

Annual Report 2011

Titus Brandsma Institute

Contents

Foreword	3
Biblical spirituality.....	5
Mystical texts	6
Sources of Carmelite Spirituality.....	6
Modern Devotion	7
Spirituality in social contexts.....	8
Serving the church and society.....	10
School for spirituality	10
In discussion about the spiritual path.....	11
Titus Brandsma lecture	11
Mystical week	12
Places of inspiration.....	12
St Catherine's day Kranenburg.....	13
Mission statement.....	14
Organisation	15

Foreword

In the middle of 2011, the time arrived. After a festive welcome by the staff on 30 June, Dr Inigo Bocken became the new Scientific Director of the Titus Brandsma Institute the next day. A quiet, preparatory first six months were followed by a lively period in which the institute opened its windows further to the academic world, as well as to the church and society. During that second six months, on 19 November 2011, the board of the Titus Brandsma Institute presented the new director to the outside world at a symposium in the auditorium of Nijmegen University. The theme of this symposium, entitled ‘Places of inspiration’, was ‘social spirituality’. This theme is central to the research programme and one which reflects the institute’s mission statement: ‘the academic study of spirituality in the light of Jewish and Christian tradition in the past and present, in the service of church and society’. In the coming years, the interaction of tradition and present day will direct the institute’s research programme.

This very unique approach in turn creates very unique products. Firstly, the research results will be communicated to colleagues and interested parties through publications. 2011 was a particularly productive year. Research into Modern Devotion, an important precursor of modern day spirituality in the Netherlands, produced a ‘stack of books’. Secondly, in 2011 staff made appearances at many conferences and other events, such as the new discussion forum *collatio*. Thirdly, there is the programme provided by our own School for Spirituality, for which 24 new students registered in 2011. So three products – publications, appearances and education – in other words, a trinity of products.

This report provides a selective overview of our staff’s productivity in 2011. The first part, ‘academic study’, concerns the research fields in which staff at the institute were involved. The second part, ‘in service of church and society’, relates more to public-oriented work. For a complete overview of the scientific output of 2011, refer to the institute’s website: www.titusbrandsmainstituut.nl. We hope that you will enjoy reading this report.

On behalf of the management at the Titus Brandsma Institute, Dr Inigo Bocken,
Academic Director

The academic study

Fundamental principles

‘Spirituality’ is experienced in different ways, defined in different ways and studied from different angles. At the Titus Brandsma Institute, spirituality is referred to as a ‘God-human relationship’ and is studied in the light of the Judeo-Christian tradition. These two characteristics indicate a clear distinction from other scientific approaches to spirituality, which are legion. In spite of that, the institute’s own fundamental principles must be continually sharpened and inquired into and the dialogue with these other approaches must be ongoing. In the vocabulary of the institute, this pursuit – which is constitutive for the other research fields (Biblical spirituality, mystical texts, history, Modern Devotion, and spirituality in social contexts) – is referred to as ‘fundamental research’. Based on the fundamental research, all theoretical and practical scientific activities of the institute are arranged encyclopaedically. This order also determines the institute’s research programme, ‘Reframing spirituality and mysticism, past and present’, and the ‘Encyclopaedia’ component of the international web community of the institute, ‘Spirituality International’ (Spirin).

In line with the institute’s interdisciplinary approach and the related exchange with colleagues at Nijmegen University and beyond, in September a new discussion forum was launched, *collatio*. This is an intensive monthly staff meeting with equal input from all participants aimed at jointly acquiring deeper insight into the discussion themes. The name *collatio* refers to the representatives of the Modern Devotion whose communities relied on this form of communication, which does not focus on being right but on jointly discovering the truth. In this way, the academic staff wish to shape the new spiritual horizon with its modern challenges, summarised under the title ‘social spirituality’. In order to further enrich the discussion, colleagues from the Faculty of Philosophy, Theology and Religious Studies are also invited to the *collatio*, as well as guests from outside the university.

In the year under review, four of these interdisciplinary sessions were held, each on the first Monday of the month:

- on 5 September, the first *collatio*, Inigo Bocken delivered an address about ‘Life in Christ as authentic life; Kees Waaijman also gave a talk;
- on 3 October, Huub Welzen delivered an address ‘The spiritual outlines in the Gospel according to Luke’; the second address was given by Pieter de Villiers, Professor in Biblical Spirituality at the Vrijstaat in Bloemfontein (South Africa);
- on 7 November, Rijcklof Hofman delivered an address about a famous sermon by Geert Grote against the so-called focarists (priests who have broken the vow of celibacy); the second address was given by Charles Caspers;

- on 5 December, Charles Caspers delivered an address about the spiritual meaning of liturgical rituals for and by the church portal; the second address was delivered by Thomas Quartier (RU).

Key publication

– C.J. Waaijman, Spirituality as theology. *Studies in Spirituality*, 21 (2011) 1-43.

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. After many years of research, Kees Waaijman and Huub Welzen are experts in Biblical spirituality. In the autumn of 2011, they were joined by Anne-Marie Bos. 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 contributes a whole new theme: art and biblical spirituality. Her particular focus is the prophet Elijah, also the father of the Carmelite Order.

In April, Huub Welzen published a new standard work about the Gospel according to Luke. This Gospel features a dual problem, with which the mixed Christian congregations struggled during the last quarter of the first century. Firstly, the congregation faces possible segmentation due to internal differences of (religious and social) origins and material constitution. Luke shows that the formation of congregations in the spirit of Jesus transcends the boundaries of their own group. Secondly, little remains of the strong faith in Jesus returning that was so typical for the first generation of followers. Luke says that this return is now really imminent and emphasises the importance of perseverance, faith and prayer in this respect.

Welzen’s book was well received by colleagues and other interested parties. One of the reviews summarises the book as follows: ‘This book about the Gospel according to Luke is an exciting and inspiring book. Not a book to read in one go, but in small steps to discover what Luke is trying to say. Justice is done to the fact that Luke has written a Gospel that is intended to be read, a text whereby the reader – past and contemporary - can become personally involved in the story!’ The book about Luke is also available in an electronic version on the institute’s website. See <http://www.titusbrandsmainstituut.nl/ned/uitgaven/e-boek.htm>.

Key publications

– H. Welzen, *Lucas. Belichting van het Bijbelboek*. Den Bosch: KBS Uitgeverij.

– C.J. Waaijman, ‘Biblical spirituality. An “other” reading (Allègoria)’, in: P. G. R. de Villiers & L. K. Pietersen (Eds.), *The spirit that inspires. Perspectives on Biblical spirituality* (Acta Theologica Supplementum, Vol. 15), Bloemfontein: UV/UFS, 1-20.

Mystical texts

Spirituality can result in a person 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 require a good distinguishing ability from that reader. Many mystical texts describe an experience of something that transcends human capabilities, but that also accepts man in all his weakness.

Hein Blommestijn and Jos Huls are collaborating on a handbook about processes of conversion, based on studies about individual mystical authors. In 2011, also in the framework of the ‘Mystical week’, Blommestijn studied texts by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry; Huls continued his research on the work of Søren Kierkegaard.

Discussing one of the works of Kierkegaard, *Practice in Christianity* (1850), in the *Encyclopaedia of Mysticism* Otger Steggink says: ‘A century earlier, this book anticipates the Christological views of our time. The book unites the soft voices of Jesus-people and charismatics with the persuasive demand of later Christians for socialism, to let it take its place at the heart of the church-political structures, an opponent of the rich and powerful, as Jesus used to be, according to Kierkegaard’.

Key publications:

– Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *Wijsheid in de Woestijn. Een bloemlezing uit Citadelle*. Introduced, translated and edited by Hein Blommestijn. Nijmegen: Titus Brandsma Institute.

– Jos Huls, ‘Faith in the Face of Death. An Interpretation of Kierkegaard’s Meditations on Abraham’s Sacrifice’, in: *Studies in Spirituality*, 21 (2011) 297-337.

Sources of Carmelite Spirituality

The Titus Brandsma Institute was founded in 1968 by Nijmegen University and the Dutch Carmelites. As a religious order, the Carmelites study their own spiritual heritage, where possible in partnership with the institute. As such, Edison Tinambunan, also linked to the Biblioteca Carmelitana in Rome, is

working with several colleagues on the critical edition of all Carmelite constitutions from the beginning in 1281 (the first constitutions) until 1995 (the last constitutions). These constitutions are the main source for the history of the Carmelite Order and its spirituality. The first of five publications planned by the team appeared in 2011. Antoine Jacobs is working on the history of the Dutch Carmelites in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, a period which was influential for our modern day. In 2011, he produced an extensive inventory of all monasteries and convents of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in the Netherlands, from the oldest, before 1270 in Haarlem, to the monastery founded in Nijmegen in 1927.

Key publications

- Edison Tinambunan & E. Boaga, *Corpus Constitutionum Ordinis Fratrum Beatissimae Virginis Mariae de Monte Carmelo*, Vol. *Primo 1281-1456* (Corpus Constitutionum Carmelitarum, Vol. 1), Roma: Edizioni Carmelitane.
- Antoine Jacobs, *Monasticon Carmelitanum Neerlandicum. Historisch repertorium van de kloosters van de Orde der Broeders en Zusters van O.L. Vrouw van de berg Karmel (13de eeuw-1940)*, Heerlen: LVD-U.

Modern Devotion

One of the main spiritual reform movements in the Netherlands was the Modern Devotion initiated by Geert Grote, with Thomas van Kempen as the main author. Even in the years before the Second World War, Titus Brandsma pointed to the significance of the writings of the modern devout for contemporary people. 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 according to the institute named after Titus Brandsma, the same writings still have the same power of eloquence for modern society. At the institute, Rijcklof Hofman is working on the edition of works by Geert Grote, Rudolf van Dijk is translating the writings of modern devouts, among other things, Charles Caspers is placing aspects of Modern Devotion within the greater context of the history of spirituality and Inigo Bocken points to the relevance of Modern Devotion for fundamental research and the study of spirituality in social contexts. All this is achieved by editing Latin texts, translating these texts into the vernacular, publishing articles in international compilations and participating in international conferences. In terms of book production, there were two highlights. The summer saw the publication of the critical edition of the sermon composed by Geert Grote against priests who shared their lives with a woman ‘at the hearth’ (the ‘focarists’). On 3 November, the translation produced by Rudolf van Dijk of a writing by Gerard Zerbolt of Zutphen, a topper from Western meditation literature, was presented in Zwolle.

Key publications

- Inigo Bocken, Enzyklopädie der Weisheit und Weisheit der Enzyklopädie. Wissenschaft und Weisheit bei Carolus Bovillus (1470-1560), in: *Coincidentia*, 2(1), 329-349.
- Rijcklof Hofman, *Gerardi Magni Opera Omnia*, Pars II.1. *Sermo ad clerum Traiectensem de focaristis – Opera minora contra focaristas* (Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis, Vol. 235), Turnhout: Brepols.
- Rudolf van Dijk (introduction and translation), *Gerard Zerbolt van Zutphen, Geestelijke opklimmingen. Een gids voor de geestelijke weg uit de vroege Modern Devotie* (Bibliotheca Dissidentium Neerlandicorum, Vol. 8), Amsterdam: University Press. The electronic version of this book is available on the institute's website, see <http://www.titusbrandsmainstituut.nl/ned/uitgaven/e-boek.htm>.

Spirituality in social contexts

Can the 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: in what way 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.

Key publications

- H.H. Blommestijn, 'Leadership in Religious Life (Part 2)', in: *Vinayasādhana, Journal of Psycho-Spiritual Formation*, 2(1), 23-40.
- I.M.K. Bocken, 'Nirgendwo Zuhause. Die Rhetorik des Wohnens nach Michel de Certeau', in: U. Dickmann & W.C. Schneider (Eds.), *Wohnen* (Felderkundungen Laienspiritualität, Vol. 3), Schwerte: Katholische Akademie Schwerte, 24-45.
- F.A. Maas, *Vitale verscheidenheid van het ene goddelijke leven. Meister Eckhart en theorievorming in spiritualiteit*. Farewell speech Radboud University Nijmegen (31 pp.).
- C.J. Waaijman, Jemanden zu Hause besuchen. In U. Dickmann & W. C. Schneider (Eds.), *Wohnen* (Felderkundungen Laienspiritualität, Vol. 3), Schwerte/Nijmegen: Katholische Akademie/Titus Brandsma Institute, 131-147.

– C.J. Waaijman, Ökumenische Aspekte in säkularer Spiritualität. In C. Dahlgrün (Ed.), *Spiritualität der Ökumene - Ökumenische Spiritualität*, Würzburg: Echter, 43-60.

Serving the church and society

School for spirituality

Until the summer of 2011, the school had three learning routes ('spiritual guidance', 'spirituality of the religious life', 'spirituality and pastoral care'). At the start of the fourth lecture cycle in September 2011, these three routes were merged in one new learning route 'spiritual guidance'. During this programme, students are challenged to learn and think from a mystagogic perspective and thus guide others on their spiritual journey. During the two year programme, students build up their theoretical knowledge through lectures and test their practical skills in smaller groups. For those interested, the programme can be expanded to include a tailor-made individual trajectory, the so-called 'deepening programme'. It is possible to follow this programme within the two years of the programme or during an additional year. All this was explained at a well attended Open Day on 5 March when students were invited to 'sample' lectures and practical sessions to see whether the programme appealed to them.

In September, 24 students embarked on the programme. Eighteen of them from very diverse backgrounds also registered for the deepening study programme. They meet on 24 teaching days (divided over four 'blocks') per study year. In the morning, they attend lectures which are also open to guests, including students from the Spiritual Guidance programme, which is organised by the Netherlands Protestant Church. The whole group thus consists of 55 students. In the afternoon, the students are allocated to smaller groups for a practical session. After the first two blocks, which were given in the autumn of 2011, the experiences of the new group of students have been positive.

On 4 November 2011, four students from the 'spiritual guidance' programme were presented with their diploma. On 25 November, it was the turn of seven students from the 'Spirituality and pastoral care' programme and thirteen students from the 'Spirituality of the religious life' programme. On this festive day, they received their certificate of attendance. All the students gave a short presentation in which they talked about what they had learned during the programme. Often this produced beautiful and moving stories. One of the students expressed how difficult it was to put into words: 'What can I say about the impact of a programme which teaches you that you receive everything?'

In discussion about the spiritual path

The course ‘In discussion about the spiritual path’ used to be given by Bep Meereboer, under the auspices of the Titus Brandsma Institute. After her death in 2010, Hein Blommestijn assumed the organisation and coordination of the course. In its current guise, this is a one year course comprising two modules, each consisting of eight sessions. In terms of content, the course is structured around the quarterly magazine *Speling*. In 2011, 22 students took part in ‘In discussion about the spiritual path’.

Titus Brandsma lecture

On Friday 4 June, the eighteenth annual Titus Brandsma lecture was given by Professor Wim van de Donk, Queen’s Commissioner in the province of North Brabant. As in 2010, the chosen venue was the historic Stevens church, in the heart of Nijmegen. Wim van de Donk’s lecture was entitled: ‘Spirituality and sustainability; a plea for a new relationship with the country that surrounds us’. This subject not only reflects the institute’s research field, ‘Spirituality in social contexts’, but also the year theme, ‘sustainability’, previously chosen by the Dutch Religious Conference (KNR) for 2010. A brief summary of the content:

For many years, we have talked about our environment in terms of contrasts and this is how we experience it. Again and again, a dichotomy appears; again and again the balance between two poles, for example town and countryside, economy and nature, consumption and production is threatened with distortion. In order to escape from this impasse, Wim van de Donk opens a whole new perspective. He rejects black-and-white thinking and promotes a more relational approach to town and countryside, for example. Only then can we coordinate change and sustainability and achieve ‘sustainable change’.

Wim van de Donk’s lecture has been published electronically on the institute’s website: <http://www.titusbrandsmainstituut.nl/ned/uitgaven/e-boek.htm>.

At the end of the lecture, the chairman of the board, Professor Jan Peters, announced the pending arrival of a new academic director. He also expressed his appreciation for the way in which the interim academic director, Charles Caspers, had led the institute from February 2010.

Mystical week

From Monday 4 July to Thursday 7 July, Hein Blommestijn organised the so-called Mystical week, focusing on a work by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry (1900-1944), the *Citadelle*. The theme of the week was: ‘*The Wisdom of the Sands; the mysticism of man*’.

The pilot-writer Antoine de Saint-Exupéry (1900-1944) is a modern mystic who thought about the Mysticism of man. He realised that unconditional love gives us access to the reality of God, so that we can become human. Only by giving are we born. All too often, we expect something back, so that our gift becomes a useless gesture. In his posthumously published book *Citadelle* or the *The Wisdom of the Sands*, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry meditated about the ‘exchange’ whereby we as people gradually become part of eternity. During the Second World War, he worked on this manuscript alongside his other well-known books *The Little Prince* and *Flight to Arras*. The main character in this ‘novel’ thinks about the meaning of life. It is a philosophical work as well as an on-going meditation, in which the I character reflects on the truth of man. In this reflection, man comes to prayer.

Around 225 participants took part in the Mystical week. See also http://www.titusbrandsmainstituut.nl/ned/onderwijs/mystical_week.htm.

Places of inspiration

On Saturday 19 November, a symposium was held in the auditorium of Nijmegen University on social spirituality entitled ‘Places of inspiration’. This symposium was offered to Falco Thuis o.carm., retiring board member, in thanks for all his work for the institute over the years. The aim of the symposium was to explain the institute’s intensive focus on social or modern spirituality. The reasons were briefly summarised on the invitation folder as follows:

Many signs indicate an end of an age characterised by competition, compartmentalisation and far-reaching specialisation. In many organisations, institutions and companies – as well as among individuals – there is an increasing demand for inspiration, and in very different ways. In many cases, however, we lack the language in which to express the search for inspiration. New, creative forms of thinking are required. Through its ‘social spirituality’ project, which focuses on ‘places of inspiration’ within different groups of our society, the Titus Brandsma Institute wants to contribute to the development of the new approach.

Three speakers, each from a very different angle, explained spirituality within a greater social context. Jan Veldhuis, chairman of the supervisory board of the Stichting Carmelcollege, gave the first lecture entitled: ‘The Holy Ghost and fiery tongues in education’. He was followed by Huib Klamer, secretary for Ideology and Corporate Social Responsibility of the Confederation of Netherlands Industry and Employers (VNO-NCW), with a lecture entitled: ‘The spirit blows... in search of the spirit in organisations’. Great applause from the audience welcomed the new academic director, Inigo Bocken, who talked about: ‘Social spirituality – a pleonasm? About inspiration in daily practices’. Finally Jan Peters thanked Falco Thuis o.carm. on the occasion of his retirement. Music was provided by an ensemble from Antwerp: Nadja Nevolovitsch (violin), Wilfried van de Brande (vocals) and Peter van de Velde (organ).

The speeches by Jan Veldhuis, Huib Klamer and Inigo Bocken have been published electronically on the institute’s website, <http://www.titusbrandsmainstituut.nl/ned/uitgaven/e-boek.htm> (at ‘other lectures’).

St Catherine’s day Kranenburg

On Friday 25 November 2011, the feast day of Saint Catherine of Alexandria, a conference was organised by the local Verein für Heimatschutz and the Titus Brandsma Institute in Museum Katharinenhof in Kranenburg entitled ‘Die devotio moderna als geistige Reformbewegung am Niederrhein’. The afternoon programme included four academic lectures in the framework of ‘Frömmigkeit ohne Institutionen? Die devotio moderna als Reformbewegung am Niederrhein’. The following speakers successively addressed the conference: Rijklof Hofman about the sermon by Geert Grote against priests who shared their live with a woman, Inigo Bocken about the Modern Devotion and the contemporary *Religionsfrage*, Manuel Hagemann about the Modern Devotion in the region around Kleef; Anne Bollmann about congregations of Sisters of the Common Life. Replete with this spiritual nourishment, around seventy participants sat down to a hearty meal in the Katharinenhof crypt, followed by the evening programme for around ninety participants. This programme included two public lectures in the framework of ‘Geist ohne Grenzen: devotio moderna und Spiritualität heute’. With Jan van Eyck’s Lamb of God as illustration material, Charles Caspers gave an interesting talk about ‘Thomas van Kempen and heaven on earth’, which was followed by a flamboyant presentation by Thomas Quartier about ‘Trennungskrisen. Rituelle Erkundungen der Imitatio Christi in der modernen Gesellschaft’. The evening ended with a first: for the first time in centuries, songs by Nicolaus van Kues were played. The songs have been put to music by Flemish composer Boudewijn Buckinx.

Mission statement

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

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 and an encyclopaedic research method.
- (2) Society, desired product: a vocabulary with which differently schooled students can recognise spirituality in their own living and working environment as something that is particularly relevant to themselves and others.
- (3) Religious orders in Western Europe, desired product: studies which religious institutes can use to align or confront their 'foundation documents' with actuality.
- (4) Religious orders in Asia, Africa and Latin America, desired product: support for young religious men and women by supervising PhD programmes.
- (5) An academic forum, desired product: a web community (Spirin) and an academic magazine (*Studies in Spirituality*).

Organisation

As of 31 December 2011, the board of the Titus Brandsma Institute consisted of:

Professor J.R.T.M. Peters s.j., chairman

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

J.G.H. de Vaan, treasurer/delegated administrator

H. van Geene c.m.m., board member

B. Wolbers o.carm., board member

M.-L. van Wijk - van de Ven, board member

The scientific advisory council of the institute consists of:

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 14.38 fte.

Of this amount, 0.5 fte is for the scientific director and scientific secretary, 6.95 fte for research, 1.94 fte for education and discipline development, 0.9 fte for Spirin and 3.14 fte for support.

Titus Brandsma Institute

Toernooiveld 300

6525 EC Nijmegen

The Netherlands


T +31 (0)24 361 21 62

F +31 (0)24 361 21 51

E secretariaat@titusbrandsmainstituut.nl

www.titusbrandsmainstituut.nl

 facebook.com/titusbrandsmainstituut

 @tb-instituut