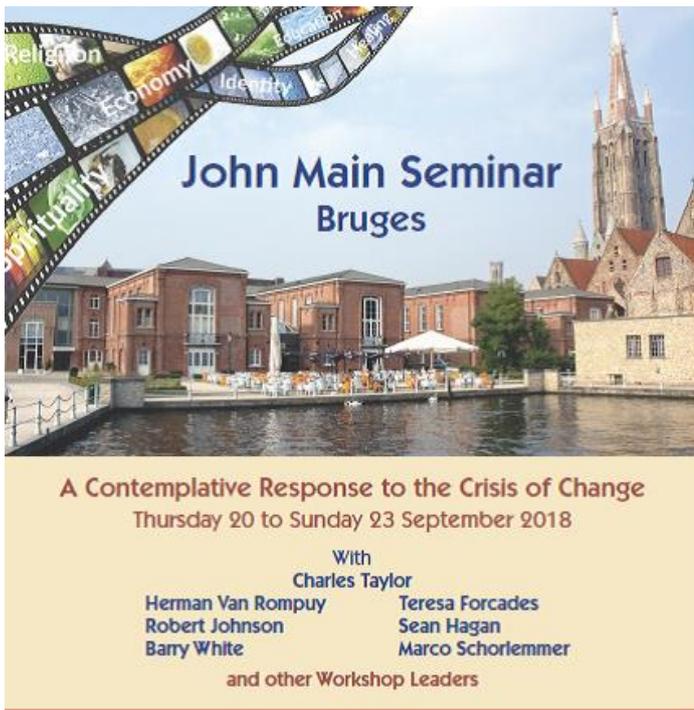
Despite these challenges, those who attended were enthusiastic and Julia Skeen expressed some interest in starting a group in Grahamstown.

Thinking of the future, the group spent some time after the Friday session evaluating the venture. Maggy Clarke, the Spiritfest Convener, was present and she encouraged the initiators of this event to give it time to grow. Different formats were discussed, such as a workshop near the beginning of the festival followed by sessions through the festival featuring different ways of meditation. Alternative quieter venues, such as the Dutch Reformed Church, were suggested.

A word of thanks is due to the organisers of Spiritfest for allowing us this opportunity and to the Methodist community for the use of their hall. Special thanks goes to Thozamile who graciously, and to the minute, opened the hall for us each day and helped in various other ways.

Report by Fleur Way-Jones & Paul Faller

JOHN MAIN SEMINAR



A Contemplative Response to the Crisis of Change

‘May you live in interesting times’ sounds like a blessing but is said by some to have been meant as a Curse. Whether our own interesting times are blessed or cursed will depend upon how wisely we understand the dangers and opportunities they carry.

This year’s John Main Seminar combines creative thinkers from major areas of the modern crisis – from fields in which Meditatio has been exploring the contemplative approach to these challenges. They share extensive experience in their fields, a contemplative perspective, and a belief in the transformative influence of meditation.

Each speaker will present a new vision for their field that will contribute to a new clarity and depth of perspective in our transition to – we hope – a more just and peaceful world. There will be workshops and discussion panels, as well as the usual opportunity to

meditate together. As always the annual John Main Seminar of The World Community for Christian Meditation, will combine creative thinking and the work of silence.

Charles Taylor will talk on the diversity of new manifestations of wisdom in a secular age. He is a philosopher from Canada and Professor Emeritus at McGill University. He is known for his contributions to political philosophy, the philosophy of social science, history of philosophy and intellectual history which have earned him prestigious prizes including the Templeton Prize.

Herman van Rompuy will address the crisis of democracy and the way politics can handle the management of division. He is a Belgian and EU politician, who formerly served as Prime Minister of Belgium and then as the first President of the European Council.

Sr Teresa Forcades will present challenging new ideas on Faith and Belonging. She is a contemplative Benedictine nun of Montserrat and an active political and social commentator in Catalonia. She is also a medical doctor and a theologian.

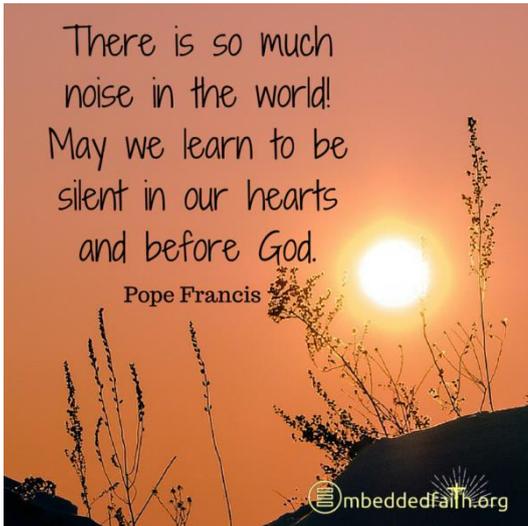
Dr Barry White will present his ideas and work of bringing a contemplative practice to transform healthcare. He is Consultant Hematologist at St James’s Hospital, Dublin and National Hemophilia Director and was the first National Director of Clinical Care for the Irish Health Executive. He is CEO of a new healthcare system that will integrate contemplative insights with clinical care.

Sean Hagan will speak on leadership and also assist in the synthesis of the ideas generated. He is the General Counsel of the International Monetary Fund and Fellow of Kings College, London.

Robert Johnson will speak on how a new mindset in economics can promote a new world order based on principles of peace and justice. He is the Executive Director of the Institute for New Economic Thinking, a Senior Fellow and Director of the Project on Global Finance at the Roosevelt Institute.

Marco Schorlemmer will speak about the need to nurture the contemplative core of scientific enquiry for our emerging knowledge to encourage innovative societies. He is a senior scientist at the Artificial Intelligence Research Institute of the Spanish National Research Council and was co-coordinator of the Science Group in the National Plan for Values of the Catalan government.

2018 RETREAT AT GOOD SHEPHERD RETREAT CENTRE



Date: 19 - 21 October

Venue: Good Shepherd Retreat Centre

Hosted by: Eldoraigue Family Church

Cost: Single room: R640 p/p/n

Double room: R570 p/p/n

Theme: Why do we want to be silent before God?

Inquiries: Alta Theron - 082 262 2153

BONNEVAUX

Renovation work intensifies

By Elba Rodriguez



In the month of April we had six contractors working alongside to complete the first stage of works around the house. Two of the contractors have completed their tasks. An access road to allow circulation and parking of heavy vehicles was created. The work on the guttering system in the roof and the woodwork for protection of the interiors was also completed. In the inside, the demolition team has been knocking down interior walls and ceilings. The carpenters have removed all windows and will soon start the installation of refurbished and new windows.

In the outside, it has been thrilling to see that after chipping away the old plastering the masonry team found several 17th century arches in the east wing of the building. The arches will become visible again and will be contrasted with a natural reddish hue restored façade fitting to the 19th century. The selection of appropriate materials from local sources is crucial for the historical conservation of this building.

Very soon there will be more contractors working on the inside of the main house and there will also be mobilization of the teams that will start work on the barn (future conference centre) in the month of May. During the renovation process a team composed of members of the design firm DP Architects and WCCM are regularly holding meetings and visiting the site to assess the progress and check the quality of the works.

The impact on visits and accommodation will continue for several months but we are carefully planning each stage and ensuring that meditation in Bonnevaux remains a pivot point of the active and contemplative life of the place. Meditation is offered three times a day: morning meditation in a provisional house for the community and midday and evening meditation in the chapel.

The spring season has enhanced the internal and external beauty of the place. In addition to the construction activities it has also been a joy to see that the work of volunteers with the gardens and greenhouse are well advanced. A variety of plants have been carefully placed in the sunken garden and the planners are now looking into the next phases of the project.

We tried to make the reading of the text also a practical exercise by looking at real life examples where we are asked to forgive others. We departed on Sunday after lunch with a new commitment to participate in the the ministry of reconciliation.

VISIT OF LAURENCE FREEMAN SEPTEMBER 2019



We are planning a visit of Laurence Freeman, leader of WCCM internationally, for September 2019. He has already agreed to come to South Africa and our task now is to form partnerships with other organisations which might show interest in the visit.

To date we already have the Jesuit Institute of South Africa and the Christian Spirituality Centre based in Cape Town interested in working together with us to make the series of events over a 10-day period fruitful.

We will keep you updated in future newsletters. We appeal to members of WCCM locally to contact us so that meditators in your area will have an opportunity to meet Laurence and hear him speak.

RESOURCES

Meditation Chimes



Produce good vibrations with a gentle tap of the wooden mallet on the single 15 cm metallophone. This solo tone rod emits a powerful tone that lasts for 20 seconds or more. It consists of one polished solid aluminium rod on a meranti holder with felt base. Handcrafted in Johannesburg. Available at R150 + plus postage

Contact Paul at paulf@cie.org.za

The new website of The School of Meditation

www.theschoolofmeditation.org



It is designed to help you on your journey of meditation. Explore the website for a range of resources. There are also new online courses: How to Meditate, An Introduction to Christian Meditation - A Six Week Course and The Roots of Christian Mysticism.

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