Religion and Spirituality, edited by Martin Dowson & Stuart Devenish (Information Age Publishing, 2010)
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There can be no doubt that Western Culture is searching for the corrective to a utilitarian and empirical approach to life and community inherited from the project of Enlightenment Humanism, out of which most of our social institutions were birthed. The Christian Research Association summarised Australian statistics to suggest that just under half of all Australians are happy to call themselves 'spiritual', 'religious' or both. What is meant by those terms, however, varies a great deal! Less than half of this group would walk into a church building, mosque or temple. The other half of Australians are happy to say they have no religion, but only around 15% of this group intend this as a definitive statement about God or metaphysical realities. That is, most people who have no religion do so because they don't care or don't know enough about it. (_Shaping Australia's Spirituality_; CRA publication, 2010)

Writers like David Tacey frame the search for spirituality as a struggle from the neglected (unconscious) soul of humanity and is leading to the ill-health of a whole society (_God & Diseases: Making Sense of our Physical and Mental Wellbeing_: Harper Collins, 2011). Gary Bouma would emphasise the structural benefits of religion and spirituality which are available for the creation of a healthy community (_Australian Soul_; Cambridge University Press, 2006). This collection of essays on 'Religion and Spirituality' maps some of the terrain for the argument reintegrating spirituality and religion with our efforts towards a stable and just society. "From the 1950s onward, in response to the perceived failings of modernity (eg. War; depression, global inequality, environmental degradation), attempts to bring together education and, at lest, generic values or morals increased... Religious educations were confronted with the challenge of bringing together the secular and the sacred, even as science and religion grew ever more distant from one another" (viii).

As with all contemporary work on spirituality and religion, definitions are slippery and the editors have done well to leave the definitional aspect alone. Instead, the collection of essays offers an intuitive impression of the breadth of spiritual and religious experience that affect the pursuit of positive social outcomes. Similarly, there is a very broad definition of 'education' and essays cover formal institutional settings, creation of learning environments for personal spiritual development, and consideration of the place of education and social justice within spiritual experience and religious traditions. Overall, the collection achieves the editor's objective to "demonstrate the possibility of a healthy integration from a truly global, transdisciplinary and ecumenical perspective in education and religion" (xi).

The first of four parts of the book contains four essays on the social justice spirituality of _World Religions_. These essays cover Muslim, Chinese religions, Buddism and Christianity and together provide a fascinating argument for the innate social value of religious systems in a secular environment. Social justice is part of the DNA of religious meaning systems. The second section examines M_eaning, Motivation and Maturity_ and looks at how spirituality and religion – as distinct entities – both have the capacity to inspire the kind of courageous, self-sacrificial commitment to

others that undergirds social justice activism. Third, *Teaching Policy and Practice* in a variety of formal education settings are brought into view with fascinating case studies from Singapore, Cambodia, United States, and Australia. The final part moves into the field of *Community Service and Development*.

So, highlights? There are a number! Depending on your interest and setting there is much to stimulate in this collection.

As a theologian, it was really interesting to contrast the social justice teaching of different traditions in part one. In particular Austin's essay comparing the social spiritual impetus of traditional chinese religions with that of christianity was instructive. Austin argues that there is an implicit motivator for social action in Christianity's doctrine of redemption which is absent in traditional Chinese religions. A healthy spirituality can take a person's capacity for justice so far, but religion seems to provide a social structure to move the individual beyond themselves into acting for the corporate interest. George's article on Social Justice and Critical Thinking will be useful for those wanting to engage in the debate about Christian Religious Education (CRE) in secular schools.

As a sociologist, I found the essay by Ee Moi Kho, Min Fui Chee, and Giok Ling Ooi on Multireligiosity in Singapore State Education fascinating! In an effort to keep back the tide of immorality thought present in the imposition of western culture, the government re-introduced a religious studies unit into secular education. This was frustrated by the usual socio-cultural tensions of religion in multicultural age, yet was still seen to helpfully equip students for mature citizenship. The article by Lovorn and Proffitt posits a similar argument. That sensitively integrating religion into the history syllablus in U.S. Schools enbles students to understand the strengths and weakness of religion in relation to citizenship.

As a priest, I found the spirituality discussions encouraging and pertinent to the question of education that inspires dedication to a social justice agenda. Encouraging, because there is good evidence available here that spirituality makes a difference. McKay and Gaffoglio examine the discovery of spirituality through international learning experiences; Daughtry challenges the sacred-secular division in youth work; Lawton reveals the devasting effects of excluding indigenous spirituality from community service delivery; and Edwards and Thwala draw on the Zulu traditions of Africa to present an argument for reintegration of spirituality with empircal approaches to health and community well-being.

List of Essays

PART I: WORLD RELIGIONS
1. Justice in Islamic Spirituality: Implications for Individual Flourishing and Social Harmony,
    by Bagher Ghobary Bonab
2. The Impact of Traditional Chinese Religions on the Social Justice Orientations of Chinese Christians,
    by Denise Austin
3. The Contribution of Buddhism to Global and Regional Initiatives in Education,
    by Trish Sherwood
4. Social Justice and Critical Thinking: The Contribution of Christian Perspectives on Education,
    by Tony George

PART II: MEANING, MOTIVATION, AND MATURITY
5. Religion, Meaning, and Motivation,

Michelle Wade

is a postgraduate theology student at St. Mark's Theologican Centre Canberra with a background in sociology and is an ordained Anglican priest. Chelle blogs about her theology reading at www.reddresstheology. wordpress.com.