Editorial

Donald R. Ferrell

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In preparing the March 2010 issue of the *Journal of Religion and Health* for publication, I was struck again, as I have often been, by both the breadth and depth of the scholarship that is presented in its pages. If you are one of those readers who read *the Journal* from cover to cover, you would find yourself covering a rather vast terrain. You would travel from the question presented by James D. Campbell and colleagues of what role religion/spirituality may or may not play in helping patients afflicted with severe and even catastrophic illnesses cope with the impact of those illnesses upon their lives to how churches in Nigeria see their needs in coping with HIV/AIDS as reported by Godwin N. Aja and colleagues. You would ponder the research of Mary Magee Gullatte and colleagues on how to understand the disturbing statistic that African American women stricken with breast cancer have the highest incidence of delayed diagnosis/treatment and the highest rate of treatment of late stage cancers due to delayed diagnosis of any racial or ethnic group in the United States. While you are thinking about those questions, you would also find yourself considering Mark H. Anshel's contribution on how religious leaders in communities of faith can increase their capacity to promote good health by working with the disconnect in themselves and their constituents between the normative core health affirming values of their traditions and their own health compromising habits. In addition, you would discover how well Buddhism, among the great traditions, seems to foster health-promoting practices in its membership as discussed by W. H. Wiist and colleagues.

As you continue to read, you would next be confronted with the disturbing question, now so prominently in the news, of the sexual abuse of minors by Roman Catholic priests. Even more disturbing is the fact that many of these abusing priests were systematically protected by their bishops. You would reflect upon Clare McGrath-Merkle's argument that the profound failure of these priests and bishops to achieve that state of being that Erik Erikson called "generativity" put hundreds of children at risk of sexual abuse within their own religious communities. From exploring the question of radical developmental failures in the psychosexual identity formation of Roman Catholic priests and bishops, you would continue your journey through this issue of the *Journal* by reading about another

D. R. Ferrell (✉)
Dorset, VT, USA
e-mail: ferrelld@earthlink.net

occupational hazard in the professional lives of Christian clergy (and *mutatis mutandis*, presumably in the professional religious leadership of the other great religious traditions). This time as seen in a sample of Protestant clergy, namely, the problem of burnout as presented in the research of Benjamin R. Doolittle. As your reading path further unfolds, you would be introduced to some profound psychological, philosophical and theological questions in Angelika Walser's article on her work with persons who suffer from genetic skin diseases. Then Philip Browning Helsel offers you a discerning interpretation of the divine imperative of joy in the Book of Ecclesiastes in dialogue with Freud.

Your reading pilgrimage through this issue of the *Journal* would then lead you to a deeply engaging story by Editorial Board member David Moss of how, in what he believes was a providential encounter with poet Alan Ginsberg in a bar in Saint Louis in 1966, led him first to the work and later to a collegial relationship with theologian Thomas J. J. Altizer, who played a prominent role in the death of God controversy that exploded on the American religious and theological scene in the 1960s. What follows is a fascinating dialogue between Altizer and Moss on the meaning of God's death now that it is no longer in the headlines but has become the pervasive cultural and psycho-spiritual event in relationship to which our religious and spiritual lives, whatever forms they may take, must be lived.

The Altizer-Moss dialogue brings you to the end of your reading journey through this issue of the *Journal*. At this point, I would ordinarily bid you goodbye until the next issue appears in June, 2010; however, I am departing from editorial tradition to mention that we are honored to have also in this issue a review by Eva Fleischner of the book *The Holocaust is over: We Must Rise from Its Ashes* by Avraham Burg. Eva Fleischner is considered by many one of the truly creative voices in the study of the Shoah and in the Jewish-Christian relationship after the Shoah. Her review of Burg's controversial, yet challenging, book on the way Israel can move beyond its traumatic past toward a more hopeful future of peace and justice with the Palestinian people is a significant contribution to the on-going discussion in the *Journal of Religion and Health* of the ways in which authentic, religiously grounded spiritualities bring healing resources to the human quest for individual and social well-being.