

2023 Workshop Participant Biosketches

(by alphabetical order of last name)



Ojo Melvin Agunbiade, Ph.D. Dr. Agunbiade is an Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Obafemi Awolowo University. Melvin teaches courses on sociological theory, social research methods, and the sociology of health, healing, and illness. He completed his PhD in Health Sociology at the University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa. He holds a Master of Science degree in Sociology and Anthropology from the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria, and another in Gerontology from the University of Southampton in the United Kingdom. Ojo has substantial expertise and experience in mixed-methods research designs and social policy. His areas of research include mental health, sexual health, ageing, gender and spirituality, and African traditional medicine systems. He has over 40 publications in reputable local and international peer-reviewed sources.



Mohammed Almaqrami MB ChB, MD, MSc. Dr. Almaqrami is an Assistant Professor of Psychiatry, Faculty of Medicine, Thamar University, Director and Consultant Psychiatrist, Fiadh Alhayat Psychiatric Hospital, Sanaa, Republic of Yemen. He earned his Bachelor in Medicine from Sanaa University in 1991, and he completed his doctorate degree in general psychiatry from the University of Khartoum 1998. He received a Master degree in Child and Adolescent Mental Health from the University of London in 2002. He has published articles and books in psychosocial support and mental health. His unique vocation of expanding the role of bio-psycho-socio-spiritual model in mental healthcare is at the center of his goals which expand to various dimensions. Areas of interest include spiritually integrated cognitive behavior therapy and the use of prayer as a therapeutic intervention for the psychologically affected people. He is an active member in the Yemeni Society for Psychiatrists and in many other regional and international Child and Adult mental health organizations.



Ram Prasad Aryal, Ph.D. Dr. Aryal is an Associate Professor and former director at School of Development and Social Engineering, Pokhara University, Nepal. His qualification includes MA in Population Studies (1996) from Tribhuvan University, Nepal; MSocSc in Demography (2001)

from Waikato University and PhD in Social Work (2015) from Massey University, New Zealand. He has taken trainings on advanced demographic techniques from Chulalongkorn University, Thailand, and on Asian Cultures and Theologies from Divinity School of Chung Chi College, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong. His areas of research are on HIV, disability, orphanhood, spirituality and health. His research findings show that access to resources determines degree of stigma and discrimination attached to HIV, disability, and orphanhood. Likewise, religious faiths play significant role in people's recovery and rejuvenation.



Mohd Arif bin Atarhim, Ph.D, RN. Arif is a faculty member in the Department of Nursing, Faculty of Medicine at the National University of Malaysia (UKM). He earned his Master of Nursing from Monash University Australia and further his doctoral study in Human Development at UKM. During his doctoral degree, he was awarded by the George Washington Institute of Spirituality and Health (GWISH) scholarship for the spiritual care train of trainer and training course on palliative care nursing in cancer patients for ASEAN by the National Cancer Institute, Bangkok, Thailand. Furthermore, he involved as a stakeholder for the Enhancing Nurses' and Midwives' Competence in Providing Spiritual Care through Innovative Education and Compassionate Care (EPICC) project, which was co-funded by the European Union's Erasmus+ Program. The purposed is to develop evidence-based spiritual care education and practice across Europe and beyond. His research interest focuses on religiosity/spirituality and the influence towards spiritual care, health promotion, psychological well-being, chronic illness, and palliative care.



Brunna Boaventura, PhD, MS, RD. Dr. Boaventura has a bachelor's degree in Nutrition at the Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC/Brazil/Florianopolis), with master's degree in Nutrition/UFSC in Metabolism and Dietetics, and PhD in Food Science/UFSC/Cornell University (USA). She is Adjunct Professor at the Department of Nutrition at UFSC (2015-actual). Coordinator of the Undergraduation Course in Nutrition at UFSC (2021-2023). Coordinator of the NUTRI.COM Project - Weight Loss Program based in Eating Behavior. She performed a cognitive-behavioral therapy training applied to weight loss and maintenance at Beck Institute (USA). Areas of research interest: behavioral nutrition; nutritional intervention; nutritional counseling; overweight and obesity; foods with functional properties; bioactive compounds; phytochemicals; oxidative stress; antioxidants; physical exercise; spirituality. She hopes that from participating in this workshop I will have greater clarity on how to bring Spirituality and Religiosity to my clinical practice as a nutritionist, to my work as a professor, and to my creativity and discernment as a researcher. With the teachings of this workshop, I will be able to act with discretion and excellence in this vast field that is Spirituality and Religiosity, but still little studied in health, mainly in Nutrition.

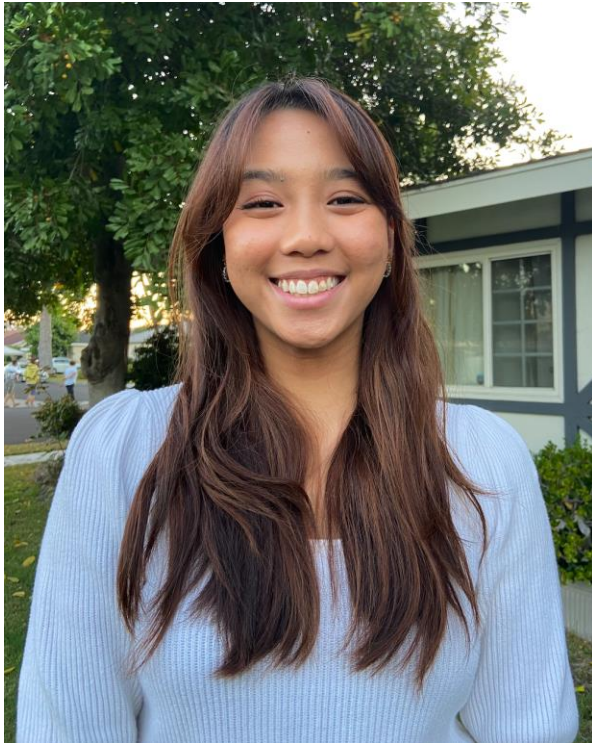


Ada Alvarez Conde, Ph.D. I'm Ada from Puerto Rico (36). I have a PhD in History and a MS/BA in Communications. I'm a Chaplain since 2019 and serve as co-leader of the Mental Health Chaplain Ministry mostly with abused children and teenagers. I've been working 17 years with dating and domestic violence, being a survivor myself, in public policy and awareness. My area of interest is trauma healing, especially psychological abuse. I decided to study another MA-PHD in Neuro-Theology (Christian) which I finish next July. I work as a college professor and develop training for the Police. My first experience with faith was when I was 8 years old as I endured my first (of 3) open heart surgeries. In September I will publish my testimony book, *Open Heart*, which along with this training has me excited.



Alicia Cortright, MPH. Alicia is an epidemiologist and public health program manager residing in Vancouver, Canada. Alicia has a BS in Medical Microbiology & Immunology from the Univ of Wisconsin- Madison and an MPH in Epidemiology from the Univ of Minnesota-Twin Cities.

Her work experience includes infectious disease surveillance and prevention, qualitative research on disparities in birth outcomes, management of a community-minded mobile health clinic in Malawi, and facilitation of volunteer-led community health initiatives in Ethiopia, Kenya, and South Sudan. She currently serves as the South Sudan Field Manager for Kingdom Workers and the Research Manager at The Meros Center, a research and training community for Christian health ministry. Her research interests include the role of spirituality in community-led development, health disparities and underserved populations, and processes to cultivate community-driven and equitable research partnerships.



Jan Estandarte. Jan is a recent graduate of the University of the Pacific in Stockton, CA who graduated with her BS in Biological Sciences. She developed a fundamental background in biology and chemistry but primarily in biochemistry where she researched the protein, ubiquitin, and its essential post-translational regulatory mechanism in cells. Her main interest is in cancer research and is interested in investigating different approaches to treatments that go beyond simply medicine. She found Dr. Koenig's presentation inspiring as he discussed the impact of religion from a medical standpoint and the integration of religion to improve patient care. She currently works at an educational non-profit organization, where she works to provide free online mentoring/tutoring to kids K-12 mainly in lower income communities and hopes to do the same with accessible healthcare.



Mark D. Faries, Ph.D. Mark is an Associate Professor and Extension Health Specialist in Behavioral Medicine with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension (Family & Community Health), and Adjunct Faculty with the Texas A&M School of Medicine and School of Public Health. His research and extension efforts explore *why* and *how* people initiate and maintain healthy behaviors, with focus on theoretical, religious (internalization), and self-regulatory aspects of healthy lifestyles. He is Director of the *Well Church Initiative* (wellchurch.tamu.edu), which maintains the tradition and trusted relationship of Extension with faith communities, supporting their clergy and congregations with health education and resources across the faith-placed to faith-based continuum. He also specializes in understanding of health behavior through the lens of ancient Christianity — especially perspectives on the carnal passions, and war of flesh and soul.

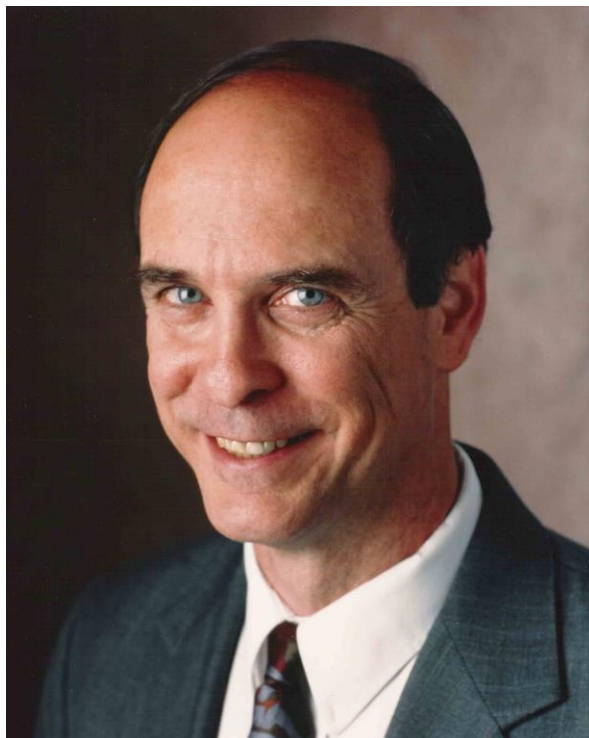


Deepu Varughese George, PhD, LMFT. I am an Associate Professor of Family Medicine and serve as a Behavioral Medicine faculty for the Department of Family Medicine at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. I am a family therapist by training and my clinical work since 2013 has focused on integrating behavioral health into primary care settings, with a commitment to

transforming access to behavioral health care through integration in medical settings. I am also a candidate for Holy Orders with the Episcopal Church, with a distinct interest in exploring the idea of “Spiritual Health” of the next generation of healthcare professionals such as physicians, advanced practice providers, and mental health learners. I would like to set up a research program on spiritual practices and health outcomes in the Rio Grande Valley.



Rümeyza Nur Gurbuz-DOĞAN, Ph.D. Dr. Gurbuz-Dogan is a lecturer in the division of Psychology of Religion at the Social Sciences University of Ankara, Turkey. She received her bachelor's in theology at Ankara University in 2013 and then completed her MA at Durham University, the UK, in 2016, under the program of 'Spirituality, Theology and Health'. She has developed and evaluated the Sufi music therapy intervention manual and its effects on common mental health disorders during her PhD studies at UCL, Division of Psychiatry and has been awarded the PhD degree in 2021. Her main research interests are spirituality, psychology of religion/spirituality, music therapy, applied clinical studies and mental health. She is now giving several classes for both undergraduate and postgraduate students including the psychology of religion, educational psychology, introduction to psychopathology, and interventions for the spiritual and mental crises.



John R. Guyton, MD. Dr. Guyton will retire as Professor of Medicine in the Endocrine Division at Duke University and Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Clinical Lipidology at the end of June, 2023, marking the close of a 50-year career investigating atherosclerosis pathology, caring for patients with lipid disorders, and fostering the new field of clinical lipidology. His education included a major in physics and minor in English at the University of Mississippi, M.D. from Harvard, and medical residency at University of Texas Southwestern in Dallas. He has held faculty positions at Harvard Med, Baylor College of Medicine, and Duke. Along the way he embraced evangelical Christianity and affiliated early with the Christian Medical Society, rejected ontological individualism, taught Sunday School for 30+ years, identified genetically afflicted persons as ringbearers reminiscent of Frodo Baggins, and wrote a series of 95 blogs in 2016-2017 on the theme of “Searching for GSOT.”



Kenneth R. Harris III, LCSW, BCD is a graduate of George Mason University (2011) where he earned a BS in Integrative Studies and commission as an Army Cavalry Officer. Kenny served with 2nd Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, deploying to Afghanistan (2013-14) and South Korea

(2015). He reclassified in 2016 and graduated from the Army-Fayetteville State University Master of Social Work Program (2017) and the Army's Social Work Internship Program (2019). Kenny has served in numerous military mental health settings—notably Outpatient Embedded Behavioral Health Clinics. In 2022, he deployed to Poland with the Immediate Response Force as lead Behavioral Health Officer for 3rd Brigade, 82ND Airborne Division. Kenny continues active-duty service as a Social Work PhD student at UNC-Chapel Hill. His research interests include psychological and behavioral resilience, racialized and ethnic service members, and psychosocial religious-faith mechanisms for human flourishing.



Merrill M. Hawkins, Jr. (Mel), M.Div., M.S. Ph.D. After earning the Ph.D. in Religion (History of Christianity Specialization) from Baylor University, I joined the faculty of Carson-Newman University in 1995, where I serve as Professor of Christian Studies. My upper division courses originally were in the history of Christianity, but I shifted my focus after completing a residency in Clinical Pastoral Education at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville Medical Center (2003-2004) and Jungian oriented spiritual direction formation through the Haden Institute (low residency/non credit 2008-20012). Today, I teach spirituality and emotional wellness courses that cover topics such as love, grief, and anger. In addition, I teach one course on spirituality and mental health in Carson-Newman's CACREP accredited graduate counseling program. My present research involves a history of the work of Lofton Hudson, founder of one of the first pastoral counseling centers in the United States (his papers are in Carson-Newman's archives). I am excited to use the formation of this year's Spirituality and Health Workshop to revise current courses, launch a new course in the spring 2024 semester (Vocation, Calling, and Life Purpose), create new undergraduate courses in topics such as resilience, compassion, and awe, and explore possible future research agendas and community service opportunities. In addition to teaching at Carson-Newman, I am an ordained Baptist minister and I just completed 21 years as a part-time

pastor in the Holston Conference of the United Methodist Church (under an "Other Fellowship" status).



Jamilah Hanum Abdul Khaiyom, Ph.D. Dr. Khaiyom currently serves as an Assistant Professor and Clinical Psychologist in the Department of Psychology, AbdulHamid AbuSulayman Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences, International Islamic University Malaysia. She received her Ph.D. in Psychological Medicine from Universiti Putra Malaysia, and her doctoral research was on Group Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT) for Patients with Anxiety Disorders. She is currently focusing much of her time researching integrating Islamic spiritual elements with cognitive-behavioral and mindfulness interventions in promoting mental health and well-being. Some of her latest publications are spiritual therapy from an Islamic perspective and *i-ACT For Life* - a prevention program featuring integrated elements of Islamic spirituality and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy. *i-ACT For Life* has been digitalized and currently being used by Malaysian population for the management of psychological distress and maintenance of mental health.



Jacqueline Laures-Gore, PhD, CCC-SLP. Jacqueline is a Professor of Communication Sciences and Disorders at Georgia State University and the Director of the Aphasia & Motor Speech Disorders Research Laboratory. She is a Fellow of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association and a 2022 Honors of the Georgia Speech-Language-Hearing Association recipient. She is currently Language Editor for the *American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology*. Her research focus includes post-stroke aphasia and its relation to stress, coping, depression, and integrative health practices.



Tatiana Letovaltseva. Tatiana is a Belgian military officer, trained in CBRN matters. Since 2018, she has been working as the military coordinator of the Belgian military chaplaincies. She holds a master's degree in Social and Military sciences from the Royal Military Academy and a master's degree in World Religions from KU Leuven. She is currently a doctoral researcher at the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies of the KU Leuven and at the Royal Military Academy. Her research focuses on the reform of Belgian military chaplaincies and their possible contribution to the development of the military concept of 'spiritual care'. Her areas of interests are interfaith dialogue, virtue ethics, spiritual dimension of military health and management of religious diversity in the military context.



Ch. Capt. Lance Lormand, USAF. Ch. Lormand is a prior-enlisted aviator serving as Chaplain to the 21st Special Tactics Squadron, Pope Army Airfield, North Carolina. He is a graduate of the VA's Mental Health Integration for Chaplain Services (MHICS) program and holds a Doctor of Ministry Degree in Integrative Chaplaincy from Vanderbilt Divinity School. Chaplain Lormand is also a Board Certified Chaplain, having served a year's clinical residency at Brooke Army Medical Center. Chaplain Lormand's doctoral thesis "A Hope Beyond the Self: A Chaplain's Perspective on Spiritual Resiliency" explores providing spiritual care to those facing an existential crisis of meaning in a military setting. In total Ch. Lormand has sixteen years of service between active duty and the Air Force Reserve. Prior to his current position, Chaplain Lormand was Chaplain to the 86th Air Wing, Ramstein Air Base, Germany. During his assignment to Ramstein Air Base, Chaplain Lormand deployed as Installation Chaplain to RAF Fairford, UK in support of ongoing air operations in the European theatre. Upon returning, Chaplain Lormand immediately volunteered to serve in support of Operation Allies Refuge/Operation Allies Welcome (OAR/OAW) where he served with distinction some thirty-five thousand Afghan evacuees fleeing the Taliban.



Kay Malek, PT, PhD. Kay is the Program Director and Associate Professor of the Doctor of Physical Therapy program at DeSales University, teaching in the areas of neurologic PT, chronic disease management, patient education, and professional development. Dr. Malek earned degrees as a physical therapist assistant from St. Philip's College (1990) and Bachelor of Applied Arts and Sciences in Occupational Education (1997), Master of Science in Physical Therapy (2000), and Doctor of Philosophy in Education with a concentration in Adult, Professional, and Community Education (2006) degrees from Texas State University. Dr. Malek's scholarly interests to include motivational interviewing to promote exercise and physical activity in persons with chronic medical conditions; knowledge translation regarding high intensity gait training and vestibular rehabilitation; compassion fatigue and burnout in graduate physical therapy students and early career professionals; and finally an emerging interest in designing effective teaching methodology to encourage discussions about religion and spirituality as components of physical therapy patient care by current and future physical therapists.



Leslie "Connor" Nickels, M.D. I am a Christian. I am originally from Memphis, TN. I attended medical school at the University of Arkansas and graduated in 2002. I did my emergency medicine residency at Orlando Health in Orlando, FL. I did 2 years of private practice and realized I missed academics. I completed an emergency ultrasound fellowship in Orlando in 2008. Since that time, I have been at the University of Florida in Gainesville, FL. I am an associate professor and currently work part time. For years I have had the desire to attend seminary and I am finally pursuing this goal. I am an online student at Dallas Theological Seminary. I plan to use what I am learning within academic medicine and develop research in this area of spirituality and medicine. (specifically, the emergency department).



Funmilola (Funmi) OlaOlorun, MBBS, PhD. Dr. OlaOlorun is a Community Health Physician with a PhD in Public Health from Johns Hopkins University. She teaches and supervises research projects of medical and postgraduate public health students in her current role as Senior Lecturer in the Reproductive and Family Health Unit of the Department of Community Medicine at the College of Medicine, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria. Her research is focused on women's health across the life course. More specifically, she has conducted research in Nigeria in areas such as family planning, fertility desires, household decision-making, intimate partner violence, and menopause. Funmi is a co-Principal Investigator for the Performance Monitoring for Action program in Nigeria and has served as principal investigator, co-principal investigator and investigator in many internationally funded studies. Funmi is excited about the opportunity to integrate spirituality, religion and religiosity into her quest to better understand women's health.



Justus Uchenna Onu, M.D. In 2008, Dr. Onu graduated from medical school. He successfully completed his residency training in psychiatry from 2012 to 2017, passed all necessary exams in

first sitting, and as a result, received Fellowships from the Faculties of Psychiatry at the West African Postgraduate Medical College (WAPMC) and the National Postgraduate Medical College of Nigeria (NPMCN) in 2016 and 2017, respectively. He is currently employed with Nnamdi Azikiwe University Anambra State, Nigeria, as an assistant professor (lecturer 1) and a consulting psychiatrist. He has a background in psychological medicine and has received additional training in medical education and community mental health. In addition to the outcomes of mental disease and other chronic medical conditions in Africa, his research interests are in the area of genetic epidemiology of major mental disorders. He is especially curious with how socio-cultural elements, such as religion, can affect how mental illnesses manifest in Africa.



Daniel Orogun, PhD, MBA, M.A, BDD. Daniel is an associate researcher and a senior postdoctoral fellow in the Faculty of Theology at the University of Pretoria. He has interdisciplinary interests in religion and healthcare/mental healthcare, healthcare management, religeconomics, African Pentecostalism, and religion and new technologies. He has published several articles and is currently supervising PhD candidates focusing on nursing, psycho-spirituality, and healthcare in the Republic of Ireland and South Africa. His current research is on the efficacy and sufficiency of psycho-spiritual support in mental healthcare for individuals, corporations, and community development. He provides community service as a healthcare chaplain and serves as a research resource person for chaplaincy organizations. He leads the School of Intelligent Prayers and believes prayer plays a significant role in achieving mental wellness. Daniel is the international collaboration advisor on the Advisory Board of the Emergency Services Chaplaincy of Southern Africa.



Stephen Pan, Ph.D. Dr. Pan is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Public Health at The University of Texas at San Antonio. As a social and behavioral epidemiologist, Dr. Pan's research focuses on policies and social and cultural processes that impact public health, particularly among minority populations. He holds a PhD in Population and Public Health from the University of British Columbia and has received support from the US National Institutes of Health, the US Fulbright Commission, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, and the National Natural Science Foundation of China. He has co-authored over 70 publications and has conducted public health research in East Asia and North America since 2007. Among other research interests, Dr. Pan seeks to advance the study of religion, spirituality, supernatural beliefs, and public health among marginalized populations, and has led studies on religion and HIV sexual risk, healthcare utilization, psychological distress in China. (Publications: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/myncbi/16s-itUwP76Ai/bibliography/public/>).

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Stuart Parrish. Stuart Parrish (he/him) is a writer/musician with a strong interdisciplinary educational background BA, NCCU. Stuart is particularly interested in exploring the theories of composition and rhetoric at the intersection of spirituality, theology, and health. This area has been a focus of his lived experience , studies and research. He is also an advocate and founding member , Vice President of Adult Learners Student Organization. Certified CITI in human subject research, completed MBSR and Expressive Writing at Duke Integrative Medicine. Research capstone on Learning from Adult Learners, Presented at the conference on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at NCCU summer 2019, internship - Triangle Digital Humanities Network, Assistant Content Manager, interviewer, writer, Institute held Fall 2019 # Representation Matters.



Christine Pui-ting Lau, Ph.D. I got my master degree in marriage and family therapy at the University of Hong Kong in 2009 and my PhD in Counselor Education and Supervision in 2017 from Regent University, Virginia. I'm a certified family therapist and work as a full time faculty of Alliance Bible Seminary in Hong Kong. Currently I am the chair and associate professor of the Counseling Department at the seminary. Apart from teaching, I'm also interested in doing research on religion and health. My dissertation was a quantitative study on the relationship between work-family conflict and religious coping of Chinese working parents in dual-career families. Moreover I have joined the faculty at Regent University to conduct training for local pastors and professional counselors in China on promoting healthy marriages.



Ma. Irene N. Quilantang, MA, ScM. Irene (*pronouns: she/her*) is a third-year PhD candidate at the Brown University School of Public Health where she is researching religiosity, spirituality,

and HIV through an intersectional approach. Her overarching goal is to develop and implement culturally sensitive behavioral health interventions in resource-limited settings. She earned her BS in Behavioral Sciences from the University of the Philippines Manila, MA in Psychology from the University of the Philippines Diliman, and ScM in Global Public Health from Brown University. She is currently a National Institutes of Health (NIH) Fogarty Fellow under the NIH-Fogarty Training Program for the Prevention of HIV in Vulnerable Populations, and an active member of the Philippine Health Initiative for Research, Service, and Training (PHIRST).

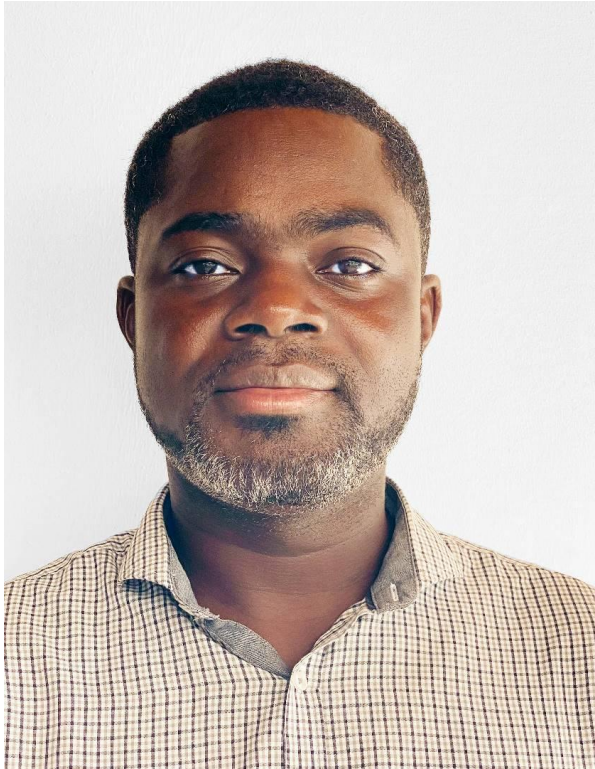
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USAF Chaplain Adam Rhoads.



Joan Romaine, M.P.H., M.S., LGPC, NCC. Ms. Romaine holds a Master of Public Health degree (2001) from The George Washington University, and a Master of Science degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling (2020) from Loyola University Maryland's Department of Pastoral Counseling. Ms. Romaine is a Licensed Graduate Professional Counselor (LGPC) in Maryland. She earned a dual BA/BS degree in psychology and advertising from Syracuse University (1990). Ms. Romaine is an ordained Elder and Deacon in the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. (PCUSA). Since 2001, Ms. Romaine has worked at the National Institutes of Health providing programmatic support for HIV/AIDS research and alcohol research. Her study of pastoral counseling and clinical training has furthered her interest in better understanding research on the intersection of religion and spirituality on health outcomes.



John Sanches. Until my early teens I lived in Surinam a former Dutch territory on the north - east coast of South America, a multicultural melting pot of ethnic groups and different religious traditions. I was raised as a Christian in a vibrant church community. As a teenager I immigrated to Holland where I was exposed to a more secular culture. I studied Theology (in Holland, England and the USA) in search of answers to existential questions and graduated with a M.Div. and completed CPE. I have worked as a local pastor, national youth director, prison chaplain, therapist and European director of Family ministries and health related issues. Motivated by my interest in the relationship between mental health and spirituality /religiosity, I studied Psychology with the intention of becoming better at a better pastor. Upon specializing as a clinical psychologist, I worked in forensic psychiatric setting and the prison system, where I qualified as a forensic clinical psychologist in Holland and England.



Joshua Sebu. Joshua is an economist and data analyst at the Department of Data Science and Economic Policy at the School of Economics, University of Cape Coast, Ghana. He was awarded his PhD in economics from the University of Kent, UK, in July 2017. He received his BA in economics and mathematics and MPhil in economics from the University of Cape Coast in 2008 and 2011 respectively. He teaches at the undergraduate and graduate levels at the University of Cape Coast, which he has done since 2018. He is a consultant for the Statistical Service of Ghana where he has helped analyse several national data including census data and also written various reports for the service. His research interests include financial inclusion, food security, child nutrition, women empowerment, farm household productivity, poverty and inequality. His newfound interest is in issues relating to health, religion and spirituality.



Dorothy Smith-Ruiz, Ph.D. Dr. Smith-Ruiz, is a Full Professor at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. She received her PhD in the Department of Sociology from Michigan State

University. She was granted a two-year NIA postdoctoral fellowship from the Yale University School of Epidemiology and Public Health to study mental health among African Americans, resulting in a book publication (1990). A second NIA postdoctoral fellowship was granted from The Duke University Center for the Study of Aging and Human Development to study the impact of grandparent caregiving on older African American women. Her research on African American grandmothers served as a jumping off point for me into new areas of scholarly development, including exploring the impact of the Great Recession of 2007-2009 on African American families, resulting in several book publications. Her most recent book focuses on physical and mental health conditions among older caregiving African American women, to examine the impact of structural factors and health disparities; including problems within the health care system and the intersecting nature of American societal institutions.



Nick Steffen, MS, LMHC. Nick is a licensed counselor who provides short-term intensive pastoral and clinical counseling to English-speaking cross-cultural workers operating in religious contexts in Western Asia and Northern Africa, often in alienating and traumatizing contexts. His current research questions revolve around the use of complexity science when integrating spirituality into psychotherapy, the effect of positive mental health on the ways people relate to their own faith and others', and the negative effects of religious/spiritual identities and commitments on mental health.



Rodger Stenger MDiv, MA, BCC. I recently returned to Palliative healthcare chaplaincy after five years as Director of Pastoral Care for a large church. Before that, I was a chaplain for Amedisys Hospice and Johns Hopkins Hospital. I've just completed the coursework for a doctorate in I/O Psychology and will begin writing my dissertation after this seminar. I am interested in the cross-section of spirituality and medicine. I worked as a church planting missionary for twenty years in Eastern Europe and hope to write my dissertation on Moral Injury in Healthcare workers in Ukraine. I also made my first film about spirituality and medicine, fell in love with the process, and plan to make more films on this topic.



Paola J. Sullian. Paola was born in Los Angeles, California and has lived in ten states. Driven by a higher calling after a successful hiatus in the professional world, she decided to complete a bachelor's degree in Family, Youth, and Community Sciences at the University of Florida. As a

McNair Scholar, Paola has set her sights on a doctoral program in psychology, focusing on spirituality and well-being research. Her ongoing research assesses the effectiveness of spiritual interventions on children's spirituality, happiness, and well-being. Paola aims to enhance the flourishing and well-being of underrepresented minority children through evidence-based spiritual interventions via her nonprofit, Little Big Souls. Balancing her roles as a devoted wife, mother, entrepreneur, student, and researcher, Paola loves co-creating meaningful brands with her business partner at The Third Eye Collective.



Barbara Tevelev. Barbara is currently enrolled in a PhD Health Sciences program at Faulkner University. At the same time, Barbara works at a pharmaceutical company as a genetic engineer and regulatory submission liaison in the rare diseases and oncology division. Barbara's academic background is heavily rooted in biological and chemical sciences and quantitative research. All of her previous work experiences followed the same path with a focus on developing biotherapeutic products. She developed commercial processes and molecules for treatment of different types of cancers, autoimmune and genetic diseases as well as vaccines. The research put her in the forefront of many recent advances, including CRISPR, utilizing mRNA for immunization, and proteomics. However, in the past few years, Barbara slowly transitioned from a laboratory-heavy and data-driven environment and gained a broader appreciation for healthcare policies and patients' advocacy groups. In conjunction with personal and religious experiences, she realized that there is more to treating patients than just providing medications. Barbara plans to focus her doctoral research on understanding the connection between religion, spirituality and health. She also hopes to evaluate several faith-based interventions with applications for treating moral injury in veterans and prisoners.



Charlotte R. Weiss PhD, MSN, ACNP. Dr Weiss is nurse scientist who recently graduated from the University of Colorado with PhD in Nursing Science/Caring Science. Her dissertation is titled “Personal Becoming through Caring for Loved Ones with Cancer, Stories of Liminality.” She is in her first year of post-doctoral training at the University of Pennsylvania, funded by NINR grant. Her primary research interests are to improve the spiritual and emotional wellbeing of family caregivers of those with serious illness, while navigating in liminal spaces. She is passionate about qualitative research, especially narrative inquiry, and the incorporation of creative methods and other ways of knowing in healthcare research and healing interventions. Additionally, Dr Weiss clinically practices as an Acute Care Nurse Practitioner, specializing in the arenas of Palliative Care and Oncology; and is a nurse educator. Trained as a Caritas Coach by Dr. Jean Watson of Watson Caring Science Institute, Dr Weiss operates from a holistic lens and an interconnected unified worldview. She resides in Wilmington NC with her husband, niece, dog, and 2 cats where she enjoys outdoor activities, quilting, crochet, reading, and shell combing.



Swan Chin Wiggins, Ph.D. My long-term research goals are: a) to identify social and spiritual issues on scripting of internalized shame; and b) to manualize and evaluate a Christ-centered prayer-based shame intervention. I have been developing and implementing an intervention program for shame reduction among Asian indigenous church planters. While considered as maladaptive in the West, shame in the East is valued for self-improvement and correlated with high cognitive functioning. My next step is to convert my Ph.D. dissertation in Intercultural Studies (Columbia International University, 2021) into peer-reviewed articles while continuing qualitative research. The dissertation found external shaming to be a contextual mechanism for the internalization of societal values about an “honored” collective Self, which in turn perpetuated self-shaming scripts.



Rev. David Wiggins. I am interested in research related to the theology of shame as well as the spiritual impact of shame. I have been serving and ministering as a full time missionary to clergy, village church pastors, and lay leaders for three decades, mostly establishing indigenous community development works in Asia, Egypt, and USA. from my primary role of intercession while equipping leaders, starting micro-finance projects, or implementing disaster relief programs, I have become increasingly aware of the need spiritual reformation and cultural transformation through for shame intervention in Asian contexts.



Robert Wong. Robert is a recent graduate from the University of the Pacific in Stockton, CA with a BS in Biological Sciences. His background is primarily in comparative physiology where he tested the eardrum tuning of túngara frogs as an undergraduate. Although he loved working with frogs, he wants to learn more about research in medicine. With his background in biology and hands-on experience in lab research, he wants to utilize and develop skills that would allow him to investigate different approaches and interventions in the clinical field that would improve patient care. As a pre-med student raised in a faith-based household, he found Dr. Koenig's presentation to be inspiring as he shared how religion can impact life not only from a social perspective but also from a medical one. This drove his curiosity to find more roles religion has in our lives in a medical sense.