



Association for the Pastoral Care of the Mentally Ill

An association which supports the mentally ill and their relatives

NEWSLETTER NO. 4 SEPTEMBER 1988

THE CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

This Association has had such a high profile since the June newsletter that my colleagues have much to report and I can be brief.

On behalf of the Management Committee I would like to express my gratitude to two retiring committee members: Gwenna Howard and Ruth MacCabe. They each made a valuable and much appreciated contribution to the early establishment of APCMI. We shall miss their friendly encouragement. Both assure us of their continued support as members.

We have pleasure in welcoming Nick Cotton to the committee. Nick is a founder member of Dulwich Branch.

Roger Moreton kindly offered to serve as Minutes Secretary to the committee. He is doing this work most efficiently and we are very grateful.

The committee membership of the Rev. Vernon Muller was confirmed at the recent AGM. Vernon had been co-opted earlier in the year and has since proved invaluable.

Monies received during the period reviewed include grants of £2,000 from the Yapp Trust and £500 from the Laing Trust. A splendid contribution to our funds of £1,133 came from the Notting Hill Police Sponsored swim. A collection at the Inaugural service produced over £200 and another at St. John's Church Coulsdon raised £137.05 for the Croydon Branch. The final figure for the Howard Hopkins London Marathon was a splendid total of £1,501.

I am sure you will join me in thanking all concerned for these offerings received. They are vitally important to the continuation of our work.

AUSTIN LINDON

INAUGURAL SERVICE

We are giving pride of place in this edition of the Newsletter to reporting our Inaugural Service of Worship which was held on the 12th June in St. Marylebone Parish Church, London. The Lord Mayor of Westminster attended. Nearly 300 people came to the service most of whom stayed on afterwards for the reception in the Crypt.

We have received many compliments about the organisation and attention to detail we put into making the service appealing to the different groups and individuals who made up the congregation. The

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all-white floral arrangements were exquisite, the professional choir and organist provided superb music, and the lessons were movingly read by Major Pamela Wood of the Salvation Army and APCMI Chairman Austin Lindon. The Development Officer Dennis Murray led the specially written intercessions. The Service was jointly conducted by the Rector the Rev. C Hamel Cooke and the Rev. Vernon Muller Chaplain to Friern Hospital who also serves on the APCMI Management Committee.

We publish in full the address and messages read by Jane Lindon Founder and President of APCMI and the address given by Fr. C Cunningham.

On behalf of the Association for the Pastoral Care of the Mentally Ill, I welcome you all to our Inaugural Service this evening. Our Patron the Bishop for Central London in the Diocese of Westminster has sent this message.

"The Association for the Pastoral Care of the Mentally Ill has my prayerful support in gathering together its members, friends and others at this public service of worship. I know that prayer is at the heart of the work which the Association carries out and I would ask you to remember all who suffer with a mental illness, their families, friends and those who care for them, in your prayers now and in the future.

I gladly pray for God's blessing upon this service of worship"

BISHOP JOHN CROWLEY

This is not just an inaugural service but an interdenominational and interfaith occasion which we hope will attract compassionate attention to mental health needs within our society.

It is also a Public Service, and we have chosen the contemplative beauty of choral Evensong for its setting. It is a Civic Service too. The leading representative of the local community has joined us in our act of worship, and her presence here demonstrates that the community does care and desires to align with the Churches in their work of pastoral support for mentally ill people.

Most of you present here this evening in this famous and much loved church have connections within the field of mental health, and you are here because you care deeply, very deeply, about the mental suffering in our midst. Some of you are professionals working either in hospitals or in the community; some of you work for voluntary associations or church groups. Some of you are relatives of a mentally ill person, and some of you have had personal experience of mental illness.

However there is one group which cannot be represented at our Service. Because of the severity of their mental breakdown and the fragmentation of their lives these people are to be found not in Church, but in locked wards, secure units and prisons, or resident in a cardboard city - actually within walking distance of this Church.

What are the aims and objectives of APCMI? Here is a brief extract from our Constitution:

"The object of the association shall be to promote the relief of persons suffering from the problems of mental illness and their families, by the provision of pastoral counselling and care appropriate to their individual needs to enable them so to develop their spiritual, physical and mental capacities that they may realise their full potential as individuals and participating members of society and so that the condition of their life may be improved".

And now I would like to read some messages.

First from the Archbishop of Canterbury.

"I send my prayers for the Inaugural Service of Worship of the Association for the Pastoral Care of the Mentally Ill. The Association works in an area of urgent need in our society and it has my warmest good wishes in its work."

ROBERT CANTUAR

The second is from the Moderator of the Free Church Federal Council:

It gives me great pleasure on behalf of the Free Churches to send warm Christian greetings to all who will gather for the Inaugural Service of the Association for the Pastoral Care of the Mentally Ill. Your Association is committed to an important practical and compassionate ministry. I pray that God will prosper your work and that the service on 12 June will be an inspiration to many people.

With warmest Christian greetings.

THE REVEREND BERNARD GREEN

The next is from the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster.

All too easily the mentally ill can be ignored and even pushed to the margins of society. To all of you, however, they are special and much loved people. I pray that God will bless the work of your Association, and of those in hospitals and units, who attend to the needs of the mentally ill and embrace them as truly brothers and sisters.

HIS EMINENCE BASIL HUME

The final message is from the Chief Rabbi.

The Association for the Pastoral Care of the Mentally Ill serves a section of our community which must be of prime concern to us. I warmly commend all those who have associated themselves with its efforts, and particularly greet those present at its inaugural service of workshop.

Working with the mentally ill demands devotion and dedication. It is a difficult task, and thus deserves the fullest measure of support.

I trust that the Association will continue its steady growth and so be enabled to render assistance and promote some of its imaginative schemes which could be of such great help.

LORD JAKOBOVITS

JANE LINDON

"This evening, we celebrate the birth of an idea, of a vision. In the main, it is the vision of one couple, who, having experienced difficulties themselves, and knowing that they were not alone, had the courage and energy to found an association in one of those areas of illness that do not immediately appeal to the general public. We are well aware that in the field of general surgery no efforts are spared, and wards are full of orthopaedic patients, of heart bypasses, of abortion cases, often in very attractive and clean wards.

But there are other darker sides to our health services, and I fear that in the realm of mental illness, a low priority has been given to those who are sufferers. The accommodation is poor, the services are inadequate, and because often there is not some tidy solution, society does not want to know.

There is a priest not far from here who over an untidy desk has hanging the following saying: "God is untidy, the Devil is tidy" If you think of the significance of that saying, it tells us much about many of the caring agencies that strive for a tidy world. Probably at no time in history has there been a generation more concerned about the inequalities of life. We are a people given to removing the hardships out of life but the weakness of all these caring agencies is that their fundamental philosophy is wrong. Society at large works diligently for the alleviation of pain, for restoring man as best possible to well being; but much of its approach is clinical and mechanical. It neglects the spirit of man and so in the realm of the mentally ill, any help can be given is envisaged in purely medical terms - in medication, in all types of therapy, good and proper through they may be. But your Association, which has celebrated with an inaugural service, speaks of another dimension, and speaks of another approach to the care of the mentally ill.

You have chosen the word "pastoral" and chosen it very deliberately. You are not trying to supersede the work of doctors and psychiatrists; but what you are doing, and it is to your credit, is reminding the medical world of the place of God in the life of the individual, in the life of our society. You are giving an eternal dimension to your work. You are reminding people that the sick are not just bodies; the sick have souls, and the mentally sick, precisely because their illness impinges on what makes them to be what they are, namely their spirit, are often neglected because our society for the most part is an unspiritual one. They are like hungry sheep: they look up and they are not fed.

This I think was your experience, that the spiritual welfare of the mentally ill was being neglected. Church authorities, like the state, put emphasis upon ordinary hospitals. They like quick results. Most illnesses are resolved in a relatively short time, but mental illness can go on for many years. The church does need to be more aware of this field of illness; it needs to prepare its ministers for work among the mentally ill; it must above all be supportive to those who are forced to work and live in these circumstances, and I speak of the many who have sons and daughters who are ill and whose lifestyle is a constant crucifixion of those who are their nearest and dearest. I use the word crucifixion deliberately, because that is what it is. Pain born out of sorrow and sadness is one thing, but pain born out of the destruction of a personality is a sorrow so deep that it is difficult to explain to others just what it is.

It is only in your coming together in an organisation where you share one another's burdens that you can begin to plan and rebuild your own lives once again. For you now have the strength born of common concern, bound together by prayer, fortified by your spiritual approach, to begin to help others, both the sick and the bereaved.

That your society is a much needed one is evident from the speed with which it has spread, and you cannot but go on to greater things if you remember your beginnings, if you remind yourselves constantly of the word "pastoral". You are not trying to supercede the doctors and nurses in this most difficult profession, but what you are doing is reminding that profession that man is a spiritual being and that there are spiritual answers, that not all solutions lie in some chemical formula.

We give thanks to God for the work already done, and we thank him for being able to view the world from an eternal perspective. Our prayers and congratulations to the Association".

Rev. Fr C. Cunningham I.C. Rector of St. Etheldreda's R.C. Church, Ely Place, London, EC1

DIARY UPDATE

May The first meeting was with Rev. John Gutteridge of Walthamstow who with his wife is very active in mental health care provision. They are both APCMI members. Jane Lindon and I discussed with him the role of the befriender. On the 4th Community Chaplain Rev. Pat Thomas joined me at the Pine Street Day Centre, Clerkenwell where we discussed with the staff the establishment of an APCMI relatives and carers support group for the local area. The following week Jane and I were invited to the office of Ealing MIND who are also APCMI members. The Development Officer congratulated us on our work and hoped we could liaise in the future. On the 13th I addressed a lunchtime meeting of the City of London Social Welfare Group of which I am a member. The successful second meeting of the Kensington and Chelsea group was held on the 16th. Three days later I facilitated the Training Course Befrienders support group which meets monthly. On the 23rd Rev. Pat Thomas and I were invited to make a joint presentation of our work to the Islington Deanery

meeting held in the Chapel of Pentonville Prison. Jane had a discussion at the Catholic Herald Office about media coverage for APCMI. The CH is supportive of the Association and mental health issues. The last event of the month was a Mental Health Assembly led by Pat and myself for churches in Camden.

June On the 1st I had several meetings with local clergy in Clerkenwell to acquaint them of our intention to have a support group in their area. They were all very responsive. That evening I attended a meeting of our Croydon Branch. On the evening of June 9th I gave a talk to Friern Hospital League of Friends. The day after I travelled to Princes Risborough to address a lunchtime meeting convened by a group of interested professionals. They agreed to support a local meeting to be held on 5th September. Sunday 12th, the Inaugural Service (see report). The first AGM of the Association was held on the 25th.

July On the 5th I met Ms Jackie Levett a Senior Social Worker in Kensington and Chelsea who is particularly interested in the work of APCMI. This was followed by a working lunch with Mr Ian Gregory the Development Officer for the Coalition for Community Care in Kensington, Chelsea and Westminster. Two days later Mrs Josephine Woolf of the Jewish Welfare Board (Hackney Branch) came to the office to meet Jane and I. She is interested in support for relatives and standards of hospital care. On the 11th Jane and I visited the Jewish Welfare Board headquarters and Day Centre. Senior Personnel gave us a warm welcome and invited us to lunch. It is hoped that further dialogue will develop and contacts made with other Jewish communities. The same evening I attended a committee meeting of our Croydon Branch. Jane participated at a meeting at the new "Royal Britain" Exhibition Centre in the Barbican to finalize plans for the Royal Private View (see enclosed leaflet). This is an APCMI initiative under the auspices of the Mental Health Foundation and we will benefit from funds raised. Please support this event. I was on holiday for the third week and Jane and Austin Lindon supervised the office. On the evening of the 25th I attended a meeting of the Kensington and Chelsea group. The following day I discussed with two of our members the possibility of the Association setting up a support group for families bereaved as a result of suicide. At the end of the month I met Ms Pamela Hughes who works for the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). They are studying how they can address the needs of the Community Care Programme. That evening I Chaired a meeting of the Croydon Branch. Jane attended a three day International Conference organised by the Richmond Fellowship. Among the leading speakers were: Prof. Thomas Szasz, Prof. Julian Leff, Dr David Owen MP, Rt. Rev. Bishop Lawrence Zulu and Jean Vanier.

DENNIS MURRAY
DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

REGIONAL ROUNDUP

The Dulwich Branch have opened a Drop-in-Centre for people with mental health needs and carers. It operates from Platform One next to Forest Hill British Rail Station and is open every Tuesday evening from 6.30 - 8.30 p.m. It is run and manned by a rota of APCMI

members backed up by professional carers, other voluntary organisations and neighbourhood churches.

On 5th August a charity performance of "Lock up Your Daughters" in aid of the Branch was given by the London Musicals Co. At the Buffet Supper following the delightful and polished Show a cheque for a generous amount was handed to Chairman Austin Lindon and Nick Cotton a founder member of the Dulwich Branch. Our warmest thanks to all who contributed to the success of this most enjoyable event.

We will be holding a general meeting later in the year to elect a Local Management Committee.

The Kensington and Chelsea Group hold their meetings on the first Wednesday of each month at 7.30 p.m. in the Crypt of Our Lady of Victories Church, Kensington High Street (entry via 16 Abingdon Road). We are planning an Autumn programme of speakers from mental health agencies and are hoping to develop a local APCMI service. New members are welcome. The group thanks Fr. Chris Webb who was so supportive in its early days. He is moving to a new Parish and we wish him every blessing.

The Croydon Branch is concentrating on a publicity drive in order to develop an APCMI service in the area. The Steering Committee will be holding public meetings on a regular basis in the future. Rev. Noel Walter has moved to be Chaplain at Redhill General Hospital. He was very active in establishing the Branch and we extend our grateful thanks and best wishes. He will continue to support APCMI.

South Bucks is holding an APCMI public meeting on Monday 5th September at 8.00 p.m. in the Community Centre, Princes Risborough in order to set up a local group.

Guildford Branch Steering Committee has been working to find a local identity, to draw up a strategy, and to draft a constitution which will ensure affiliation to the National Association and to make APCMI known amongst church communities.

The Committee has a good selection of members drawn from the statutory & voluntary agencies, church groups and a variety of professionals, which enables us to liaise well with other organisations who are trying to help people with mental health problems such as NSF and MIND. The main thrust is towards the setting-up of a Training Course similar to the Heythrop Course but using local experts, hopefully starting early in 1989 at Mount Alvernia Hospital. It is felt that the training course will be the stepping stone to an initial group of befrienders who will be ready to visit in hostels and individuals' homes and also to organise a support group and drop-in facility. We have already been offered highly skilled advice and support.

On Monday 7th November at 8.00 p.m. there will be a General Meeting in St. Joseph's Recreation Centre Church Hall, Eastgate Gardens, Guildford when APCMI Officers will be elected. There will be an opportunity to hear our patrons/advisers speak about the training course and how our APCMI group will work in the context of other church and medical developments in the area such as the closure of local psychiatric hospitals. All are welcome.

The philosophy of the Guildford APCMI is one of creating a well-informed network of local friendship and support so that mentally ill people, their friends and family can feel part of a warm and open therapeutic community where we can mutually build up an environment of stability, security and peace (the Kingdom of God!).

Kingston and the London Borough of Fulham Discussions are being held in both areas with interested parties hoping to set up local branches in the near future.

East Sussex Interest is being shown in this area. Would local members get in touch with head office please with a view to starting up a group.

APCMI RADIO BROADCAST

APCMI had a seven minute slot in the Sunday programme on Radio 4 on 14th August. Those taking part were Jane Lindon, Dennis Murray, Gail Cotton, Peter de Figueredo and Rev. Vernon Muller. The presenter was Kate Whittaker who achieved a balanced and intelligent approach to the founding of APCMI, its work and its affect on the people it helps and supports. It was felt by the speakers that the Churches should be playing a more positive role in the pastoral care of the mentally ill and their families, and that there was a great need for enlightened guidance and understanding of their spiritual needs and expectations

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED: OUT OF THE DEPTHS - A Book of Prayers in time of Depression - By Patricia Thomas

Rev. Patricia Thomas, Assistant Chaplain at Friern Psychiatric Hospital has written this slim, perceptive spiritual book as a result of her work with people with depression in the hospital and in the community where she works in close partnership with us in areas of mutual interest and concern.

PRICE £1.00 inclusive P&P from APCMI Head Office.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

THINK IN DAY The next Think In day will be held in London on Saturday 26th November 1988. The topic for the day will be 'MEETING PASTORAL NEEDS'. Full details to follow.

LONDON TRAINING COURSE

The next Volunteer Befrienders Training Course will be held at Heythrop College on Tuesday evenings 4th October - 29th November at 7.00 p.m.

The DEADLINE for copy for the December edition of the Newsletter is 14th November.