



Association for the Pastoral Care of the Mentally Ill

An association which supports the mentally ill and their relatives

NEWSLETTER NO.11 SEPTEMBER 1990

THE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The National Committee of APCMI was re-formed at the Annual General Meeting for the year ended 31st March 1990 held at St. Matthew's Pastoral Centre, Croydon on July 14th 1990. On behalf of the Association I would like to express our sincere thanks to Reverend Vernon Muller, Chaplain of Friern Hospital, who stood down from the Committee after three year's devoted service, during which he was a constant source of help and advice. Reverend Barbara Stanford of Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church, who helped us so much with the Conference there in April 1989 must also be thanked for the time she spent with us as a co-opted member during the year. Our Life President, Jane Lindon, the founder of APCMI stood down from the Committee in order to devote her energies and talents to special APCMI projects during a sabbatical year. Les Campion and I stood down and were re-elected. Five vacancies from the permitted total of twelve-plus-treasurer were filled by the following:

Reverend John Payne, Army Chaplain, an early member of APCMI.

Deborah Rolland, Chair of York Branch APCMI.

Julia Head, Chair of Kingston and Esher Branch APCMI.

Gillian Merrick, Secretary of York Branch APCMI.

Reverend Andrew Wilson, Chaplain of Warlingham Park Hospital.

We are fortunate to welcome these talented and well qualified members to the National Committee. Father Kit Cunningham, Roger Morton (Secretary), David Cotton (Treasurer), and Geoffrey Walker make up the balance together with Verity Pink and Brother Adrian Tate (Vice Chairman). Verity and Adrian had been co-opted after the 1989 A.G.M. and their election was confirmed by the 1990 A.G.M. The reconstituted Committee, including several mental health professionals and clergy, admirably demonstrates our inter-denominational nature.

With this Newsletter we are issuing copies of the programme for a Conference "The Arts and Mental Illness" which we are co-hosting with National Schizophrenia Fellowship. Attached to the programme you will find a hand bill for an Art Exhibition "Visions - The Experience of Schizophrenia". NSF and APCMI are presenting this Exhibition which is generously funded by SANE (Schizophrenia a National Emergency) and the Arts Council. Twenty thousand programmes have been distributed. We are proud of the progress we have made in organizing these two very important events and congratulate the planning committee which has been chaired by Jane Lindon. We hope that the membership will support these Arts initiatives. Sir Hugh Casson has kindly told us that many of the paintings are outstanding.

Constant expansion and development give cause for satisfaction and for the enthusiasm which will promote further expansion - a retrogenerative process - but we will never lose sight of the client whom we exist to serve. We welcome new members, new Branch committee members and, at last, new staff. In co-operation with Holy Cross Church, King's Cross, we have engaged a full time inner city mental health worker. Julian Hopwood commences work 28th August. He is to spend half his time in the King's Cross area with Holy Cross Centre Trust and half his time in adjoining areas with APCMI. Plans for a Development Officer for the

regions, based in York, are well advanced. A regional office will soon be opened. This project is being financed by SANE. We are especially happy to become involved with a group in Aberdeen. Royal Bank of Scotland paid Development Officer Dennis Murray's expenses for his first APCMI visit to Scotland - made after several months of telephone contact and correspondence with the local organisers who are now to be congratulated and welcomed as founders of the first Scottish Branch of APCMI.

This continuing expansion creates need for further fund raising efforts and I would be glad to hear offers of help. We are very pleased to announce that we have received our first of five annual grant payments of £1,200 from the Corporation of London. We thank those members of the Court of Common Council who supported our Humble Petition for moneys from the City's Cash. We thank National Westminster Bank for a donation of £500; Royal Bank of Scotland for helping us respond to Aberdeen; The J. W. Laing Trust for a further donation of £500; and all of you who helped raise sponsorship monies in connection with Howard Hopkins' London Marathon run. The final total for the run exceeded £1,500. Well done Howard!

AUSTIN LINDON

An Open Letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury Elect

Dear Dr Carey,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Association for the Pastoral Care of the Mentally Ill to offer you our warmest congratulations on your appointment as next Archbishop of Canterbury, and to assure you of the prayers of our membership in the daunting tasks that lie ahead of you.

You may not have heard of our Association yet, as we are quite small and we have only been in existence for four years. However we are planning to contact you in the new year in the hope that you will consider our request for you to become our Patron. I would like to explain why, if you graciously accept, it would be of such importance to us.

APCMI came into being because we identified a gap in the system of care of the mentally ill. We discovered that the spiritual needs of mentally ill people wherever they happen to be, in hospital, in the community, in prison, or residing in a cardboard city had been gravely neglected. We found that there was no mission or ministry within the major Churches specifically established to provide pastoral care for people with serious mental health needs and for their families, at their time of greatest need. Indeed we have heard of many sufferers who have turned to their Churches for help only to discover that pastoral support and sympathetic understanding of their illnesses and their spiritual problems were sadly lacking.

I know from media reports that it is your wish and intention to serve underprivileged members of our society; so therefore, with some temerity, I am asking you to give special consideration please, to a group of our brothers and sisters who are in great need; who are becoming increasingly marginalized; and who have very few advocates to plead on their behalf. I am hoping that you will give leadership and encouragement to all those of us who are striving to provide a compassionate and understanding pastoral service, and who are endeavouring, with limited resources, to stem the tide of misery and neglect which is rapidly overtaking the chronically mentally ill people in our midst.

I believe that the Established Church has a duty to take a moral and ethical stand in the face of inappropriate social engineering, which so far has resulted in an

intolerable burden of care being placed on families and carers. In partnership with mental health professionals and the voluntary sector the Church should be seen to be positively fostering good standards of psychiatric care for mentally ill sufferers.

APCMI is an interdenominational Association and we are proud of our ecumenical spirit. No one Church can tackle the enormity of the problems surrounding the care of the mentally ill, nor should it be expected to. Our membership includes representatives from many Churches. I would like to take this opportunity to offer you our support and put at your disposal the expertise we have gained in the mental health field.

Ours is a grass roots, hands-on agency providing where possible a local, neighbourhood service. Deeply committed individuals and groups are privileged to work together to meet common needs. However, if APCMI is to continue its on-going national development in conjunction with the churches, then it has now become a matter of urgency that we seek, for the first time, the formal acknowledgment and recognition our important mission deserves. To enable us to carry out our day to day work with the mentally ill and fulfil our expansion programme resourcefully we also need the active support of, and sponsorship from, all church leaders. A new Archbishop of Canterbury is just the person to ask, I feel. May we look to you for help?

Again our good wishes go with you. Thank you for reading this letter.

God bless,

Yours sincerely,

Jane Lindon.

RESEARCH PROJECT

Please let me introduce myself, I am an Anglican Priest who has been interested in the work of the Association almost from its inception. I believe it was the third meeting held by the Association that I attended on a cold winter's evening in London nearly four years ago. I was then Chaplain to the Mid-Wales Psychiatric Hospital near Brecon and had learned of the meeting from the Field Officer of the National Schizophrenia Fellowship whom I met at a workshop for Mental Health Professionals in Llandrindod Wells. He told me that the Association was concerned with the spiritual and pastoral needs of the mentally ill and their families. I was interested in what was being said at the London meeting and was keen to be involved. A change of job, unfortunately meant that any involvement at that time was going to be tenuous. The new job led to my working abroad until last year. My congregation at S. Peter's Church Paderborn, Germany, believed that the work of the Association was important and readily agreed to send annual donations.

I now live and work in Woolwich and hope to be here for a few years and am therefore able to become more involved with the work of the Association. I consider it a great honour to have been elected to the Management Committee this year.

I am a graduate in psychology but do not consider myself an academic. My main interest is in the type of research which can bring practical benefit to those we serve as an Association; the mentally ill and their families. We believe that we have something specific to offer in the field of mental health, namely to be concerned for the spiritual needs of the mentally ill and their carers. We wish also

to help people in the churches and in the field of mental health to become more aware of the spiritual needs of people in general. Spiritual well being is closely connected to mental and physical well being. It is an important element in the functioning of the whole person.

I have been asked to research into the area of spiritual and mental health; a difficult task. Spiritual, in this context is not easy to define. It will not be easy either, to deal with the subject in a way which will have practical benefit for those we seek to serve. I do not think this is a task that I can complete alone and would welcome any ideas from Association members. I hope to be able to visit branches and would welcome suggestions from branch members and beneficiaries.

If you have any ideas or suggestions which might help this project please address them to me care of the Head Office of the Association.

JOHN PAYNE

Some Notes by an Artist who has experienced Schizophrenia

I am not a psychiatrist and I do not understand psychiatry. This is merely a personal explanation of my mental condition which was first diagnosed eight years ago (as paranoid schizophrenia).

We all grow up with conscious and unconscious anchors in reality. Few of us are so anchored that we are invulnerable to the contradictions of our lives. I had an 'Achilles heel' in that I took members of my stepfamily as my role models since the age of six in a world which considers such bonds as not authentic.

When I was criticised by marxists at art college their arguments severely threatened my identity and I began to break down, losing my anchors in reality, opening a floodgate to neurosis, primarily about being homosexual which I had always concealed. My anxiety increased to an intolerable level and a perpetual examination of self took over my mind independent of my will. The necessity of escaping from this tension and strain resulted periodically in psychosis. The overburdened mind rests temporarily on some apparent truth and fixes the self for a moment allowing a colossal flow of energy into 'being' - until either that energy ebbs away; this 'self' becomes untenable; or administered drug treatment intervenes.

It also resulted in episodes of 'functional' psychosis which were unpleasant to experience. I suffered auditory hallucinations, not hearing voices but loud violent noises, and I experienced catatonic seizures of the mind which Emily Dickinson described in a poem as, "It was not death for I stood up, and all the dead lie down". A dreadful sensation of being suspended, transfixed in a black void: quite alone in a loveless universe. (I experienced something similar after receiving electro-convulsive therapy and refused further treatments because of this).

The tormenting Parkinsonian side effects of neuroleptic drugs intended to control this condition and relieve the patient, leads many of us to refuse, driven by the hope that we might resolve the endless labyrinth of schizophrenia unaided, rather than suffer agitation, restlessness, trembling convulsing muscles and fits, and a soul-destroying ennui.

Some of my paintings represent this inner conversation about self and world. Little marks, designs and hieroglyphs are subjects of thought. They are painted with potassium permanganate solution which burns through the paper as it oxidises. This expresses anxiety. These works were photographed in a converted chapel in Portsmouth, which is significant since the whole process also pours from a mind which had experienced the 'death' of God. The title of this particular work is "Man Goeth to His Long Home", which is from the Bible.

(Ecclesiastes 12 1-9. (Good News Bible)

"So remember your Creator whilst you are still young before those dismal days and years come when you will say "I don't enjoy life". That is when the light of the Sun, the Moon and the Stars will go dim for you and the rainclouds will never pass away. Then your arms, that have protected you, will tremble, and your legs now strong will go weak. Your teeth will be too few to chew food, and your eyes too dim to see clearly. Your ears will be deaf to the noise of the street. You will barely be able to hear the noise of the mill as it grinds or music as it plays, but even the song of a bird will wake you from sleep. You will be afraid of high places and walking will be dangerous. Your hair will turn white; you will hardly be able to drag yourself along, and all desire will have gone.

We are going to our final resting place, and then there will be mourning in the streets. The silver chain will snap, and the golden lamp will fall and break; the rope at the well will break, and the water jar will be shattered. Our bodies will return to the dust of the earth, and the breath of life will go back to God who gave it to us.

Useless, useless, said the philosopher. It is all useless."

MARK WATTS

APCMI Branches' Think In Day, 14th July 1990.

St. Matthew's House Conference Centre, Croydon.

Congratulations to Croydon and Dulwich Branches who organized this successful event which accommodated the APCMI Annual General Meeting in the lunch break. Our Think In Days are specially designed for Branch members to get together for study, exchange of ideas and information and to meet each other on an informal basis. Thanks are in order to all who attended, especially those who travelled long distances.

Jeremy Davis of Croydon has produced an eight page report which is available on request as is Rev. Andrew Wilson's talk. At the request of several Branch Committee members Jane Lindon's "Viewpoint" article, which she read out on the day is reproduced elsewhere in this newsletter.

Dr. David Cotton, National Committee member from Dulwich, very ably chaired the Day, which consisted of a talk by Rev. Andrew Wilson, Chaplain at Warlingham Park Hospital, followed by Branch Presentations by Dulwich, York, Kensington and Chelsea, and Croydon. At an Open Forum later in the day opportunities were given to other representatives to give accounts of their work. These included delegates from Bognor and Chichester, Eastbourne, Guildford, Kingston and Esher, and Hastings. Time was also made available for a period of general discussion.

Development Officer Dennis Murray spoke about some of his priorities for the ongoing work of APCMI and he made the clear statement that Branches should become catalysts for the formation of other Branches.

After Jane Lindon's reading of the 'Viewpoint' item APCMI Chairman Austin Lindon spoke for all present when he said that during the day he had grown through listening and he looked forward to attending similar events in the future.

VIEWPOINT - On the occasion of the fourth birthday of APCMI we publish an article commissioned by the Catholic Herald in September 1986. The advance

publicity engendered by Jane Lindon's "Viewpoint" was largely instrumental in the success of the first meeting she convened in order to found the Association.

"CRUCIFIXION OF MOTHERS"

"ADRIAN HAS been more contented within himself these last few weeks. He believes that he is the Pope, and therefore as an ordained priest he can say Mass in his room. He keeps a supply of stale bread in his bedside locker, but, as he says "the wine is in my heart".

Sometimes he thinks he is Jesus, and, occasionally he will write a letter to the Pope or the Cardinal. The other day he used the pay-phone in the corridor to call the Benedictine Monks at Quarr, as he wants to join them immediately and become a monk. Adrian is a Schizophrenia sufferer, committed to a psychiatric hospital. He has been very ill for four years with severe psychotic episodes, mood changes and deep depression.

At times he is tormented by hostile hallucinations and appears to be "possessed by devils". But, as his mother I can remember the time when our tall, elegant, intelligent and creative son briefly had the world at his feet.

He has always been affectionate and well mannered. Adrian is never out of my thoughts and prayers. As yet there is no cure for Schizophrenia, but I ask you to join me in prayers for all those dedicated people who are researching into the mysterious and dreaded disease.

Statistically speaking, in this country 50,000 Catholics have had, or will have Schizophrenia at any given time. Add to this number their deeply distressed and often helpless relatives (Father Kit Cunningham writes about "the crucifixion of mothers"), and sufferers from other mental illness and breakdown and the enormity and extent of this human suffering becomes apparent.

In my case I experienced one of the most traumatic events of my life when I discovered belatedly that during my son's first two admissions to hospital he had not received one single visit from a priest.

I had wrongly assumed that the Catholic Church in London provided an efficient Chaplaincy service to psychiatric hospitals. As a result of further enquiries I discovered that there is no organisation within the church in this country specifically instituted to provide trained priests and helpers in the field of mental illness.

I do not think that it helps the patient if one has to beg a priest to visit him, especially if the priest has no aptitude for this type of delicate mission. Indeed, I have been at the receiving end of some strange comments from them.

For example: 1. The Church considers that Mind and other voluntary bodies provide a sufficient service. 2. Sometimes the S.V.P. provide an ad hoc service to psychiatric hospitals (Though such specific care is not in their constitution). 3. Due to our multi-racial society Catholics could no longer expect the automatic service of a hospital chaplain. 4. My deeply felt attitude to the Sacrament of the Sick was construed as "magic". 5. Priests untrained in Psychotherapy are inclined to lump together patients' sick fantasies and guilt complexes with early religious experiences as a predominant syndrome, and the current religious experience and inquiry is therefore suspect. 6. Leave it to doctors and nurses.

I find these comments hurtful, and, I regret that my church appears to have opted out, especially when one considers that there are ideologies within Western psychiatry that are both anti-family and atheistic.

Further stress can be experienced when relatives have to come to terms with underfunded, understaffed, demoralized hospitals, many of which are overcrowded and squalid.

The government has issued draconian directives concerning aftercare in the community, none of which relate in any way to the human condition.

I believe that this state of affairs should be a matter of concern for our bishops; but I also think that there is scope for interdenominational action. (For instance the Quakers have pioneered reform in this area for 200 years).

I have been privileged and consoled to meet Christians who are quietly and unassumingly visiting and befriending these poorest of the poor - but many more are needed."

JANE LINDON

DEVELOPMENT REPORT

The well established Branches in Dulwich, Croydon, Guildford, Kensington and Chelsea, Kingston and Esher, Eastbourne, and York are continuing to make excellent progress in providing for local needs. Readers will recall their reports in our last issue. We plan to include another detailed account of their activities in our next Newsletter. In this edition we are concentrating on our new developments.

ESSEX: CHELMSFORD

The Study Day held at Victoria Road South Baptist Church on Saturday, 16th June was attended by 30 people who heard a medical overview from a local Consultant Psychiatrist, Dr Christine Murray, and a pastoral overview from Rev Russell Warden, Director of Greenwoods Therapeutic Community. Workshop discussions were on the themes of identifying our own needs and the needs of other people and on how we, as local people, could meet those needs. At the end of the day it was agreed that an evening meeting be held in September/October to establish a branch of the Association in the Chelmsford area. (See Dates for your Diary)

ESSEX: FOREST

The One Day Conference organized by the Forest Branch Steering Group held at Wanstead Methodist Church on Saturday 30th June attracted an attendance of over 60 people from different churches and organizations in the Walthamstow, Waltham Forest, and Wanstead 'Strip' area of North London and Essex. Both the morning speaker, Dr Mark Slater, Consultant Psychiatrist, who gave a medical overview, and the afternoon speaker, Rev Michael Pritchard, Chaplain, Claybury Hospital, speaking on the role of the Church in the Community, stimulated discussion amongst the delegates in their chosen workshops which followed the presentations. The day drew to a close with a commitment from those attending to meet again on the evening of September 25th to launch a local Branch of APCMI. (See Dates for Your Diary).

HASTINGS AND ST LEONARDS

A Branch of the Association has now been formed in Hastings and St Leonards. Over the next few weeks the Branch will be looking at the feasibility of running a local Befriending Scheme.

BOGNOR REGIS AND CHICHESTER

The Branch Committee is already involved in setting up a local Befrienders' Training Course to be held during the Autumn.

LIVERPOOL

Discussions continue with personnel from both Roman Catholic and Anglican Dioceses as to the role of APCMI in future plans for pastoral care for the mentally ill and their relatives.

ABERDEEN

Following discussions with a group of people in Aberdeen, the Development Officer, Mr Dennis Murray, addressed a public meeting in the Conference Room, Cornhill Hospital, Aberdeen, on Thursday, 16th August 1990 at 7.30pm. A decision to adopt the APCMI Branch Constitution was formed. We are hoping that the whole of the Grampian area will benefit from this first Scottish Branch which is sure to stimulate interest in other areas North of the Border.

LUTON

We are in discussion with the Director of Development, Fairfield Hospital, South Bedfordshire Health Authority who has shown interest in the possibility of joining with us in a Consultation for the Churches in the Luton area modelled on the successful Consultation Day we held in association with the East London Church Leaders last December. The Director is currently studying our Consultation document and information pack. These items can be made available, together with appropriate advice, for use elsewhere.

CENTRAL LONDON

At the recent A.G.M. Sister Theresa Pountney of the Church Army and a London Member of the Association requested that we try and get some provision off the ground in central London. She was willing to place a venue at our disposal for a meeting. (See Dates for Your Diary)

EAST LONDON

The Development Officer continues to keep the Association's profile high in the ongoing discussions and developments in the area. A Befriending Scheme for Tower Hamlets is being considered by a sub group and a Mental Health Awareness Exercise for local religious practitioners is planned for next Spring. City and Hackney developments include a proposal to have a series of local Pastoral Care Study Days in different parts of the locality.

Dates for Your Diary

DULWICH & FOREST HILL, Friday 31st August 1990 at 7.30pm in DULWICH COLLEGE THEATRE. Charity Theatre Evening by London Musicals Company. Tickets £10.00 (£3.00 Concessions) to include Buffet. Contact 081 670 2470 for details.

YORK BRANCH A.G.M. Tuesday 18th September 1990. in ST BEDE'S PASTORAL CENTRE, 21 Blossom Street, YORK.

BRANCH FORUM: Monday, 24th September 1990 at 7.00pm (Coffee at 6.30) at St EDWARD'S HOUSE, 22 Great College Street, London, SW1. (For Branch Delegates)

FOREST BRANCH PUBLIC MEETING: Tuesday 25th September 1990. at 7.30pm at HIGHAM'S PARK BAPTIST CHURCH, Cavendish Road, London E4.

CROYDON VOLUNTEERS' TRAINING COURSE: Consecutive Tuesdays from 2nd October 1990. - 20th November 1990. 7.30pm - Details from Head Office.

WESTMINSTER; Wednesday, 10th October 1990 at 7.30pm in the lounge, ELGOOD HOUSE, 84, Bell Street, London NW1. Open Meeting to discuss the development of a Branch in the Westminster/Paddington area.

BEXLEY ONE DAY CONFERENCE: "The Local Churches and Community Care" Tuesday 16th October 1990. 9.45am - 4.30pm at U.R.C. CHURCH, Geddes Place, BEXLEYHEATH, Kent.

ART EXHIBITION AND ARTS CONFERENCE: ROYAL COLLEGE OF ART, Kensington Gore, London. EXHIBITION 4th - 16th December 1990. (In Entrance Gallery) CONFERENCE 6th & 7th December 1990.

ADDITIONAL DETAILS OF THE ABOVE EVENTS CAN BE OBTAINED FROM THE LONDON OFFICE OF THE ASSOCIATION.

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Edited by Jane Lindon : produced by Austin Lindon