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Ordered in alphabetical order of author.

Sacred space and common ground: challenges and opportunities to nurture children's spirituality in Liverpool Cathedral.

Abstract

Cathedrals are spiritual spaces and common ground; they can contribute to the spiritual well-being of individuals and communities. A growing body of literature explores how adults and communities engage with and respond to time in Cathedrals. Empirical research studies undertaken in Liverpool Cathedral have revealed that encounters with the Cathedral positively affect spiritual well-being and contribute to a sense of belonging. However, a much-neglected area of research is the effect on children's spiritual well-being when they encounter a cathedral, whether at a time of worship, in a family or educational activity, or visiting as a tourist.

This short paper offers insights into empirical research with adults within Liverpool Cathedral and a theoretical exploration of understanding children's spirituality within the context of the Christian faith tradition. Secondly, it outlines the variety of ways children encounter Liverpool Cathedral through school visits, holiday activities for families, Sunday worship, and involvement in the Cathedral's music department. Thirdly, consideration is given to the value of analysing these encounters using a relational spirituality framework, looking at self-understanding, connections with others, the world and the transcendent while recognising the challenges and limitations of research on children's spiritual nurture in a cathedral setting.

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‘Subclinical’ traits as elements of the ‘normal’ personality in Catholic clergy in Italy

Abstract

This paper uses established psychological instruments to explore the personality profile of catholic priests serving in Italy. The two instruments used are the Short Dark Triad that measures three subclinical pathologies, Machiavellianism, Narcissism and Psychopathy, and the HEXACO that measures six factors of normal personality, known as Honesty–Humility, Emotionality, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Openness to Experience. Data provided by 264 priests found that all of the Dark Triad variables correlate strongly and negatively with the dimensions of the HEXACO model of Honesty–Humility, Emotionality, Extraversion, Conscientiousness, and Openness. This means that assessment for these variables may help to identify priests who are most vulnerable in their personality. Additionally, using hierarchical multiple regression, we further examined the associations between Dark Triad and Hexaco, using the Honesty–Humility scale as dependent variable and as predictors the three scales of Dark Triad. We found that low Machiavellianism and Psychopathy were revealed as leading predictors of higher

Honesty–Humility scale, as indicated by the literature (Lee and Ashton, 2014). This shows that Honesty–Humility is an important element for understanding various dysfunctional aspects of personality, in a sample of Catholic priests in Italy.

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Early observations of a Catholic-Charismatic cathedral congregation

Abstract

In the summer of 2022, Liverpool Cathedral planted a new worship community drawing together Anglo-Catholic and Charismatic spirituality. This congregation is now embedded in the worship life of the Cathedral, meeting at five o'clock each Sunday. This article presents an account of the worship community's traditions and practices, with anecdotes from a priest-observer who reflects on the stories of individuals who have found a spiritual home in this fledgling community. From a range of backgrounds, of Christian faith and none, ordained and lay, members of the worshipping community are diverse in motivational style (Leslie J. Francis and Emyr Williams, 2015). This article reflects upon the centrality of sacramental tradition in the Catholic-Charismatic congregation and asks whether sacramental forms are an integral motivating factor for participants. The piece will also suggest future avenues of study, observing the therapeutic effects Catholic-Charismatic worship has upon the well-being of individuals and the potential within empirical research to record this trend.

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Rethinking the object of the aesthetic experience:**A criticism of analytic philosophy's approach to the aesthetic experience****Abstract**

Contemporary literature regarding the aesthetic experience understands the object of the aesthetic experience to be the form of the artwork being experienced. This places great emphasis upon having a 'theory of art' which identifies what constitutes an artwork to understand the aesthetic experience, however there is no uncontroversial 'theory of art.' To mitigate this problem, this presentation suggested an alternative object of the aesthetic experience, where the object is not the form of an artwork itself, but instead the object is located within an artwork and only in some instances is revealed. This alternative understanding of the object of the aesthetic experience contradicts some of the characteristics of analytic aesthetics as set out in the general introduction to Lamarque and Olsen's *Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art: The Analytic Tradition, An Anthology*. To accommodate non-analytic research into the object of the aesthetic experience, this presentation explored practical limitations of analytic philosophy's use of language –exemplified through 'disinterestedness' within Kant's *Critique of Judgement* and Noël Carroll's 'Art and the Domain of the Aesthetic.'

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A Cultural-Musicological Perspective on the Social and Cultural Impact of Liverpool Cathedral's Online and Choral Music Outreach Programme

Abstract

This research explores the social and cultural significance of Liverpool Cathedral's music outreach initiatives, encompassing two key projects. The *Digital Turn Project* (2020-2022) examined the impact of online music participation during the UK's Covid-19 lockdowns. Using quantitative and qualitative methods, the study revealed that online music engagement fostered social connection, cultural expression and emotional resilience among participants of all ages. The *Social Value of Music Participation Project* (2022-2024), funded by the British Academy, investigates the ongoing societal impact of Liverpool Cathedral's egalitarian choral outreach in the Liverpool City region. Through longitudinal data collection, the research highlights the programme's role in enhancing social mobility, belonging and wellbeing, while fostering music education and community cohesion. Together, the studies provide empirical evidence of the transformative role of choral music outreach, offering insights into the sustained impact of the Cathedral's egalitarian choral outreach, while shaping social connection, cultural expression and community resilience. They show how religious institutions can serve as pivotal spaces for social and cultural engagement in times of crisis and recovery, and beyond.

Overall, the research contextualizes the Cathedral's choral music outreach efforts within the Liverpool City region's socioeconomic landscape, where deprivation levels are among the highest in the UK. In this way, the research positions choral music outreach as a counterbalance to social inequalities, fostering transformative societal impacts. It highlights the Cathedral choral outreach programme's contributions to social mobility, a sense of belonging and community wellbeing, while strengthening music education and social cohesion. The research contributes to three key fields: the Sociology of Religion—examining Liverpool Cathedral's alignment with “neoliberal religion” in a secularized, market-driven context; music sociology—investigating the sociocultural meanings of music in everyday life; and applied music scholarship—illustrating how music outreach initiatives serve as powerful tools for enhancing social welfare, education and emotional wellbeing. The research fills a critical gap in the study of choral music outreach in sacred spaces, underscoring the potential of cathedrals as hubs for community engagement, social inclusion and cultural transformation.

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Art as theological fusion: The Cathedral's role in lighting the creative fuse

Abstract

This paper explores how cathedrals, particularly Liverpool Cathedral, serve as spaces where theology and art intersect, enabling deeper reflection and public engagement. Traditionally centres of cultural and spiritual fusion, cathedrals now act as neutral spaces for dialogue between the sacred and secular. By fostering mutual critical dialogue and embracing contemporary art, these spaces invite diverse perspectives, creating opportunities for both personal transformation and broader social change. Using Tracey Emin's artwork, *For You* as a case study for reflection, the paper highlights how such art challenges and redefines traditional theological boundaries, positioning cathedrals as dynamic spaces that bridge tradition and modernity.

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Using a theological interpretation of Scripture in youth bible studies

Abstract

I am researching how young people use Scripture to resource their faith construction. I am using the notion of 'collage' to explain how the Bible functions as a series of interwoven images and how young people construct their faith lives using these images. My three contexts (school, church, parachurch) use the Bible study resources I have created to help me understand how this construction works.

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Emergence of Randomised Controlled Trials within religion and spirituality research

Abstract

Randomised Controlled Trials, the peer review process, and more recently 'open science' carry the torch for robust scientific methodology. Although less commonly implemented in research on spirituality and religion, RCTs have made some valuable contributions to this broad field especially over the course of the past six years. This study analysed 42 peer-reviewed RCTs emanating from a prolific lab to evaluate their scope of impact. Findings corroborated the strengths of the RCTs as evidenced by generous sample sizes, fully supported hypotheses, and publications in a wide range of respectable journals with good impact factors. Suggestions were made to provide additional clarification of recruitment methods, to report approval from specified ethics committees in all studies, and to include more data accessibility statements in the spirit of 'open science'.

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Validating the Francis Burnout Inventory (FBI) among Indian Catholic diocesan priests

Abstract

Based on the balanced affect model of Norman Bradburn, the Francis Burnout Inventory (FBI) defines positive work-related psychological health of priests and clergy as a balance between positive and negative emotions. The FBI, with its two-fold measures, Satisfaction in Ministry Scale (SIMS) and Scale of Exhaustion in Ministry (SEEM), each consisting of 11 items has shown higher reliability scores in studies among clergy in individualist cultures such as Great Britain, United States of America, Australia and Italy. Factor analysis conducted, for the first time, on data provided by 761 Catholic diocesan priests belonging to a collectivist culture such as Tamil Nadu, India indicated good model fit, reliability and construct validity. Higher reliability scores were evidenced when the reverse-coded item, 'I always have enthusiasm for my work' was removed from the SEEM. Construct validity of the revised FBI with 21 items was supported against an independent measure of well-being.

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The significance of religious and spiritual experiences:

Insights from the Alister Hardy Archive

Abstract

This research explores religious and spiritual experiences (RSEs) using the Alister Hardy Archive to examine ‘transcendental’ encounters. The study identifies key hallmarks of RSEs, including transiency, ineffability, and noetic quality, and applies personality psychology to analyse the experiences. Drawing on Carl Jung’s psychological types, the research investigates expressions of Introversion (I), Extraversion (E), Sensing (S), iNtuition (N), Thinking (T), Feeling (F), Judging (J), and Perceiving (P) within the collected accounts. Additionally, W.T. Stace’s core theory of mystical consciousness—distinguishing introvertive and extrovertive experiences—provides a framework for understanding the nature of these encounters. Introvertive experiences involve inward-focused, contentless consciousness, while extrovertive experiences reveal unity in the external world. Initial findings indicate a preference for introversion and intuition among respondents, suggesting a psychological tendency toward inward reflection in mystical experiences. This ongoing research contributes to a deeper understanding of how various personality types engage with the transcendent.

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How actors co-create public value in cathedrals: The enabling role of digital technology

Abstract

This is the first research into digital technology co-creation at cathedrals and the effect of digital co-creation on public value. Different elements of public value are considered – aesthetic, economic, environmental and social, with emphasis on social value. Co-creation in a cathedral context is the collaboration between the cathedral community (staff and volunteers) and the cathedral public (people who attend services, visit the cathedral or interact online). This is a comparator study using case studies of four cathedrals and one heritage site, based on over 60 interviews, a walk-through digital audit, online reviews and social media posts. A conceptual model (ACTAP) was developed using the theoretical framework of the research – actors, co-creation, technology acceptance, the APPI model (artifacts, processes, persons and interfaces) and public value. Transcripts from primary and secondary data are being coded and input into NVIVO. Analysis will be thematic and will use ACTAP – by cathedral; between case study cathedrals; and using the heritage site as a good practice comparator.

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