



Association for the Pastoral Care of the Mentally Ill

An association which supports the mentally ill and their relatives

NEWSLETTER NO. 7 JUNE 1989

THE CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

This is a very interesting stage in the spread of our Association. Recent publicity has brought enquiries from Aberdeen, Manchester, Wakefield, Bristol and Northern Ireland. We must endeavour to encourage the development of new cells, groups and branches in as many of these places as we can as soon as may be practicable. Our resources may be slim but we already have the requisite experience to pass on to new friends. Typically, a branch will take about nine months to become effective. Regional Reports will be taking up much more space in our 1990 Newsletters! The scale of our operations is increasing also. I was glad to be one of approximately one hundred present at our Joint Conference held recently at Bloomsbury Baptist Church. This was so successful that I would urge members to attend the joint APCMI/NSF conference on June 23rd/24th.

There is another reason why I would like to see as many of you as possible at the Conference - our second AGM will be held on Saturday 24th of June at 1 p.m. We need to see a credible attendance and we need members present to elect new committee members. If you cannot commit yourself to attending the two day conference please come to the A.G.M. - it should not take much longer than half an hour but your involvement is very important to us all.

During the quarter APCMI received a legacy of £1,500 and a very gratifying four figure response from my Lenten Appeal to Religious Houses. Two members have volunteered to help me with Head Office fund raising efforts. More offers of this kind are invited. Donations to hand include: £150 from Lloyds Charities Trust; £250 from British Telecom; £200 from PH Holt Trust; £50 from St. Thomas of Canterbury Parish Bolton; £150 from the Christopher Laing Trust and an anonymous £100.

Finally I am delighted to be able to congratulate Howard Hopkins on a splendid time of 3 hours 29 minutes (his personal best) running for APCMI in the London Marathon. Sponsorship monies are still coming in and should reach four figures soon. Thank you Howard - and thanks to all who gave and all who collected.

AUSTIN LINDON
CHAIRMAN

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Annual General Meeting of the Association for the Pastoral Care of the Mentally Ill for the year ending March 31st 1989 will be held at Friends' House, Euston Road, London on June 24th 1989 at 1 p.m. Members are warmly invited to attend.

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Registered Charity No. 327532

APCMI COMMITTEE

The Constitution of APCMI requires a proportion of committee members to 'stand down' each year. A number of vacancies are required to be filled from June 24th 1989. The committee meets in Central London on the first Monday of alternate months. Please let us know if you would like to be proposed for committee membership.

DIARY UPDATE: HEAD OFFICE NEWS FROM DEVELOPMENT OFFICER - DENNIS MURRAY

An important part of the Development Officer's work consists of meeting people, either singly or in groups, in order to introduce and explain the aims and objectives of the Association. Sometimes I initiate these meetings and at other times interested persons get in touch with me. Many of these introductions develop into further meetings and activities which promote our work and help us in our expansion programme. Understandably we are known best within mental health circles; but I am pleased to report that increasingly we are making good contacts in areas beyond, with for example, Church groups, community agencies, and representatives from the professions. A high proportion of these people become APCMI members and are very supportive of our work.

FEBRUARY. Meetings this month were with Canon John Fowler, Chairman Hammersmith and Fulham Deanery Social Responsibility committees to discuss my contribution to a forthcoming seminar on Pastoral Care of the Mentally Ill; with mental health personnel from Tower Hamlets and City and Hackney Community Health Councils; and with staff from Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church to plan our April seminar. Other activities during this month included: attending the Licensing of the Rev. Paul Lewis as Chaplain to the National Hospital, London; being guest speaker at our Guildford Branch Befrienders' Training Course; visiting the Chapel Orchard Mental Health Day Centre in Mitcham and calling on the Vicar of Holy Trinity Church, Hounslow. I attended local Branch steering committee meetings at Kensington/Chelsea and Eastbourne. My wife and I accompanied Jane and Austin Lindon to a Charity performance of "The Pirates of Penzance" given by the Stock Exchange Operatic Society at the Westminster Theatre. We enjoyed the excellent production which was in aid of the Mental Health Foundation. The Lindons attended the formal opening of the National Schizophrenia Fellowship's London Advisory Centre at King's Cross. We wish them every success.

MARCH. Jane and I were delighted to receive our first international visitor, Sister of Mercy Carmen Coffey from Australia who is in Europe studying the work of hospital Chaplains. She had heard about us in Brisbane through an article in the Tablet. I continued to liaise with the lively and comprehensive Crest Centre in Waltham Forest. Jane and I represented APCMI at an important meeting convened by Bishop Jim Thompson of Stepney. Also present were other Church representatives from the East End of London. I gave a talk at the Charing Cross Hospital as part of the Hammersmith/Fulham Deanery day which met to consider pastoral care of the mentally ill. I continued to facilitate the successful regular London Befrienders' support group. I had a meeting with Mr Peter Thompson of the Matthew Trust (which has an interest in the care of patients in Broadmoor and other special hospitals). I gave a warmly received talk to the ladies' section of the Finchley Bible Society at their Spring Rally. I attended branch meetings at Kensington and Croydon. I chaired an informal meeting of APCMI members who met to discuss the establishment of a new Branch for the Kingston and New Malden area.

APRIL. With the new Director of the Churches Council for Health and Healing, Dr John Young, I was invited to co-lead a one day seminar on Pastoral Care for the Mentally Ill. The attendees had come long distances and represented a wide cross section of Church groups. We gave lectures, chaired discussions and led group activities. It is hoped that in the near future we will jointly produce a leaflet to assist churches and congregations in their pastoral ministry of the mentally ill and their carers. I also co-led a half-day seminar for a group of Methodist Churches in the Muswell Hill Circuit. I addressed another interested Parish group from St. Peter in Chains Church N8. Particular interest was shown in APCMI by the Vicar of Holy Cross Church, King's Cross, London who is gravely concerned about Inner City problems surrounding mentally ill persons in his area. Jane and I attended the 10th Birthday Party for the Hazelwell Day Centre in Putney. I attended the Training sub-committee at Croydon and the second meeting of the proposed Kingston Branch. The Lindons, Vice Chairman Dr G Conran, myself and my wife were in the invited audience for Esther Rantzen's moving programme on mental illness on 4th April. The occasion was also a good opportunity to meet friends and colleagues from the mental health field.

REGIONAL ROUNDUP

DULWICH/FOREST HILL

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

The germinal idea of setting up a Dulwich Support Group came from APCMI members Nick and Gail Cotton. I can well remember the open meeting at St. Peter's monastery in December 87 when several ideas were aired. It was decided to set up a Drop In Centre to be operative every Tuesday. Our first premises were in "Platform One" adjacent to Forest Hill station which is run jointly by ILEA and Lewisham. Several of us were involved in publicising our activities with notices in the local press, libraries and churches, and perhaps best of all with the public. We recruited volunteer befrienders from amongst the members. These persons came from all walks of life, but whatever our expertise we all strive to bring Christian orientated love, compassion and a listening ear to our work with our clients who suffer from mental illness or emotional stress. Sometimes there are relatives who are in a state of anxiety from having to constantly care for a family member who is ill. Attendance has been varied yet we have never been without clients. I think I can speak for all our Volunteers in that we and our clients alike have gained in wisdom, knowledge and rapport from this stimulating activity. I personally have always come away from the Centre uplifted in body, mind and spirit, and we know for certain that our clients have too. Up to now we have concentrated our pastoral activities in the centre, but it is contemplated in the near future that we branch out to home and hospital visiting.

As a doctor I am aware of the recent advent of holistic medicine within our profession. Humans consist of a body, mind and spirit, so the Pastor must concentrate on all three areas for alleviation of illness and bring about integration in these areas. So our fundamental aim is to enable people to know and receive love, and to give it out to others round about them. Good pastoral care is meted out if we listen more, serve more, love more and hope more in our work.

Some months ago the Tuesday Venue was moved to Christ Church, Forest Hill, SE23 where the Minister Rev. John Caldicott has very kindly invited us to use his St. Paul's Centre. We have spacious accommodation, the use of a piano, and access to the beautiful and peaceful Chapel. We meet from 6.30 to 8.30 p.m. but we keep apart the last 10 minutes to move into the Chapel for a quiet prayer time - clients are invited if they so desire. Gail Cotton and I were invited to talk about the work of the centre to professional groups at Maudsley and Hither Green Hospitals.

On the 23rd May '89 we celebrated the first birthday of our Drop In Centre with a most enjoyable party. We pray that the Holy Spirit will continue to enlighten us in our work and we ask you to keep us in your prayers.

DR. GORDON CONRAN: VICE CHAIRMAN

KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA

The steering committee continues to meet once a month at More House - Catholic Chaplaincy.

The support group for carers continues to meet every 1st Wednesday of the month at Our Lady of Victories Church, Kensington, with a visiting speaker from other Agencies.

Thanks are due to Dominic Augustine (May speaker) Community Psychiatric Nurse - St. Mary Abbots Hospital for a very informative talk on care for the Mentally Ill within the community, and for his offer of continuous support and practical help if required.

Thanks are also due to Marks & Spencers, Kensington for support in supplying a voucher to cover expenses of teas, coffees, biscuits etc. at support group meetings and eventually our proposed Drop-In-Centre.

No further progress to date on premises for our Drop-In-Centre but I am assured we may expect to hear positive news soon about this venture.

STAN MCGOWAN

CROYDON

We are very enthusiastic about our Training Course for Volunteers which we are planning to start in the Autumn. Mainly local speakers have been invited and from that we hope to build on our network of contacts. We are very grateful to a volunteer who has undertaken to deal with all the administration involved - that means the Committee can concentrate on the all important publicity side. We hope and pray to have a good response from our churches.

Our Carers' Support Groups, after a fairly slow start, are beginning to develop and the local needs of each are becoming apparent.

We have booked St. Matthew's House, East Croydon for our A.G.M. on Monday 26th June at 7.30 p.m. We are particularly pleased that we have been able to use this facility again because that is where we started nearly a year ago. From that beginning several of our committee members were only able to commit themselves to serving on the Steering Committee and we are therefore very keen to hear from any local member who feels they could offer their services to the new Management Committee. They will meet on an average of once a month.

We have spoken to several Groups of Church Councils who have appeared very interested in the work of the APCMI. We trust the message will be passed on to individual churches.

BARBARA VIGAR

EASTBOURNE AND GUILDFORD

Both branches continue to make progress. Full reports will be published in the next Newsletter.

KINGSTON AND NEW MALDEN

Two successful meetings have taken place to be followed by a third on 7th June. It is hoped that a larger public meeting will be organised in the Autumn to launch a local Branch.

MANCHESTER

The Development Officer will be in Manchester on Wednesday 6th July to set up an informal meeting. Local members have been contacted. Anyone interested in attending this meeting please contact Head Office.

WAKEFIELD

The Development Officer will be in Wakefield on 7th July to give a talk to a group of Ordinands. Anyone in the area who would like to meet Dennis please contact Head Office.

YORK

A number of new members would like to set up some form of APCMI activity in the area. If you would like to promote the Association in York we would like to hear from you.

ABERDEEN

Enthusiasm is being shown by interested parties in this area. They would like to set up a local Branch and we have promised to assist them.

CAMBERLEY: SURREY

A local parish group showing interest could be the focus of a new APCMI initiative in the area.

BERWICK UPON TWEED

Positive interest has been shown with a wish to set up a group.

Regional development depends on local promotion, publicity and ground work. Please help us by spreading the word in your neighbourhood, your community, your Parish. We will assist and support you to the best of our ability.

FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS

As a result of our Bloomsbury Seminar two other Baptist Churches are hoping to have similar seminars in their localities. In April nearly 200 full-time Hospital Chaplains were sent an APCMI Information pack, and we are pleased to report that already several have become members, either as individuals or through our group membership scheme. Several are interested in promoting our work either in hospitals or the community.

At the end of May we circularised all the 720 Church of England Rural Deans of England and Wales with information about our work (be patient Scotland, we will get there). We hope to do a similar exercise with other denominations in the near future. This is a source of advanced publicity for your area.

As a result of meetings we have had with the Bishop of Stepney, the Rt. Rev. James Thompson, our discussion document has now gone before the East End of London Ecumenical Church Leaders Group. They have agreed to support the establishment of a One Day Consultation on the pastoral needs of mentally ill people and their relatives and carers living in the Islington, Tower Hamlets and Hackney Boroughs of London. We shall be seeking the active assistance and partnership of all interested parties in the setting up of the Day, to be held in late Autumn '89. This is a pioneering inner City project initiated by APCMI.

Enclosed with this Newsletter is a copy of Jane Lindon's article written at the request of David Saint, a Director of SANE for inclusion in their Newsletter (circulation 7000). It has had a wide response and resulted in

many enquiries. We hope it will encourage some of you to "put pen to paper" if you have an important mental health issue to raise with your local press, hospital, M.P. or Bishop.

A mention in the Sacred Heart Messenger has also elicited inquiries as has a piece in a North London monthly magazine circulated by 17 R.C. Parishes.

SEMINAR - "MENTAL ILLNESS - COMMUNITY CARE - A PASTORAL RESPONSE"

Reflections on the day by Nigel Capon

Saturday 15th April was a lovely warm spring day and full of new hopes and I decided to walk from Russell Square to the Seminar to clear my mind for what was to come. I had only just left the station when a teenage girl came up to me and asked "Got ten pence for a cuppa tea guv?" I felt afterwards that God had a sense of humour and was telling me "to come down to earth mate", and only then would I be ready for the days events.

The Seminar was held in Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church Conference Centre and we were warned that the day was going to be rather full (something of an understatement!). The day started with a lecture by Dr P Timms, a psychiatrist at the Unit for the Single Homeless attached to Guys Hospital. He gave a brief overview of psychiatric practise over the past thirty years and then went on to suggest that it was the Christian's responsibility to care, and that there was a difference between healing and curing: healing having the elements of faith and prayer within a holistic nature - the whole person. He specified schizophrenia saying that it not only has a personal dimension but also a social one and stressed the importance of trust and support. The conflicts of mental illness tend to fragment lives and exclude the sufferers from society. Dr Timms mentioned the importance of the existence of such an organisation as APCMI.

The lecture was followed by three workshops: Signs and Symptoms; The Use of Professionals; and What is Community Care? The morning session ended with a plenary led by Bloomsbury Minister Rev. B Hibbert. The main point raised was the fact that professionals and volunteers actually complement each other - each having important skills.

A short lunch break with an opportunity to meet and chat with each other was followed by an excellent lecture given by Rev. Mrs. Pat Thomas assistant Chaplain at Friern psychiatric hospital. She gave us exceptional insight into the lives of patients and outlined four areas in which the Churches could be of particular help: Being There; Education; Community and Supporting the Carer. The talk was followed by two sets of workshops on a Supporting Relatives and Carers; Mental Illness - a personal story; listening and counselling skills - then all change to b) Role of Befriending; Working with the Homeless; Worship with mentally ill people.

Somewhat exhaustedly we all re-assembled for the closing Plenary "Where to from here?"

Yes, it was a tiring day but one of sharing, excitement and great value. We absorbed so much information, and it occurred to me that God was with us all - perhaps that was where the warmth was coming from? The Seminar attracted 100 attendees.

(Copies of Rev. Mrs P Thomas' address are available from Head Office, S.A.E. please).

DATES TO REMEMBER

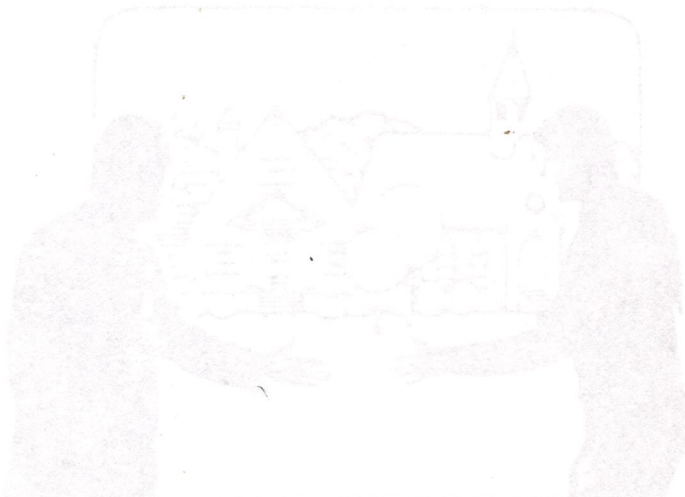
3rd October to 28th November The Autumn London Based Volunteers' Training Course will be held on nine consecutive Tuesday evenings at Heythrop

College, Cavendish Square, W1. For prospectus and full details contact Head Office.

On Saturday 17th June 12.30 - 5.00 p.m. the famous annual "Strawberrie Fayre" organised by St. Etheldreda's Church will be held in historic Ely Place, London EC1. Part of the proceeds come to APCMI. Londoners please come and support this event!

Friday and Saturday 23rd/24th June 1989: Two day Conference on the "Pastoral Care of the Mentally Ill", APCMI co-hosting with National Schizophrenia Fellowship 10a.m. - 4.30 p.m. each day at Friends' House, Euston Road, London. (Please note details of the Association AGM which is being held during the Conference).

The Copy deadline date for the next issue of the newsletter is Monday, 14th August 1989.



If a young man suffering from schizophrenia is half-remembered and half-forgotten, then this psychiatric experience should not detract from the fact that the same young man is a spiritual human being capable of true religious emotion. He is entitled to the same rights and expectations as the rest of us: freedom of religion, respect for his inner beliefs and access to the pastoral services of his choice.

If he is living in an environment which is alien to religious values it is likely that his spirituality will be misunderstood or ignored and that he will be deprived of spiritual counsel in his illness. Had he been a patient in a psychiatric hospital he might have had the services of a Chaplain, but such a relationship would have ended at the hospital gates.

Very few ministers remained in psychiatric hospitals, which means that community pastoral care for schizophrenic patients is both patchy and ad hoc, carried out by a sprinkling of dedicated individuals working in isolation. The Churches and other religious bodies have not placed mental health issues high on their list of priorities and they have not provided a dedicated mission to mentally ill people and their families.

The Newsletter of
SANE -
Schizophrenia
A National
Emergency

Issue Number 6
April/May 1989

SANE TALK



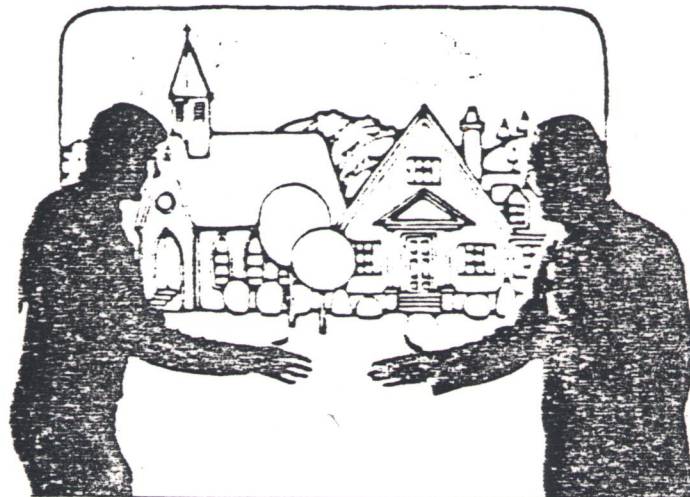
SANE COMMENT

Schizophrenia and Pastoral Care

If a young man suffering from schizophrenia is hallucinating and believes that he is Jesus Christ or the Pope, then this psychotic experience should not detract from the fact that the same young man is a spiritual human being capable of true religious emotions. He is entitled to the same rights and expectations as the rest of us: freedom of religion, respect for his inner beliefs and access to the pastoral services of his choice.

If he is living in an environment which is alien to religious values it is likely that his spirituality will be misunderstood or ignored and that he will be deprived of specialised pastoral counsel in his illness. Had he been a patient in a psychiatric hospital he might have had the services of a Chaplain, but such a relationship would have ended at the hospital gates.

Very few ministers are trained in psychotherapy, which means that community pastoral care for schizophrenia sufferers is ad hoc, carried out by a sprinkling of dedicated individuals working in isolation. The Churches and other religious bodies have not placed mental health issues high on their list of priorities, and they have not provided an established mission to mentally ill people and their families.



Sadly it seems that the major religious bodies have largely ignored the suffering and neglect of a substantial group in their midst who are often unable to find help themselves, and yet who are desperately in need of friendship and support. Whilst acknowledging that at times a relationship with a person suffering from schizophrenia can be difficult it is also true to say that it can be a rewarding and therapeutic experience which enriches both participants.

The spiritual and creative needs of schizophrenia sufferers within our society are overlooked and pastoral care comes bottom of the list.

Much has been written about the deficiencies of community care and the need to "educate the public", and "overcome

fear and ignorance", but little has been said about those people of goodwill who would like to help people suffering from a mental illness provided they were given positive support.

This is an area where the Churches could take a lead, by providing valuable resources such as meeting rooms, and by encouraging people at parish level to take informed interest. The Churches should be seen taking a moral and ethical stance when appropriate and also endeavouring to provide a network of social and pastoral service. There does appear to be an urgent necessity for an umbrella organisation to address these needs and unify Church commitment. This can only be achieved with the involvement of voluntary workers.

Addressing such problems is the Association for the Pastoral Care of the Mentally Ill (operating mainly in London and the South East but expanding nationally as funds permit). The members believe in the spiritual integrity of mentally ill people within the holistic approach, and help anyone in need whatever their creed, race or cultural background. The Association specialises in a wide range of pastoral provision for sufferers and those who care for them. Volunteers visit the mentally sick in hospitals and in the community and offer a friendly listening service. APCMI runs regular training courses for helpers and befrienders. It facilitates local APCMI initiatives such as Drop-In-Centres and relatives' support groups, and it functions as an information and referral centre.

The work of the Association has had a considerable response from statutory agencies, professional carers, other voluntary organisations and of course from mental sufferers themselves. As a young woman suffering from schizophrenia said to APCMI, "you have given me fresh hope".

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Jane Linton,
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