

NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2000

THE CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

"We have different gifts, according to the grace given us" Romans 12 : 6

I find this passage from Paul's letter to the Romans an important reminder that everyone has special gifts to offer and a part to play in any thriving organisation. I think that it is particularly relevant to our association. Within the national committee we are trying to use those individual gifts with different committee members taking the lead in different areas of work. But this concept extends beyond the committee and applies to every local group and member. My hope is that we will continue to look out for each other's gifts and encourage them to be use.

This newsletter is an example. We are fortunate to have John Rawson as editor of the newsletter. His wife, Leona, does the typing without any fuss or acclaim. But the success of the newsletter also depends on the contributions and this depends on you. For example, we would like to have :

- Regular updates from local branches and affiliated groups with, if possible, a link person having this responsibility for each group
- Short articles on pastoral care and mental health
- Poems, stories, jokes, letters
- Reports of conferences and reviews of books etc
- Examples of good practice both within APCMH and elsewhere
- Information about resources eg support groups, projects, literature, videos
- Requests for information

On this last point I should mention that we do receive a number of requests for information and resources. We are compiling some resource sheets; but we are often short of answers. We are particularly stuck when it comes to local information.

Requests could be put in the newsletter and readers might be able to respond.

Lionel Perkin has worked hard at constructing a web-site for us. It is already on-line but, before advertising it, we want to obtain a relevant web-site address. This should be completed soon, along with our new leaflet.

We have also formed a new company in the name APCMH and should be able to transfer to the company on 1 July. The Guild of Health's property at Edward Wilson House is to be sold shortly, so we need a new address. We have agreed with St Marylebone Church that we can use their address, and forwarding arrangements have been made. We hope to develop a close working relationship with St Marylebone.

(Please refer to back page for new address details ...Ed)

To mark the new company, new leaflet, new web-site, new address and new "partnership" with St Marylebone, we intend to hold a celebratory service followed by refreshments at St Marylebone on Sunday, 2 July 2000 in the afternoon. Further details will follow but, meanwhile, please keep the date free. I look forward to seeing you then.

But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

1 Cor 12 : 18-20

MARY HILLIER

I have been involved with APCMH for about six years. I completed a volunteer's training course in Croydon and went on to work as a volunteer in their drop-in, subsequently becoming Croydon's first Development Officer, a post held for four years.

I am trained as an adult education tutor and have worked for the past 12 years with Croydon's Continuing Education and Training Service, working with people with disabilities (including mental health difficulties) in a variety of roles. I now work full time as Learner Support Co-ordinator.

Married for 27 years, I have three sons aged 17, 19 and 21 years. Brought up as the daughter of a Congregational Minister I am now an Anglican, but have a strong belief and commitment to the ecumenical movement. I am currently training to be a Southwark Pastoral Auxiliary and hope to be commissioned in June 2001.

I have had personal experience of the value of "being" and believe in being empowered and empowering others through a healing presence to "do" for themselves. Unconsciously we can often seek to make life relevant for ourselves by the actions we take on behalf of others. The philosophy of APCMS has particular significance for me and I feel has much to offer many others.

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THE QUIET GARDEN TRUST

The movement began in 1992 when the first Quiet Garden opened in Stoke Poges, Bucks, England. This was the vision of the Rev Philip D Roderick, a priest working in the Diocese of Oxford, England and now Director of The Quiet Garden Trust. It caught the imagination of others, and soon more Quiet Gardens followed in the UK, the USA and Canada. Quiet Spaces in the City and Quiet Gardens are now developing in many different parts of the world.

The Trust was set up in 1994 to support the interdenominational ministry of individual Quiet Gardens and Quiet Spaces. It encourages those considering providing a Quiet Space, responding in a positive way to new ideas and suggestions, as well as providing pastoral oversight.

The Quiet Garden Trust
Stoke Park Farm
Park Road, Stoke Poges
Bucks SL2 4PG
Tel: 01753 643050

A Seminar on CULTURE, CONFORMITY AND MENTAL HEALTH at Southwark Cathedral

Thursday 8 June from 17.20 to 20.30

Speakers: Jonathan Glover, *Professor of Ethics, KCL*,
Kay Redfield Jamison, *Professor of Psychiatry, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore*

Who defines mental health? What are our values and goals? What are the links between mental health, culture and antisocial behaviour? What causes, preventive measures, and treatments of mental illness are suggested by medicine, psychology, anthropology and criminology?

This event is free. Tickets may be obtained by telephoning 020 8659 2318.

The Festival of Medicine website is at www.kcl.ac.uk/festival

INSENSITIVITY

In his book, "Spiritual Pain", Doug Hiza talks about the importance of AGENDAS when we are offering pastoral care to another person. He says, "We must always focus on the agenda of the (other person) - not our own hidden agenda."

It reminded me of a visit made to me in hospital many years ago by a well meaning lady from one of the local Christian churches. In the long bare dormitory ward I had no choice about her visit to me and every word could be overheard by the 20 or so other patients. I must have appeared very ungrateful, and offended by my lack of response, I was told that I was selfish and that it was no wonder I was ill! I was proclaimed sinful and in need of forgiveness. Although this may well have been true, I was feeling very vulnerable and already overburdened with feelings of guilt. Her words had a profoundly distressing effect on me and still re-visit me (25 years later) when I feel low.

Maybe an extreme example, but I felt that this lady had come with her own agenda. We all have our own agenda but I need to acknowledge my own, so that I can put it to one side and focus on that of the other. It is then that I can really listen and hear what is being said and form a supportive, trusting and non-judgemental relationship which can form a bridge and a channel for healing.

Pastoral care for me means meeting with another person as human beings with respect for each other, but also knowing that when we are in relationship with God we have an extra spiritual dimension and resource within that relationship. We can then try to truly "be there" for each other.

The contributor of this piece wishes to remain anonymous

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INDIFFERENCE

When Jesus came to Golgotha they hanged Him on a tree,
They drove great nails through hands and feet, and made a
Calvary.

They crowned Him with a crown of thorns, red were the
wounds and deep.

For those were crude and cruel days, the human flesh
cheap.

When Jesus came to Birmingham, they simply passed Him by,
They never hurt a hair of Him, they only let Him die.
For men had grown more tender, and they would not give Him
pain,

They only just passed down the street, and left Him in the rain.

Still Jesus cried, "Forgive them, for they know now what they
do."

And still it rained the winter rain that drenched Him through and
through.

The crowds went home and left the streets without a soul to see,
And Jesus crouched against the wall and cried for Calvary.

The Rev G A Studdert-Kennedy was appointed chaplain to the forces in 1915. He served in the Somme offensive and he is famous for his book of verse about the First World War called "Rough Thymes of a Padre." He had a voice like a foghorn and swore like a trooper, but when he preached at Church Parade, every eye was on him and his sermons were the chief topic of conversation during the ensuing week. He handed out compassion, friendship, jollity and cigarettes in equal measure. He was known as "Woodbine Willie".

Contributed by Leona Rawson

DON'T BE FOOLED BY ME

Don't be fooled by me.

Don't be fooled by the face I wear.

For I wear a thousand masks: masks that I'm afraid to take off; and none of them are me.

Pretending is an art that's second nature with me; but don't be fooled.

For God's sake don't be fooled.

I give the impression that I'm secure, that all is sunny and unruffled with me, within as well as without;

That confidence is my name and coolness my game; and that I need no one.

But don't believe me. Please.

My surface may seem smooth, but my surface is my mask.

Beneath this lies no complacency.

Beneath dwells the real me in confusion, in fear, and aloneness.

But I hide this. I don't want anybody to know it.

I panic at the thought of my weakness and fear of being exposed.

A nonchalant, sophisticated facade, to help me pretend;

to shield me from the glance that knows.

But such a glance is precisely my salvation. My only salvation, and I know it.

It's the only thing that will assure me of what I can't assure myself: that I am worth something.

But I don't tell you this. I don't dare. I'm afraid to.

I'm afraid your glance will not be followed by acceptance and love.

I'm afraid you'll think less of me, that you'll laugh at me, and your laugh would kill me.

I'm afraid that deep down I'm nothing; that I'm no good and that you will see this and reject me.

So I play my game, my desperate game, with a facade of assurance without, and a trembling child within.

And so begins the parade of masks. And my life becomes a front.

I idly chatter to you in the safe tones of surface talk.

I tell you everything that is really nothing, and nothing of what's everything.

Of what's crying within me;

So when I'm going through my routine, do not be fooled by what I'm saying.

Please listen carefully and try to hear what I'm not saying.

What, for survival, I need to say, but what I can't say. I dislike hiding. Honestly!

I dislike the superficial game I'm playing. the phoney game.

I'd really like to be genuine and spontaneous, and me; but you've got to help me.

You've got to hold out your hand, even when it's the last thing I seem to want.

Only you can wipe away from my eyes the blank stare of breathing death.

Only you can call me into aliveness.

Each time you're kind, and gentle, and encouraging; each time you try to understand, because you really care, my heart begins to grow wings, very small wings, very feeble wings, but wings.

With your sensitivity and sympathy, and your power of understanding, you can breathe life into me. I want you to know that.

I want you to know how important you are to me; how you can be the creator of the person that is me if you choose to.

Please choose to. You alone can break down the wall behind which I tremble.

You alone can remove my mask.

You alone can release me from my shadow-world of panic and uncertainty, from my lonely person. Do not pass me by.

Please.....do not pass me by.

It will not be easy for you. A long conviction of worthlessness builds strong walls.

The nearer you approach me, the blinder I strike back.

I fight against the very thing I cry out for; but I am told that love is stronger than walls, and in this lies my hope.

Please try to beat down those walls with firm hands; but with gentle hands

.....for a child is very sensitive.

Who am I? you may wonder. I am someone you know well.

For I am every man and every woman you meet.

(extract from "Spiritual Pain by Doug Hiza)

QUESTIONS (AND ANSWERS ?) by Eddie van der Werf

What does one do when one sees someone close suffering from severe psychiatric illness and attempting to improve their spiritual position with the help of the Church of England; and highly evangelically motivated personnel at a group Christian GP's Practice undermine this support by insisting with evangelical fervour that the sufferer is involved in a cult? (as in the evangelical ideology everyone suffering from mental illness does so as a result of cult activity.)

Who can argue against NHS employed staff? Where does one go, when after the evangelical message has caused irreparable psychiatric harm to this person close to you, you find out later that the key person involved at the Christian GP's Practice is not qualified in health, but is merely a secretary pretending to be qualified in social welfare?

Later on, another person close to one is in urgent need of clinical psychiatric assistance, but the Christian Fellowship that one is involved in distorts the traditional teachings of Christ and omits from their vocabulary words such as *compassion, healing, peace, reconciliation*.

The charismatic manifestations of the Holy Spirit become more powerful and more important than God.

Who can stand against this group telling the one close to you that their poor health does not need medical attention - when this Fellowship consists of police officers, lawyers, schoolteachers, social workers, doctors, nurses and a whole range of other professionals?

What happens when ones own child is involved in this group and is not allowed access to medical attention?

And then somehow one finds ways of overcoming these difficulties and rescues those close to you from further harm. But wait, there are religious social workers and health visitors who profess the name of Christ, but while working in the health and welfare system begin to make life difficult again for those close to you. Why? Is it because of their known (not assumed) association with the previous groups at Church or the staffroom at work?

These are the dilemmas which I faced with my own family over the years. As a Christian believer since the early 1980s I learnt that the disciplines of honesty, kindness, humility, with a genuine desire to see others do well, was an aim for the believer to attain to. And we all fail at certain times.

It became clear that health and welfare professionals were attempting to be theologians at their workplace by inflicting their own religious interpretations instead of doing the jobs which they were paid for.

Likewise, there were those within churches and fellowships loosely using the name of Christ to promote their own false perceptions of expertise in health and welfare.

By seeking answers I came across many self-proclaimed "experts" in this field.

There are for example, small mental health charities who employ staff with either little experience of psychiatric issues or may be antagonistic towards religion.

Similarly, religious agencies who claim anti cult activity but are often no different than the "cults" whom they seek to destroy.

Did the statutory Health services know of anyone who could help who had specific qualification and experience in this field?

Did Parliament know of anybody who could help?

I did not find the answers I was looking for.

Using St Francis of Assisi as an example, I began to take these issues myself, by beginning a project which would invite qualified views of the NHS psychiatric profession, the view of qualified clergy from the traditional Christian church and grass root views of those who suffer confusing religious ideas while enduring severe mental illness If anyone had the answers *they* would.

MENTAL ILLNESS

Taken from "The Health Of The Nation"

a series of booklets produced by the Department of Health

Are people with mental illness more accepted nowadays?

Most people have a need to understand more about mental illness, and the treatment methods now available, to counter the stigma that is still too often associated with it. But people may be becoming more enlightened.

In a recent survey, nine out of ten people said that we need to adopt a far more tolerant attitude towards people with mental illness. Seven out of ten believed that virtually anyone can become mentally ill, and over three-quarters agreed that mental health services should be provided through community-based facilities.

SO WHAT CAN BE DONE?

There are effective ways of dealing with feelings of distress, including :

Talking treatments

When things are getting you down, it can be invaluable to be able to talk about them with someone who can help you understand what is happening to you :

- it may let you talk about how you feel and simply by letting you put things in words helps to make sense of your problems;
- it may allow you to understand why you feel the way you do, and perhaps to accept that the feelings you have are quite reasonable in your particular circumstances or after what has happened to you;
- they may help you work out a plan of action so that you can do something positive about the problems you have;
- it may help you to go over the thoughts you are having and see whether they have been making things worse - perhaps you are being too critical of yourself.

Medication

Different forms of medication are available and can be very helpful when you have become depressed or 'mixed up'.

While recovering, it may also be helpful to have somewhere special to go in the day, such as day-centres, day hospitals, clubs and drop-in centres. Sometimes having somewhere special to stay overnight is also a useful option. Most psychiatric wards are now in district general hospitals and, if you need care and support at night, can provide a period of support and safety over 24 hours. Many districts are developing these facilities in the community, away from hospitals; sometimes there are also hospital hostels.

For some people, care and support may be needed over a few months or years, and most health districts are now developing a range of staffed and supported accommodation for them to replace the care that was previously provided in psychiatric hospitals.

SOURCES OF HELP

Voluntary groups: Family doctors: Social workers: Mental health team.

From Sheila Cassidy's book
"Good Friday People".

And so we must begin to live again,
We of the damaged bodies
And assaulted mind.
Starting from scratch with the rubble of our lives
And picking up the dust
Of dreams once dreamt.

And we stand there, naked in our vulnerability,
Proud of starting over, fighting back,
But full of weak humility
At the awesomeness of the task.

We, without a future,
Safe, defined, delivered
Now salute you God.
Knowing that nothing is safe,
Secure, inviolable here.
Except you,
And even that eludes our minds at times.
And we hate you
As we love you,
And our anger is as strong
As our pain,
Our grief is deep as oceans,
And our need as great as mountains.

So, as we take our first few steps forward
Into the abyss of the future,
We would pray for
Courage to become what we have not been before
And accept it,
And bravery to look deep within our souls to find
New ways.

We did not want it easy God,
But we did not contemplate
That it would be quite this hard,
This long, this lonely.

So, if we are to be turned inside out, and upside down,
With even our pockets shaken,
Just to check what's rattling
And left behind,
We pray that you will keep faith with us,
And we with you,
Holding our hands as we weep,
Giving us strength to continue,
And showing us beacons
Along the way
To becoming new.

We are not fighting you God,
Even if it feels like it,
But we need your help and company,
As we struggle on.
Fighting back
And staring over.

ASSOCIATION FOR PASTORAL CARE IN MENTAL HEALTH
GUILDFORD BRANCH

A SPRING SEMINAR

" FREE TO FAIL "
with
THE REV RUSS PARKER,

Director of the Acorn Christian Healing Trust
and author of the book of that title

Wednesday 10 May 2000

from 2.00 - 4.00 pm

at

St Saviour's Church, Guildford

Everyone is welcome,
Coffee or Tea and biscuits will be served during the afternoon.

Admission is free - donations optional

Further information from **Trevor** or **Clare** on
01483 - 451010

E-mail : apcmh@hotmail.com

or

The Secretary, APCMH, c/o NSF Office,
101 Woodbridge Road, Guildford, GU1 4PY

A P C M H is now on the World Wide Web !!!

Why not visit us on : ***www.pastoral.org.uk***

The Association for Pastoral Care in Mental Health

An association which supports those who are mentally ill and their families.

Registered Charity No. 327532

PLEASE NOTE NEW National office address : APCMH c/o St. Marylebone Parish Church,
Marylebone Road, LONDON NW1 5LT

The views expressed in the Newsletter are not necessarily those of the Association.

The Editor welcomes contributions for the publication.

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