

# Liaison

A Periodic Newsletter of the Graduate  
Psychology Programs at Wheaton College

FALL/WINTER 2010



## Department welcomes Dr. Jamie Aten—Rech Chair



Jamie D. Aten, Ph.D. (Indiana State University) is the new Dr. Arthur P. Rech and Mrs. Jean May Rech Endowed Associate Professor of Psychology. He completed his pre-doctoral internship at the Chicago Area Christian Training Consortium (CACTC) six years ago before moving to teach at the University of Southern Mississippi where he would also go on to serve as the Assistant Director of the Katrina Research Center.

“My family and I had just moved from the Chicago area six days before Katrina. I can still remember going to work on the Friday before the storm and learning that the hurricane was suppose to hit on the other side of Louisiana. Because we lived in the country, we didn’t get television channels yet (cable was coming on Monday), so we didn’t know the storm had shifted toward Mississippi over the weekend.

Likewise, because we had Illinois cell phones our families couldn’t reach us because of the poor cellular signal where we lived. So it wasn’t until that Sunday morning while visiting a local church that we learned of the impending hurricane. Little did I know that Sunday morning how significantly the following weeks turned years would shape not only my professional life and course of my career, but also my personal and spiritual life.”

It is his hope to draw from his Hurricane Katrina (and later

Hurricane Gustav) research, clinical, and community experiences to help mobilize the church in times of mass trauma. Further, he hopes to help prepare Christian psychologists and counselors who will be able to effectively collaborate with the church to address disaster mental health issues and needs through faith-based research and responses.

Since coming to Wheaton College in June 2010, Aten has launched the Catastrophe, Spirituality, and Trauma Lab (CaST), which consists of 25 Psy.D. and M.A. students interested in turning faith-based disaster research into clinical and community-based resources and interventions. Likewise, the team has the goal of working to learn from disaster related experiences and apply these lessons learned to broader forms of trauma (e.g., combat trauma, interpersonal trauma). The team is currently working on several projects, including studies focused on Hurricane Katrina. Likewise, CaST is preparing to conduct research in Haiti. As part of this work, Aten has recently been asked by a group of Christian clergy in Haiti to help them launch the Center for Spirituality and Mental Health, with the goal of preparing clergy to attend to the mounting mental health problems left behind in the wake of the Haiti Earthquake.

Overall, he has published numerous research articles on Christian counseling and psychotherapy, and has presented his research nationally and internationally. He is the co-editor of two books “Spirituality and the Therapeutic Process” (APA Books) and “Culture and the Therapeutic Process” (Routledge). He is also the co-editor of three forthcoming books on “Spiritually Oriented Interventions for Counseling and Psychotherapy” (in press, APA

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## DR. HELEN DEVRIES RETIRES



At the end of June 2010, Helen DeVries, Ph.D. retired from her positions as Psy.D. Director and Psychology Professor. Helen is one of the earliest members of the Psy.D. faculty, and one little known fact is that she filled the faculty position vacated by Dr. Fran White in 1994. For years, Helen has taught courses in Family Systems and Geropsychology as well as mentored dozens of students in their professional and scholarly development. For the past five years, Helen provided compassionate and visionary leadership to the Psy.D. Program as Director. Her warm and enthusiastic manner with students and colleagues will be missed in the classroom and the halls of Wheaton College.

One of Helen’s protégés in the faculty has been Dr. Kelly Flanagan. Kelly accepted the responsibility of Psy.D. Program Director, assumed those responsibilities this past summer, and has embraced her new role with vigor.

Helen and her family have moved to the quaint village of Urbanna, Virginia. Dr. DeVries, now Professor Emeritus DeVries, would enjoy hearing from you, and may be reached via e-mail at [Helen.DeVries@wheaton.edu](mailto:Helen.DeVries@wheaton.edu).

Books), "Psychology of Religion and Spirituality for Clinicians" (in press, Routledge), and Evidence-Based Practices for Christian Counseling and Psychotherapy (forthcoming, IVP Press). Dr. Aten has also co-edited special volumes of the "Journal of Psychology and Christianity" and "Journal of Clinical Psychology" on Christian supervision and treating religious and spiritual clients. His current trauma research on the role of the church in addressing disaster mental health disparities has been supported by over \$1 million in funding from numerous state, federal, and non-profit agencies. He also serves as the Newsletter Editor for Division 36 (Psychology of Religion) of the American Psychological Association and has been appointed to the Faith-Based Learning Collaborative for decreasing health disparities sponsored by SAMHSA.

"Having grown up in Southern Illinois—and having been a part of the CACTC several years ago where I got to know and develop relationships with many of the Wheaton College Psychology Department faculty—being here truly feels like home."

The graduate programs are blessed to welcome Dr. Aten to the department. His enthusiasm for and experience in scholarship, community work, and issues of integration will strengthen the programs and make him an excellent fit for the endowed chair position. Dr. Aten, his wife Kelly and three daughters live in Wheaton. ■

## ALUMNI NEWS

**Dennis Christianson, M.A. ('91)** recently made a career change from church administrator (where he worked from 2000–2010) to Controller at Koelsch Senior Communities. KSC owns and manages 10 senior living facilities in the western US. Dennis' mother passed away in September joining his father who passed away four years ago. Dennis and Jayne recently celebrated 23 years together. They and their three teenage girls reside in Lacey, WA.

**Diana M. (Temple) Shiflett, M.A. ('97)** was ordained in June 2010 in Spiritual Direction in the Evangelical Covenant Denomination.

**Mark Yarhouse, Psy.D. ('98)** authored a book published in September 2010 called *Homosexuality and the Christian: A Guide for Parents, Pastors and Friends*. The book addresses difficult questions about homosexuality and sexual identity.

**Diane Tehan, M.A. ('02)** works at Cornerstone Counseling Foundation in Chiang Mai, Thailand. Diane says, "It is a great place for professional ministry to an underserved and very dynamic population, and the growth potential for delivering services is great."

**Betsy (Baxter) Byler, M.A. ('03)** is married with two beautiful step daughters in Duluth, MN. She is licensed and currently head of Outpatient Services and three youth treatment programs in Northwestern Wisconsin and Eastern Minnesota.

**Thomas Kulanjiyil, Psy.D. ('03)** co-edited a book published in 2010 called *Caring for the South Asian Soul: Counseling South Asians in the Western World*. The book's cover jacket describes the book as a unique "resource for social workers, professional counselors, pastors, psychologists, lay counselors, educators, cross-cultural counselors and the like to bring healing to the South Asian soul."

**Gayle Seuss, Psy.D. ('03)** and her husband Jim welcomed their 5th child, Maxwell, to this world in September 2010.

**Diane Starkenburg, Psy.D. ('03)**, her husband Shawn and two children (Naomi-5 and Eli-3) have recently moved from Oregon to Los Alamos, New Mexico. Diane is licensed, in private practice and specializes in couple's therapy, women's issues, and grief/loss counseling.

**Nicole Gilbert, M.A. ('05)** and her husband, Tim Gilbert, welcomed a daughter, Allyson Olivia, born September 2010. She joins big brother, Braden Thomas (4 years old). Nicole is working as an elementary school counselor, after obtaining her LPC in the state of Missouri.

**Vitaliy Voytenko, Psy.D. ('05)** and his wife Marissa moved to L'viv, Ukraine as missionaries with Mission to the World (MTW) in the fall of 2009. Their first child, Leo Elijah, was born in Vienna, Austria in May of this year. Vitaliy now teaches psychology at Ukrainian Catholic University and plans to open a counseling center as part of his ministry with MTW.

**Emily (Hart) Ekdahl, M.A. ('09)** is working as a case manager (QSP) at Countryside Association for adults with disabilities in Palatine, IL.

**Emma Campbell, Psy.D. ('10)** has begun her post-doctoral work with the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services on the Sex Offender Unit in Lincoln, Nebraska. Her duties include group and individual therapy and psychological evaluations to determine the inmate's risk of sexual recidivism and overall treatment needs.

**Josh Essery, Psy.D. ('10)** divides his time between Clarity Child Guidance Center, The University of Texas Health Science Center San Antonio Mood Disorders Clinic and Private Practice in San Antonio, Texas. He passed the EPPP in May and received his Texas Provisionally Licensed Psychologist License in October.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Trey Buchanan, Ph.D.** announced that he will be leaving his position in the department at the end of this academic year to become Vice Provost at Concordia University in Austin, Texas. Trey has been on faculty since 1992, and has taught courses such as History, Systems & Integration and Advanced Statistics in the Psy.D. Program. We are grateful to Trey for his leadership in the department and desire God's best for he and his family as they make this transition.

**Robert Gregory, Ph.D.** assumed the role of Director of Clinical Training. He also continues as the Psychology Department Chair.

**Mark Harwood, Ph.D.** resigned his position as Associate Professor and Director of Clinical Training which he held since 2007. Mark is pursuing his scholarship endeavors and private practice in the area, and all the department wish him well.

## ALUMNI PROFILE: Charles and Rebecca Parry—Pt.2 Rebecca

*Note: Charles Parry was featured in the Spring/Summer 2010 issue of Liaison.*



I have lived in Cape Town, South Africa with my South African husband, Charles, two children: Douglas (18) and Anna (16) and our golden lab, Maggie for 20 years. With Table Mountain, 30+ beaches, 11 official languages, winning two Rugby World Cups and hosting the Soccer World Cup plus excellent private schools and churches—you may begin to understand the reason we stay here. This is despite the high

crime rate, inflation and 40% unemployment (before the world economic recession).

This is quite a dynamic time in post-Apartheid South Africa and we have witnessed neighborhoods and schools opening up to all races. A democratic Constitution and elections have been welcome, but politics still seem to remain along racial/tribal lines.

We both hold the M.A. Clinical Psychology from Wheaton ('86) while Charles has a Ph.D. in Community Psychology from the University of Virginia in Community Psychology ('89).

I had grown up in Morgantown, West Virginia so moving from Wheaton to Charlottesville felt very familiar. My first counseling position was at Virginia Center for Family Relations and I obtained AAMFT Clinical Membership and licensure as a Licensed Professional Counselor.

At Wheaton, my core training in Strategic Family Therapy gave a theoretical base and later supervision & training helped me become quite skilled as a generalist in working with many different presenting problems e.g. depression & anxiety, relationship issues, addictions & co-dependency issues.

A Mennonite church became our "family," and I also led workshops, was a Board member of a pregnancy center and taught at a community college. A year in Pittsburgh, PA followed where I opened a private therapy practice.

We were watching Nelson Mandela walk out of prison on 11 Feb 1990 when the phone rang telling us that the funding had been curtailed from Charles' 2-yr post-doctoral fellowship program. We had God's peace as we decided to move to Cape Town in August 1990.

Despite having permanent residency, the Health Professions Council's Board of Psychology did not grant me registration (licensure) to practice unless I completed another internship. I waited 8 years for this as our two children were then born. My parents-in-law were a good support as was a Young Mums and Home Fellowship Group in those busy days.

An independent, community church was our spiritual home for 14 years and I chaired the Family Life Ministry organizing sermon series, an annual church family camp and a charity Fun Run & Health Breakfast with experts on medicine, psychology & nutrition. I also taught at two Christian small colleges and gave talks in the community.

A full-time 6-month supervised internship occurred when my children were aged 6 & 4—I know not seeing them was far tougher on me than it probably was on them! I practiced group & family therapy again with troubled youth at an adolescent centre as well as at a state psychiatric hospital. I honed my DSM-IV diagnostic skills and developed many connections for later referrals.

I opened a private practice from home and worked quite successfully for 10 years under supportive supervision groups. I learned Imago Relations Therapy and Narrative Therapy and led 8 small co-dependency therapy groups before recently closing the practice.

I now teach English as a second language where students include ambassadors, homemakers, business people and children from South Africa, Angola, Zimbabwe, Germany, Holland, Switzerland, Russia, Norway, Indonesia, Lithuania & Korea.

In 2008, I was the Director of the Displaced Persons program at the Trauma Centre for Survivors of Violence & Torture during the Xenophobic Crisis. I trained, supervised, resourced & supported 130 professional counselors to care for the psycho-social needs of 20,000 refugees and displaced persons who were forced out of their homes in Cape Town. My organizational and teaching skills were used to help bring hope & healing to many in need. I also liaised with Amnesty International, UNICEF as well as city, provincial and civil society.

Besides leading counselor training for NGOs, I speak at Women's Groups and recently helped my Anglican church launch an Alpha Course at my daughter's Anglican school for parents & staff.

A Christian world view and the theoretical grounding of the clinical psychology degree work at Wheaton together with mentoring from professors Dr Fran White, Dr Stan Jones and Dr David Benner and supervisors Larry French and Elize Morkel have greatly helped me apply therapy to real life dilemmas. The human spirit is resilient and I have been humbled to help bring hope & change in seemingly hopeless and "stuck" situations. ■



*Rebecca Wilson Parry is married to Dr. Charles Parry. They both hold an M.A. (Clin Psych) from Wheaton College. She also has an M.Ed. (Educ Psych).*

**Derek McNeil, Ph.D.** attended The Third Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization this past October in Cape Town, South Africa.

Also, Derek announced that he will be leaving his position in the department of the end of this academic year to become Dean of the Graduate School at Mars Hill Graduate School in Seattle, Washington. He has been a graduate faculty member at Wheaton College since 1996 teaching courses in the Master's and Psy.D. programs. We are grateful to have a year to transition with Derek. We wish Derek, his wife Brenda, and their two children well in this phase of life.

**Raymond Phinney, Ph.D.** and his wife Camay welcomed Beorn Westmark to their family in October 2010. Beorn, which means "bear" in Old English, joins his siblings who also have Tolkien names (Thorin, Lorien, and Thegn). Congratulations Phinney family!

**Ben Pyykkonen, Ph.D.** and his wife Carrie welcomed Noah Matthew to their family in May. Noah joins his big sister Larissa and big brother Lamont. We rejoice with them.

## Your copy of *Liaison*

FALL/WINTER 2010



### INTRODUCING *LIAISON*

This is the ninth publication of *Liaison* and is designed for alumni and friends of the graduate psychology programs at Wheaton College, including doctoral and master's level curricula.

### FACTS

- The Psy.D. program in Clinical Psychology was established in 1993 and has been continuously accredited by the American Psychological Association since 1998. This five-year program admits some 18–20 students annually.
- The M.A. program in Clinical Psychology, a two-year program, was established in 1977 and admits approximately 30 students each year.
- In 1999, an additional Master's degree was added in Counseling Ministries, a one-year degree for individuals who primarily work through churches or mission agencies.



## Giving

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