

Annual Report 2012
Titus Brandsma Institute

Mission statement

The academic study of spirituality in the light of the Judeo-Christian tradition past and present, in service of church and society through publications and education.

The primary target groups are:

- (1) The academic world. Desired product: a contributory/leading input to spirituality science, with the following theme areas: fundamental research, biblical spirituality, the spirituality of the Modern Devotion, mystical processes, spirituality in social contexts.
- (2) Church and society. Desired product: producing spiritual formators, trained in the School of Spirituality.
- (3) Society. Desired product: a vocabulary with which differently schooled students can recognise spirituality in their own living and working environment as something that is their own.
- (4) Religious orders in Western Europe. Desired product: studies which religious institutes can use to align or confront their 'foundation documents' with actuality.
- (5) Religious orders in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Desired product: support for young religious men and women in writing a PhD thesis.
- (6) An academic forum. Desired product: a web community (Spirin) and an academic magazine (*Studies in Spirituality*).

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Foreword

Christian spirituality in tradition and actuality. Further exploration and defining of this subject was an important activity for the Titus Brandsma Institute in 2012. The staff members made a substantial contribution to this endeavour. Serious brainwork resulted in academic publications; colleagues travelled at home and abroad, sharing the wisdom they had acquired. With great panache, they supported students in lectures and practical sessions.

This report provides an impression of all this activity. In the first part, you can read about our ‘academic study’. The second part is devoted to our activities aimed at ‘serving church and society’ such as education and formation. These two parts are clearly distinct, but nevertheless interrelated. Because education inspires research and vice versa.

The focus on tradition and actuality also means looking at the present and the future. Based on their specialisms, colleagues work on biblical writings, mystical texts and monastic rule, among others. But they do this from the desire to bring to life our spiritual heritage for people of today wishing to embark on a spiritual path. Our colleagues also attend to the spiritual experiences of those people of today. Perhaps these often non-traditional witnesses from society – expressions of ‘social spirituality’ – may later prove to be of inestimable value for tradition.

The objectives of the institute demand an integral working method and great availability from staff members. In order to further promote these two aspects, the undersigned has worked on a new research programme, starting in 2013. The institute itself will continue with a new board, four board members having left at the end of 2012: Professor Jan Peters and Jan de Vaan from the executive board, Marie-Louise van Wijk and Harrie van Geene from the general board.

There are also changes to report in terms of accommodation. In June, the university board requested the institute to relocate to another location on the campus. Several weeks later, we moved from the Erasmus building, the bulwark of Humanities Sciences, to Mercator III, a business block. Although we now greet new neighbours, we are not more distant from society.

For a complete overview of the scientific output of 2011, we refer you to the institute’s website www.titusbrandsmainstituut.nl. Also on behalf of all my colleagues, I hope that you will enjoy reading this report.

Dr Inigo Bocken, academic director

Academic study: scientific research

Foundations

The Titus Brandsma Institute interprets and studies spirituality as a ‘God-human relationship’ and is studied in the light of the Judeo-Christian tradition. However, there are numerous other classifications and approaches to spirituality, which requires our own starting points to be constantly questioned and honed, in dialogue with those other approaches. This activity falls under ‘fundamental research’.

Fundamental research creates the pattern for all the institute’s theoretical and practical-scientific activities. Until 2012, all the research activities were incorporated in the programme ‘Reframing spirituality and mysticism, past and present.’ In 2013, a new research programme will be launched, which will run through 2017.

The discussion forum begun in September 2011, *collatio*, was continued in 2012. The name *collatio* refers to the representatives of the Modern Devotion in whose communities this form of communication played a key role. In short, this is not about being right individually, but about jointly discovering the truth. The academic staff have adopted this form of discussion in order to coordinate research work and continue to interact with national and international *scholarship*. For this reason, colleagues from the Faculty of Philosophy, Theology and Religious Studies (FTR) also took part in the *collationes*, as well as guests and speakers who work for scientific institutions elsewhere. In 2012, the *collationes* mainly focused on ‘social spirituality’ in relation to the ‘soul’. Here is a summary of the subjects which were addressed:

- On 9 January: Dr Gerrit Steunebrink from the Faculty of Philosophy, Theology and Religious Studies (FTR) delivered an address about the phenomenon of ‘conversion’ from antiquity to modern day.
- On 13 February: Dr Gerard Visser, Senior Lecturer of Cultural Philosophy at Leiden University delivered an address about the soul, based on his book *Niets cadeau. Een filosofisch essay over de ziel*.
- On 5 March: Dr Sander de Boer from the Faculty of FTR also delivered an address about the soul, focusing more on the discussion about the ‘body and soul’ relationship from antiquity to modern day.

- On 2 April: Professor Toine van den Hoogen from the Faculty of FTR and Dr Jan Peil, university lecturer in the Economy and Business Economics section of the RU, delivered an address about ‘the soul of the economy’. This centred around the thesis: *A vibrant civil society engenders a market*.
- On 7 May: Professor Johan Verstraeten, Professor of Theological Ethics at KU Leuven, delivered an address about ‘Transcending anxiety. Inspiring language and spirituality as a source of leadership’.
- On 4 June: Dr Kees Waaijman, Professor emeritus of Spirituality science at the RU and academic director of the Titus Brandsma Institute for ten years, delivered an address about ‘Spirituality as theology’, a reflection of his similarly entitled leaving speech in 2010.
- On 3 September: Dr Inigo Bocken, academic director of the Titus Brandsma Institute, delivered an address about the ‘learned ignorance’ of Cardinal Nicolas of Cusa (1401-1464).
- On 1 October: Dr Anne-Marie Bos, academic staff member at the Titus Brandsma Institute, delivered an address about ‘the spirituality of receptive observation’, as a means to achieve a basis for hermeneutics of observation.
- On 5 November: Professor Henk Barendregt, Professor of Foundations of Mathematics and Computer Science at the Faculty of FTR delivered an address about ‘the meaning of the temporary’. This concerned a symbiosis of oriental spirituality, scientific insights and the insights of the Stoa. Co-supervisor was Dr Inigo Bocken.
- On 17 December, there was a special collatio plus, around the presentation of a compilation of work by Dr Rudolf van Dijk, academic staff member of the Titus Brandsma Institute. See below at Modern Devotion.

Key publication

- C.J. Waaijman, Spiritualiteit en psychologie, in: *Psyche & Geloof*, 23-2 (2012), 105-111.

Biblical spirituality

By analysing and interpreting Bible texts and Biblically-inspired texts – the so-called ‘spiritual hermeneutics’ – it is possible to expose spiritual

processes and experiential models and to articulate the ‘keywords’ of Jewish and Christian spirituality. At the institute, Kees Waaijman, Huub Welzen and Anne-Marie Bos lead studies into Biblical spirituality. One of Kees Waaijman’s constant themes is the spirituality of the Psalms, while Huub Welzen specialises in the spirituality of the New Testament, specifically the Gospel according to Luke. Anne-Marie Bos specialises in art and biblical spirituality, particularly focusing on the prophet Elijah, the father of the Carmelite Order. On Friday 30 March, she obtained her PhD in Tilburg (Tilburg University, Tilburg School of Theology) with a thesis on this theme.

From Thursday 24 to Sunday 27 May, these three were joined by Inigo Bocken at a congress in Malta on Biblical spirituality. The theme of this meeting was ‘distinction in the Scriptures’. This congress resulted from collaboration between members of the Titus Brandsma Institute and fellows from the University of Bloemfontein (South Africa), which aims to organise a congress about Biblical spirituality every two years. Other participants in the congress included biblical scholars from Malta itself and the United States. It was a memorable meeting, if only because this was the first meeting between two leading scholars in this field – Kees Waaijman and Sandra Schneiders. Besides around twenty experts sitting around the table, there was also an outer circle of students who enjoyed the opportunity of taking part in the discussions.

This all took place in the beautiful surroundings of Mdina, in a Carmelite retreat centre and in the Carmelite Institute of Malta. At the end of the congress, Huub Welzen delivered a public lecture for the institute. The organisers – Pieter de Villiers, Huub Welzen and Charlò Camilleri – hosted an excellent conference. This was a good incentive for the development of the field and an important forum for further cooperation.

Key publications

- J.M. Bos, *Elijah looked and behold.... Biblical spirituality in pictures* (SiS Supplements 23). Leuven 2012 (PhD thesis Tilburg University).
- C.J. Waaijman, *Hoe streelt jouw zegging mijn gehemelte. De spiritualiteit van psalm 119*. Kampen 2012 (also handbook to the mystical week).
- P.H.M. Welzen, *Spiritualiteit in het Lucasevangelie*. (1) Geschiedenis en bevrijding. (2) Verscheidenheid en gemeenschap, in *Acta Theologica* 32-2 (2012) 299-341.

Mystical texts

Lived spirituality can result in experiencing a personal relationship with the Other, God. We describe such an experience as mystical. Knowledge about mysticism is accessible because many mystics have recorded their experiences or commissioned others to do so for them. These texts make an impression on the reader, but at the same time require a good distinguishing ability from that reader. Many mystical texts describe an experience of something that transcends human capabilities. Within the institute, Hein Blommestijn and Jos Huls are collaborating on a handbook about processes of conversion, based on studies about individual mystical authors. In 2012, Hein Blommestijn continued his study into the texts of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, while Jos Huls pursued his research into the work of Søren Kierkegaard († 1855). A monography about this Danish mystic is due to be published in 2013.

Modern Devotion

One of the main spiritual reform movements in the Netherlands was the Modern Devotion initiated by Geert Grote († 1384). Even in the years before the Second World War, Titus Brandsma pointed to the significance of the writings of the modern devout – such as the *Imitation of Christ*, by Thomas à Kempis – for contemporary man. In his view, reading and studying these writings were helpful to restore the clouded image of God in his time, in a world in which human dignity seemed in decline. Times may have changed, but the same writings still have the same power of expression for modern society. This is why they form such an important subject of research at the institute named after Titus Brandsma. Here, Rudolf van Dijk, Rijcklof Hofman and Charles Caspers are engaged in research into the Modern Devotion. Together with Daniela Müller (Faculty of FTR) and Dr Judith Kessler (Faculty of Arts at the RU), Charles Caspers organised a workshop and an expert meeting. The workshop, which was held on Tuesday 13 March, was about ‘Distribution, reception and new paths in research into Modern Devotion’. The expert meeting, on Friday 30 November, was entitled ‘In the eyes of others. Modern Devotion in Germany and the Netherlands, influencing and appropriation’.

At the end of the year under review, a festive Modern Devotion’s event was organised on 17 December. In the Erasmus building of Radboud University a sturdy anthology of the work of Rudolf van Dijk

was presented: *Twaalf kapitfels over ontstaan, bloei en doorwerking van de Moderne Devotie*. This handsome piece of work, published by Uitgeverij Verloren, had been promised to him back in 2010 when we marked his forty years in employment. After introductions of the three Modern Devotion researchers mentioned, the chairman of the board, Professor Jan Peters, presented the first copies to Sister Anthonie Koolen, prioress of the Augustinian sisters of Soeterbeeck, to Sanny Bruijns, member of the board of the Dutch Carmelites, and to Professor S. Kortmann, rector magnificus of Radboud University. In 2013 part of the Modern Devotion research was realized with the aid of the Conference of Dutch Religious.

Key publications

- C.M.A. Caspers, Joy and Sorrow. The Meaning of the Blood of Christ in the Late Middle Ages. In C. Santing & J. Touber (Eds.), *Blood, Symbol, Liquid. Representations and Interpretations of Blood in the Late Middle Ages and Early Modern Period* (Groningen Studies in Cultural Change 44), Leuven 2012, 37-60.
- C.M.A. Caspers, *Mysterium depopulatum*. Understanding Late Medieval Worship and Piety with the Aid of Michel de Certeau. In I. M. K. Bocken (Ed.), *Spiritual Spaces. History and Mysticism in Michel de Certeau* (Studies in Spirituality Supplements 24), Leuven 2012, 45-58.
- R.Th.M. van Dijk, *Twaalf kapitfels over ontstaan, bloei en doorwerking van de Moderne Devotie*. Edited by Charles Caspers & Rijcklof Hofman (Middeleeuwse Studies en Bronnen 140), Hilversum 2012.

Spirituality in social contexts

Can Jewish and Christian spirituality, as it has developed over the centuries, still speak to contemporary people? If so, in what way? In that long period, the tradition has always been influenced and fed by society: how is that happening today? The research into ‘spirituality in social contexts’ focuses on this and other questions related to the mediation of tradition and modernity. At the same time, the question is very fundamental and very concrete and therefore should be worked out in two ways: into a contribution to the theory development and into information that is also understandable and usable outside the ‘ivory tower’ of academia.

In this process, the philosophy of the late French scholar Michel de Certeau, who died in 1986, is very valuable. On 28 and 29 September, Inigo Bocken organised an international expert meeting, ‘Wild Mystics’, in Beek-Ubbergen. The participants reflected extensively on Certeau’s philosophy in positioning mystics in early modern and contemporary society. Besides Inigo Bocken, speakers included Hein Blommestijn and Charles Caspers.

Key publications

– I.M.K. Bocken, *Everyday Life as Divine Practice. Modernity and Transcendence in Michel de Certeau*. In W. van der Merwe & W. Stoker (eds.), *Looking Beyond. Shifting Views on Transcendence in Theology, Philosophy, Art and Politics*. Amsterdam 2012, 233-240.

– I.M.K. Bocken, *Nomad and Layman: Spiritual Spaces in Modernity – Mysticism and Everyday Life in Michel de Certeau*. In Idem (ed.), *Spiritual Spaces. History and Mysticism in Michel de Certeau* (Studies in Spirituality Supplements 24). Leuven 2012, 111-125.

Serving church and society: education and formation

School for spirituality

At the School for Spirituality, every student is challenged to acknowledge and express their own spiritual path. At the end of the study, the aim is that they will be able to help others on their spiritual path.

In all, thirty students attended the ‘Spiritual Guidance’ programme in 2012. Together with ‘guest students’ and students from Hydepark (the latter group representing the Netherlands Protestant Church) – exactly fifty people in all – they attended theory lectures on 24 Wednesday mornings. The afternoon programme, only for students from the School, consisted of practical sessions, giving them the opportunity to practise their professional skills. On 25 September, a festive event was organised for the presentation of their certificates. The students’ presentations revealed the unique journey each had undertaken on their way to a new identity as a spiritual formator. They looked back at an intense, but above all very fruitful study period, which had contributed much more than knowledge to their lives.

In 2012, the School organised two expert meetings for students, former students and other interested parties. The theme of the first meeting on Friday 16 March in Clingendael (The Hague) was ‘mystagogy, as growing awareness of social spirituality in a turbulent world’. The central lecture was given by Edy Korthals Altes, former ambassador to Spain and celebrated writer on world peace. He appealed for a communal search for our European sources: the classics, humanism, the Judeo-Christian tradition and Islam. The second meeting on 16 November, held at the Titus Brandsma Institute, was inspired by the men of Emmaus and focused on ‘mystagogy as initiation to personal faith and the faith community’. The introduction was given by Annemiek de Jong-Van Campen, who works at the School of Catholic Theology at Tilburg University and who has a pastoral function at Meije-Zegveld. This was followed by workshops given by Teun Kruijswijk Jansen and Jacques Scholte.

In discussion about the spiritual path

As in previous years, the institute organised the course ‘In discussion about the spiritual path’. In September, the first follow-up course began. In the

academic year 2012-2013, eleven students embarked on the basic course, consisting of two modules of eight sessions each, on Friday evenings. The themes included:

- The sparkle in the ordinary
- The divine in art and culture
- The Scripture reads you
- Crisis as opportunity

The follow-up course, which was attended by eight students, also consisted of two modules and was given on Wednesday evenings. In the first term of the 2012-2013 academic year, the focus was on the Psalms. At the end, one of the students said:

We read the Pilgrim psalms, we were given an explanation and shared ideas. I enjoyed the richness of the language, which constantly brought me into contact with another dimension of my (God's) desires. The follow-up course deepens our knowledge, is a source of inspiration. Since then, a regular insight has emerged in me: there is always reciprocity, a 'me and Thou'. An autonomous effort is required to be silent, to make room, so that 'it may happen to me'. That's moving. It helps me create space in my daily life to see what's happening and to re-open the door if I've closed it to something.

Titus Brandsma lecture

On Friday 11 May, the nineteenth annual Titus Brandsma lecture was given in the beautiful Stevens church in Nijmegen. The speaker, Laetitia Aarnink, who was a member of the institute's academic staff from 1970 to 2010, had chosen the title: 'Mercy works in secret'. She referred to the fact that spirituality in actively religious people, besides having a visible side (for example the schools and care homes that they have founded), also has an invisible side. Anyone who devotes himself or herself to working for those in need, is first moved themselves. By what or by whom? Inspired among others by Dietrich Bonhoeffer and his interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount (particularly Matthew 6), Laetitia Aarnink compares actively religious people with children. In the same way as children become totally absorbed in their games, actively religious people become absorbed in their charity work. Mercy thus tends to remain – very paradoxically – a secret for those who practise it. Because they do what they are moved to do, but they are not aware of the good their deeds do. In our modern society, there are still many people who support their fellows in times of need, in a

natural way, but often invisible for others. Unseen and unacknowledged, mercy goes its own way.

At the end, Inigo Bocken, academic director of the institute since the middle of 2011, addressed a few words to Laetitia Aarnink. Laetitia's lecture is available on the institutes' website:

<http://www.titusbrandsmainstituut.nl/ned/uitgaven/e-boek.htm>.

Mystical week

From Monday 2 to Thursday 5 July, Kees Waaijman organised the so-called mystical week focusing on the theme: 'How sweet are your words to my taste. The spirituality of Psalm 119'. All too often, this psalm, the longest in the Book of Psalms, is regarded as irritating, dull and stiff. However, this psalm has inspired Kees Waaijman for over thirty years and isn't long enough for him. During the mystical week, he was given the opportunity to explain why this psalm still moves him. Together with the 250 participants, he looked behind the words used in the psalm. To mark the mystical week, a lovely book was published which was used as a course book: C.J. Waaijman, *Hoe streelt jouw zegging mijn gehemelte. De spiritualiteit van psalm 119*. Kampen 2012.

Blast of trumpets

The School for spirituality (spiritual guidance), the course 'In discussion with the spiritual path', the Titus Brandsma lecture and the Mystical Week are the regular annual activities with which the institute presents itself externally. There were also numerous events where the staff members represented the institute. A full summary would go too far. We will restrict ourselves to three events, each featuring music.

Despite the heavy snowfall on Friday evening 3 February, several hundred people attended a concert, 'Our Lady of Flanders', in the Our Lady's Cathedral in Antwerp. Wilfried Van den Brande and Lies Vandewege sang Marian songs by Franck, Gounod and Dvorak. They were accompanied by organist Peter Van de Velde and cellist Nadja Nevolovitsch. This concert was part of a project co-organised by the Titus Brandsma Institute, including a digital workspace about Marian spirituality.

On Thursday 15 March, the academic institutes associated with the Konferentie Nederlandse Religieuzen (Conference for Netherlands Religious Orders), organised a study day about the Eucharist. Over two hundred guests attended on this sunny winter's day. Nowadays, discussions about the Eucharist soon lead to church-related political and legal discussions about the office, despite the Eucharist being a source and highlight of Christian life. Those introducing this study day chose a different angle. Each of them, in their own way, let the participants taste something of the 'Eucharistic abundance'. Over the centuries, this sacrament has produced great creativity and new insights. Why shouldn't that happen with the current generation? Directed by choirmaster Willem-Marie Speelman, a song specially written by Andries Govaert for this day resounded in Breda. In 2013, the compilation of this study day, edited by Charles Caspers, Ad Leys and Petra Versnel-Mergaerts, will be published by Uitgeverij Abdij van Berne.

On Wednesday evening 17 October, the Nicaraguan priest, politician and poet Ernesto Cardenal was in Nijmegen at the invitation of the Titus Brandsma Institute and the Soeterbeeck Programme of Radboud University. Accompanied by the six-man music group Grupo Sal, Cardenal was touring Germany. Inigo Bocken, a great admirer of the famous liberation theologian, managed to bring the group to Nijmegen. In the atmospheric Titus Brandsma Memoriaal, Stephan van Erp and Brigitte Adriaensen (both from Radboud University) and abbot Bernardus Peeters (from the Trappist abbey Koningshoeven near Tilburg) joined Inigo Bocken to discuss Cardenal's spirituality and poetry. But above all, the 87-year-old, but still youthful poet and his Latin musicians gave the two hundred guests an unforgettable evening.

Organisation

At the end of 2012, the board of the Titus Brandsma Institute consisted of:

Professor J.R.T.M. Peters s.j., chairman (until 18 December)

M.J.A. Timmermans o.carm., secretary

J.G.H. de Vaan, treasurer/delegated administrator (until 18 December)

H. van Geene c.m.m., board member (until 18 December)

B. Wolbers o.carm., board member

M.-L. van Wijk - van de Ven, board member (until 18 December)

The scientific advisory council of the institute consists of:

Professor J. F. Goud, member

Professor J.E.J.M. Van Heijst, member

Professor Th. Mertens, member

Professor P.J.A. Nissen, member

Professor P.J.M. van Tongeren, chairman

Professor J.G. van der Watt, member

Staff make-up

The total size of the staff amounts to 11.35 fte.

Of this amount, 0.5 fte is for the academic director and academic secretary, 5.96 fte for research, 1.99 for education and discipline development, 0.8 fte for Spirin and 2.1 fte for support.