

## Editor's Foreword

The three articles in this issue of the *Journal* represent three approaches to research on near-death and related phenomena: historical, qualitative, and quantitative. In the opening article, Gregory Shushan, PhD, Honorary Research Fellow in the Religious Experience Research Centre at the University Wales Trinity Saint David and residing currently in Santa Fe, New Mexico, brought his considerable experience as a scholar of the role of near-death experiences (NDEs) in the origins of religion to a specific focus on Native American NDEs. Having scoured the ethnohistorical literature and found 25 cases of Native American NDEs, he proceeded to identify in them evidence for their roles in both religious revitalization movements and in afterlife belief systems. His article is rich in both case descriptions and ethnohistorical analysis.

Near-death experiencers often report that during their NDEs they encountered and communicated with deceased loved ones. However, this experience of after-death communication (ADC) is not limited to NDErs; it is reported by people of every demographic in any state of consciousness. Research has already indicated that when the experiencer is bereaved, the ADC eases grief, but exactly how it does has been investigated less. Such an investigation is reported by B. M. E. McCormick, MA, a graduate student, and Natasha A. Tassell-Matamua, PhD, a lecturer, both in the School of Psychology at Massey University in North Palmerston, New Zealand. Their analysis of themes in the narratives of 13 ADCrs reveals new perspectives on how ADCs heal.

In the third article, Laura Pace, PhD, and her research team at the University of North Texas in Denton report how they used best practices in assessment instrument development to create the Knowledge and Attitudes About Near-Death Experiences Scale (KANDES). In updating the previously most widely used instrument that had been developed in the 1970s and in making the updated instrument available online for researchers and healthcare providers to use without permission, Pace and her team have provided professionals with a valid and reliable instrument to assess what various populations currently know and think about NDEs and to assess the impact of interventions aimed at increasing knowledge and improving attitudes.

This issue closes with a book review by psychiatrist Charles L. Whitfield and NDEr, NDE researcher, and therapist Barbara Whitfield. They find in psychology professor Judith S. Miller's book *Healing the Western Soul: A Spiritual Homecoming for Today's Seeker* a unique and refreshing perspective on psychospiritual development that they believe NDErs and other spiritual seekers will find valuable.

It is my hope that readers enjoy the rich variety contained in this issue of the *Journal*.

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