2013 International Conference:
An Identity to Build; an Intimacy to Live: a Challenge for Families

Thursday October 3, 2013

7 pm to 8:30 pm  Conference #1

The New Science of Romantic Love - Building Identity, Intimacy, and Marriage
Speaker: Dr. Sue Johnson, ED.D. Counselling Psychology

Abstract: Romantic love has always been seen as some kind of intoxicating mysterious mixture of sex and sentiment. Until now! This presentation will outline the key developments in the science of adult bonding that has developed over the last two decades. This science has built on the developmental theory of attachment developed by John Bowlby, a theory that has changed how we view the relationship between mother and child and how we parent. The new science of adult bonding has the potential to change how we see and connect with our life partners. This presentation will outline the key changes in perspective offered by this science and what these changes mean for clinicians and for clients.

Friday October 4, 2013

9:10 am to 10:45 am   Conference #2

Being a Woman, Being a Mother, an Outdated Identity? (Bilingual Presentation)
Speaker: Dr. Karlijn Demasure, Ph.D. Theology

Abstract: "Freud excluded the idea that it would be possible to separate between feminine and maternal, between being a woman and procreation, between sex and gender." (E. Roudinesco, 2002). Freud could not predict the changes on which Western patriarchy has lost its dominant position in favor of women. The empowerment of women, children and ultimately gay people has changed the image of families as well as its dynamics. Procreation is no longer the central goal for families; these are now supposed to be places for intimacy where love reigns. Families have become emotional shelters.

In the second part of the twentieth century, as a result of birth control and contraception, women decide on procreation. This has led to a decrease in the birth rate. Being a mother is now a matter of choice. The identity of the child has also changed: it is no longer an object rather a highly desired subject. Often in families the child comes first; and the mother-child relationship has reached such a deep intimacy that it could push the father into second place. Today, being a mother still seems to be very important for the vast majority of women. More recently, procreation was made possible without the sexual act and the father is not necessarily known. Procreation occurs without intimacy;
it is medicalized. Therefore, many questions arise: can we have a child at any cost? Become a mother at any cost? Build a family at any cost? What is the Christians’ point of view toward all these challenging changes in the Western society? These are the main themes to be explored during our lecture and discussion.

11:15 am to 12:30 pm  Workshop Series #1

1. **Image of God, Resilience, and the Imaginary Potential: A Study among Vietnamese Canadians Who Have Experienced Losses.**
   **Speaker:** Mrs. Tu Nguyen Ph.D. (Cand)

   **Abstract:** Vietnamese immigrants have struggled to form and reform identity and intimacy in the host country. The ability to integrate the stranger into familiarity has been revealed in their resilience. The current study grounds on an Object Relations perspective (i.e., God image seen as an internal working model- Rizzutto, 1979), together with Durand’s Anthropological Structures of the Imaginary (1999) to examine a) to what degree God image predicted resilience among Vietnamese immigrants, b) to what degree God image associated with emotional distress, and also to explored c) how Vietnamese immigrants perceived experiences of God, loss, and resilience in relation to the imaginary potential. Resilience has been found among participants who had a consistent, loving, and secure God Image; it has been also found among those who were open to share their feelings and struggles and asserted themselves in relationships.

2. **Creative Engagement in Family Therapy: Building Intimacy, Alliance, and Attachment.**
   **Speaker:** Professor Laura Armstrong

   **Abstract:** Engaging family members in creative activities within traditional therapeutic models can foster intimacy, attachment, and alliance-building. Deeper communication than in traditional therapy can be unlocked through activity engagement as family members are moved from the intellectual, cerebral world of adults to the world of imagination and creativity familiar to children. The present workshop will provide hands-on instruction regarding how to develop or use creative materials in family therapy.

3. **La famille à l’épreuve du care : fragilisation réciproque ou initiation à l’exercice de l’hospitalité ?**
   **Speaker:** Professor Cathérine Fino, Maître de conférences Theologicum, Faculté de théologie et de sciences religieuses, Institut catholique de Paris.

   **Abstract:** Available in French only
4. **Réflexions portant sur des paradoxes liés à l’identité et à l’intimité au sein de la relation conjugale.**  
**Speaker:** Professor Christian Bellehumeur, Ph.D, CCC, Psychologist  
**Abstract:** Available in French only

---

5. **Empowering Mature Christians with the Capacity for Intimacy and Identity-Building: A Fundamental Responsibility of the Church’s Educating Ministry**  
**Speaker:** Mrs. Carol Kuzmochka, D.Min (Cand)

**Abstract:** The Church has a responsibility to provide opportunities for adults to grow in a mature Christian faith. This maturity affords the capacity to foster intimacy and to build an authentic shared Christian identity in the family and in the Christian community. This workshop will explore processes that empower mature Christian believers from the perspective of catechetical education and adult faith formation. It will highlight some of the areas of disconnect between the vision and practice of adult catechetical education in the Church, and examine some current research findings that suggest ways to empower mature Christians.

---

6. **And you too have come into the world to do this: Intimacy, Identity and the Flourishing of Life**  
**Speaker:** Professor Myriam K. Martin, pbvm

**Abstract:** Intimacy and identity are central to our understanding of what it means to be human. There are many ways to describe human flourishing and what is involved in a full and contented life. (Cameron et al, 2012) The work of authors such as Thomas Berry (1988, 1991) and Sallie McFague (1999, 2003, 2010) have challenged us to a more inclusive and expansive understanding of what it means to be human in the midst of the flourishing or diminishing of all life. Through the inspiration of selected poems by Mary Oliver and Wendell Berry, this paper explores some of the challenges regarding human identity and well-being in relationship with the whole Earth community.

---

7. **La méfiance et la peur de l’intimité : les défis pour un développement intégral dans la vie religieuse et sacerdotale.**  
**Speakers:** Professors Loraine Ste-Marie and Ramón Martínez De Pisón, o.m.i.  
**Abstract:** Available in French only

---

8. **« Ils deviennent une seule chair » : est-ce un défi pour l’intime personnel?**  
**Speaker:** Mrs. Marie-Rose Tannous, Ph.D (Cand)  
**Abstract:** Available in French only
9. **Towards a Better Appreciation of the “Intimacy” Gap between Men and Women.**
**Speaker:** Professor Martin Rovers

**Abstract:** How far have men and women come over these years in our understanding of intimacy? Male intimacy still has strong elements of the “hard wiring” days of the hunt and war, and even modern child-rearing practices have not brought boys and girls much closer together in understanding each other’s love language. Intimacy is described today mostly in feminine terms. Understanding and appreciating the way men “do” intimacy is essential for both men and women’s future relationships together. At the same time, men need to look at their own wounds of intimacy and find a new psychology and spirituality of being a man today.

10. **Love & Identity : a dangerous liaison.**
**Speaker:** Professor Mark De Kesel

**Abstract:** Freudian theory has a bad name within the field of family studies. Intimacy is reduced to sexuality and the problem of identity, too, is considered to be basically a sexual one: thus the common reproach with regard to the psychoanalytical theory. In his lecture, Marc De Kesel disagrees with this wide spread idea and explains psychoanalysis as an identity theory most adequate for the problems we nowadays have to face in the fields of both family studies and family therapy. Precisely the ‘tragic’ nature of that theory, so De Kesel argues, makes it a positive instrument for today’s family and identity therapy.

11. **La prise en compte des identités au sein du couple dans la préparation au sacrement du mariage en Belgique francophone.**
**Speaker:** Mr. Michel Bationo
**Abstract:** Available in French only

12. **Prêtre et/ou abusé ? Une nouvelle identité à trouver après l’abus…**
**Speaker:** Father Stéphane Joulain, Ph. D (Cand)
**Abstract:** Available in French only

7 pm to 8:30 pm    Conference #3

**Être homme, être père : une fausse évidence**
**Keynote Speaker :** Dr. Jacques Arènes, Clinical Psychologist, Psychoanalyst
**Abstract:** Available in French only
Cultivating Christians - Family Cultures and the Formation of Religious Identity

Keynote Speaker: Rev. Dr. Karen-Marie Yust

Abstract: While a longstanding debate between psychologists and sociologists about the forces that shape persons continues to pit nature against nurture, most contemporary theorists agree that both biology and environment affect - to varying degrees - the construction of human identity. Language acquisition, for example, involves a complex process of mapping neurological pathways in response to verbal cues infants overhear in their primary settings. Social values develop as toddlers discern patterns of behavior around them, even though they may also be biologically predisposed to certain moral understandings. A young child's burgeoning theory of mind is shaped by social interaction and feedback and may also be limited by autism spectrum disorders or other cognitive disabilities. Thus, the construction of religious identity - as an aspect of a child's social identity - is subject to their *imago dei* creation and their acculturation in the stories, practices, and rituals of faith as those socio-spiritual components are enacted within the family and congregation.

Jean Phinney's work with minority ethnic groups has suggested that a person's identity as a part of a minority ethnic group is created through the person's interactions with both that group and the larger culture group within which the ethnic group resides. The position of Christian children in the predominantly secularized cultures of North America and Europe today is analogous to that of an ethnic minority. Over time, ethnic immigrants deal with their minority ethnicity in one of three ways: (1) they withdraw into stronger identification with their ethnic tradition; (2) they relinquish many of their ethnic characteristics through assimilation into the wider culture, or (3) they develop a strong identification with both cultures. For families seeking to cultivate faithful children, the Christian culture that can give their children's spiritual lives substance and form is a second (or even third) culture. Learning to identify with this second culture requires intentional encounters with its many and varied aspects: its language, values, beliefs, practices, images, resources, and institutions. In this way, that of God imprinted in human being is identified and echoed by participation in a culture of faith, creating a dynamic relationship between nature and nurture that promotes an integrated sense of the self as Christian as well as whatever other identifications befit the child's social location.

13. *Violée, est-elle à punir?*

   **Speaker:** Mr Buuma M. Maisha, Ph.D (Cand)
   **Abstract:** Available in French only
14. « Dieu et mes parents ne sont pas pareils » - Le Dieu de l’intime  
**Speaker:** Professor Jean Guy Nadeau, Université de Montréal  
**Abstract:** Available in French only

15. **The Challenge of Chinese Immigrant Families**  
**Speaker:** Mrs. Winnie Yeung, Ph.D (Cand)  
**Abstract:** This presentation will explore intimacy and identity facing Chinese immigrant families. Culturally, Confucius teaching has had a strong hold on Chinese culture since about 500 BCE. Of the five principal relationships in society, the marital relationship comes fourth, after government-citizen, father-son, and among brothers. Spousal bonding has always been undermined. The identity and worth of a wife is to produce a son to carry the family name. Economically, the average income of Chinese immigrants is lower than the general population. Chinese male immigrants made 53% less income than their Canadian counterparts. Due to lack of compatible employment and financial instability, family dispersal is adopted as coping strategy for many immigrant families. “Astronaut families” and “satellite babies” are embraced as migration strategies. The family no longer lives under one roof. All these culminate in a complex father-children relationship. Instead of having ‘disclosing intimacy’ they practiced ‘silent intimacy’. It is indirect, without open communication and mutual disclosure. With the prevalent authoritarian style of parenting, the father is not expected to cater to emotional needs of the children. Money is used in exchange for love.

16. **Inter-Partner Touch and Intimacy: Attachment & Gender Differences**  
**Speaker:** Professor Martin Rovers and Mrs. Cassandra Petrella, Ph.D (Cand)  
**Abstract:** The workshop will share our findings so far on the psychobiological benefits of touch for humans. We have an innate survival need for touch as we can’t live without it in our earliest moments of infancy. We learn the feel of touch through our primary caregivers as we develop our attachment language. Touch is the language of attachment in these early moments and so we suspect that there is a potential here to understand each partner’s views of touch in order to move the couple into healthy and secure attachment. Individuals with avoidant and preoccupied attachment styles differ greatly in their needs and expectations of touch in the relationship. We also believe that there are similar differences across genders based on how we were socialized in our early attachment experiences. When partners differ greatly in their views of touch, distress often occurs. Based on the existing research, we are inclined to think that secure attachment in therapy can be facilitated through the combination of touch and talk therapy between partners. The workshop will highlight what is already known about touch from a psychobiological understanding and examine the difference between attachment styles and gender. We will also provide information on the benefits of touch for psychological well-being and highlight some of the practical interventions that can be used in couple counselling. The workshop promises to provide both a theoretical and practical understanding of the new field of inter-partner touch in couple counselling.