

Wayne E. Oates Institute Uses Internet Technology to Expand the Dialogue

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The Wayne E. Oates Institute works in traditional and online environments to stimulate an interdisciplinary dialogue through education, publication, and research addressing the relationship between spirituality and healing. With the leadership of Dr. James Hyde, the Oates Institute was established in 1993 in order to carry forward the tradition embodied in the ministry of Dr. Wayne E. Oates. This heritage goes back to 1947 when Dr. Wayne Oates, Ph.D. in Psychology of Religion, began teaching at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in the area of Psychology of Religion and Pastoral Care. He also supervised students in Clinical Pastoral Education at Kentucky State Hospital. That same year, Dr. Oates began serving in a unique position as theological consultant to Dr Spafford Ackerly, Chairman of the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Louisville School of Medicine. As a pioneer in pastoral counselling and chaplaincy, in 1974 Dr. Oates formally joined the medical school faculty. Wayne Oates has published over 57 books addressing the relationship between faith and healing. He has mentored numerous caregivers in the understanding that treatment requires collaboration, compassion, and integration among medical, religious, social work, and therapeutic professionals.

Education

Locally, the Institute holds monthly "Forums on Healing" which provide an educational environment for the various health and caregiving professionals. These forums consist of presentations, dialogue, and the interchange of ideas. In November of 1998 the Oates Institute led the way in distance education utilising the Internet to offer our first online conference, "Hope As A Dynamic For Healing." This online format made it possible to experience 16 presentations by individuals from the medical, social work and pastoral care professions and to engage 200 participants from various regions of the United States, Scotland, England, Canada, and Japan. Online conferencing includes several forms of interaction between presenters and participants. As one participant exclaimed following the November conference, "Everything old is new again. This conference has been like the old practice of sitting with the masters/teachers and learning from them through conversation."

The success of our first online conference led us to offer an online workshop this May entitled,

"Human Values and Healthcare in the New Millennium," This workshop will address issues related to end of life and quality of life healthcare decisions. In October of 1999 the Oates Institute will offer an online conference addressing issues related to mental illness from a spiritual, emotional, and physical perspective.

Publication

The Oates Institute is exploring new methods of publishing which expand the number of voices to be heard in this interdisciplinary dialogue. By utilising technology, the Institute is able to publish new works and republish older works. In 1998 the Oates Institute began republishing out-of-print books by Dr. Oates with the release of "When Religion Gets Sick." This is the first of a series to be known as the Wayne E. Oates Library Collection. The "Oates Journal" is an online professional journal addressing issues of spirituality and the process of healing from an interdisciplinary and interfaith perspective. The types of articles you will find in the "Oates Journal" include both scholarly, peer reviewed articles and praxis oriented articles. Issues these articles address include: mind/body issues, pastoral care in practice and theology, medical ethics, and multicultural and interfaith issues. The "Oates Journal" is published continuously, adding new articles and book reviews as they become available. Subscription to the "Oates Journal" is through membership in the Wayne Oates Institute. Library subscriptions are also available.

Research

In order to make valuable resources available for research, the Institute is developing an online research centre accessible from anywhere in the world via the Internet. Phase One of this process is the archiving of Dr. Oates' papers, letters, and manuscripts. It is really not surprising that as technology presents us with new ways of connecting and accessing information, those of us interested in the process of healing bodies, spirits, minds and souls, will search here too, for what we may learn from each other. For more information about the Wayne E. Oates Institute visit us at www.oates.org.

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