

## Preface

Growing up in South Africa within the Anglican Church, I was aware from an early age of an approach to spirituality which differs from the traditional Western model, the proponents of which identify it as African Spirituality. I have an instinctive appreciation for the holistic approach to reality which is found in this approach, as well as the value given to community, which is more in accord with the biblical picture of the church than the Western, more individualistic approach. In addition, it is becoming increasingly clear that contemporary environmental, social and contextual conditions require that Christians work together and become inter-dependent, in order to ensure the survival of the Church.

In 1996, while visiting Wales, I was introduced to Celtic spirituality, and found myself drawn to the same holism, the same awareness of the natural world about us, as well as aspects of spirituality which were quite new to me. This led me to investigate further, and to embark on a study of the relative similarities and differences between Celtic and African spirituality. I have read widely in both African and Celtic spirituality and theology, as well as in mythology and folklore of both traditions, which both reflects and feeds African and Celtic oral theology and spirituality.

My study of Celtic and African spiritualities therefore began as a personal quest for an approach to spirituality which allowed me to apply my faith to contemporary life. As I have read ancient Celtic and African traditional literature, and interacted with proponents of Celtic and African spiritualities, I have begun to explore the meaning and value of Celtic and African spirituality for the church in Southern African today. These forms of spirituality resonate with my personal interests and needs in a way that more traditional ecclesiastical forms of spirituality fail to do.

The completion of this project would not have been possible without the contribution of a number of people. First of all, I would like to thank my husband, Chris Lubbe, for his support, patience and encouragement throughout this project, and my parents for their help during this time.

I also thank my promoter, Professor Celia Kourie for her help and guidance. I have learned much from her, on both academic and personal levels. I also thank Revd Canon Dr Peter Wyngaard for reading part of the manuscript and for his helpful comments as well as his help with technical computer problems. The material in Chapters 3, 4 and 5 was discussed with students in the “Exploring Contemporary Spirituality” course of the Desmond Tutu School for Ministries during 2002 and 2003, and I learned much from the students and their comments and questions. My thanks to all who contributed to this study, often unwittingly.

Above all, I thank my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ for calling and empowering me to complete this task. May this small offering be to his glory.

It is my hope that this study will contribute to the Church’s knowledge of Celtic and African Spirituality, leading to spiritual growth and greater effectiveness in mission and contextualisation of the gospel message for the mosaic of communities that make up the varied and changing South African society today. It is also to be hoped that this study will be an instrument of reconciliation in situations of theological and inter-cultural conflict within the church, and will lead to an enrichment of worship for individuals and Christian communities.