

NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2000

THE CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

"They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of His splendour."
Isaiah 61 : 3

As we lit candles at the start of the "Growing Together" Members Day at All Saints, Battersea on 6 November, I was reminded of these words from Isaiah. The people referred to earlier in the passage were "the poor", "the broken-hearted", "the captives", "the prisoners", "all who mourn" and "those who grieve". To them the anointed was to "preach good news", "bind up" their broken hearts, "proclaim freedom", give "release from darkness", "comfort and provision", and bestow "a crown of beauty", "the oil of gladness" and "a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair". "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing", said Jesus in the synagogue as He quoted some of the verses (Luke 5:18). The less often quoted verse above reminds us that it is the same people who will be called "oaks of righteousness" and who are "a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendour". So it was that we were lighting candles not just as a prayer for someone in emotional or mental distress, but in gratitude of the light that they have been to us. "This is the light of" we said as we came forward one by one. It was a most moving moment.

"Growing Together" was altogether a very encouraging day. About 45 people attended; many more sent their apologies. After Mike Pritchard had led us in the opening act of commitment, Andrew Wilson encouraged us to see that we ourselves are a spiritual resource for each other. We then explored our common values and shared our experiences and activities. The day showed how much collective experience we have, how much we have in common, and how important (though simple) is our underlying message of "being alongside" those in distress or turmoil. The AGM confirmed the spirit of unity and agreement as to the way forward.

Jamie Summers and John Rawson have stood down from the Committee. We are very grateful to them for their valuable contributions over a number of years. We wish them well for the future. We are delighted that John will continue as editor of this newsletter. We welcome on to the Committee Cheryl Higgins, from South East Essex and Solomon Brown, the Chair of the Forest Hill group.

Neil Mackenzie is also standing down as Treasurer in May of this year. He will be sorely missed. He has done tremendous work for the Association. We now need (fairly urgently) a new Treasurer, so if you, or someone you know, might be a possibility, please let us know.

For this coming year the National Committee will concentrate on ways of spreading our message of "**being alongside**". The newsletter is one of our main ways of doing so. A new leaflet is about to be produced. We will also develop resource sheets sharing our ideas and practical experience in the hope that they may help churches to respond to mental health needs. And we hope to move into the electronic age with a web-site. We are most grateful to Lionel Perkins for undertaking the construction of the web-site.

And so we move forward into the new Millennium with renewed hope for the future. My hope is that ignorance, stigma, alienation and exclusion which abound in mental ill-health will be replaced by understanding, respect, acceptance and inclusion; and my belief is that, by "**being alongside**" rather than turning our backs, we will help this to come about.

"But let justice roll on like a river, and righteousness like a never-failing stream." Amos 5 : 24

KEYNOTE SPEECH

by Andrew Wilson
APCMH A.G.M. November 1999

"Spiritual Resources"

"What are you talking about at this 'do' then?" asked one of my matter of fact, unreligious friends. When I told him he replied, "I don't know what that means." Under my breath I muttered to myself, "You and me both sunshine." And I suspect that most of us asked to stand up and be counted about this area of life, the belief that all of us have a spiritual dimension, which is, after all a core value of our Association, a conviction that APCMH pledges itself to. Any of us asked to explain it will initially hesitate, or at least scratch our heads a bit, before we begin to explore what it means for ourselves, let alone to others. The risk is that we dismiss this discussion as unimportant, above our heads, or retreat back into well tried and traditional religious schemes and systems that tell us what we ought to think, but in reality leave us none the wiser. This question is one that all of us have to experience and wrestle with, and process for ourselves.

Where might we begin? For me there is a helpful parable in Peter Speck's book on hospital chaplaincy work, "Being There" which explores this, at first sight hazy, area. He tells us about a pastoral encounter between a distressed father in a casualty department demanding a quick religious fix for his daughter in intensive care. The father wants miracles, prayers - the chaplain looks beneath this to the needs of both parents, the silent wife sitting in the corner, explores with them their feelings of guilt and helplessness and rage, and helps them finally to say their goodbyes to their daughter before the life support system is switched off. Perhaps only a story can hold together all the things that we might need to say about the spiritual dimension of our humanity, without limiting the discussion, or defining it in a way that forecloses on our depth, our mystery. And, for some of us who would want to go further, the sense that we are made in the image and likeness of God. This story tells us that beneath the religious stuff we can become embroiled in, there is an essential, if elusive part of all of us that is about value and meaning. It's not only religious people who make sense of this. Recently an article appeared in "Addiction Today" which outlined what is called a secular spirituality to enable people to move into recovery, a religionless spirituality. Yes, we, most of us, would want to go further than that, but what this project realised was that beneath the skin there is in all of us a basic need to make sense of ourselves and the world.

Brian Thorne, the Christian therapist, summarises it like this. "We have an ultimate moral sense that distinguishes meaning and value. Unless this is encouraged our individual lives hover ceaselessly on the brink of meaninglessness." He recognises the cultural melting pot we are today, which questions all our traditions and values, and the pull towards what he calls "an all-embracing materialism". Our 'conscience' can give us direction when we are lost, on what he calls the 'ocean of relativity, the fog of meaninglessness.' And of course, that is precisely the uncharted sea that our Association pledges itself to sail in, while as fellow travellers we stand alongside one another, trying somehow to make sense of our lives.

It is not only the secular world that encourages to work together with all comers at this search for meaning, whether it is a search for ourselves, or ourselves as a community or nation. Richard Holloway, the Bishop of Edinburgh, in his recent book "Godless Morality" suggests that Jesus challenges any way of living that relies upon control or power structures or blind obedience - we live in a large and complex community where we need to make sense not only to ourselves, but to others with differing beliefs, and none. So, he concludes, 'the good life is a much more subtle business of developing appropriate inner intentions, leading to love and compassion.'

So it's not only us who are involved in the spiritual journey. Carl Rogers, the pioneer of person centred counselling, having rejected religion, and a career in a theological seminary, began to discover in later life that he might have thrown the baby out with the bath water. In an article written a year before his death he spoke about this broader perspective he had begun to discover. "I find that when I am closest to my inner, intuitive self, when I am somehow in touch with the unknown in me, when perhaps I am in a slightly altered state of consciousness in the relationship with clients, then whatever I do seems to be full of healing.

When my simply my presence is releasing and helpful. there is nothing I can do to force this experience, but when I can relax and be close to the transcendental core of me, than I behave in strange and impulsive ways in the relationship which I cannot justify rationally. But these strange behaviours turn out to be "right" in some odd way. At these moments it seems that my inner spirit has reached out and touched the inner spirit of the other. Our relationship transcends itself and becomes a part of something larger. profound growth and healing and energy are present.

Our Drop-Ins and projects affirm the openness of our approach, our readiness to enter into such intuitive, unforced, relationships - being alongside others, no matter what their orientation or belief, offering them the atmosphere and ethos that helps them to find meaning for themselves. But we also affirm that this may be done as powerfully by the way that we offer them a cup of tea, or sit with them at their table, or keep our mouths shut, as by the views or opinions that we might hold.

My experience within the Association, and my work in hospital and the community over the last ten years has drawn me back time and again to the most basic of spiritual principles, both in my pastoral care of individuals, whether they be professionals, users, carers or volunteers - and in the plans that we attempt to make for the future of the Association locally, or the plans we attempt to make for the future of our chaplaincy work.

This basic principle is one that I believe I share with the other members of our local group, and it is this: To try, and it's often a hard task, to remain open to others, despite of, or perhaps precisely allowing ourselves our own poverty and clumsiness. Not hiding behind activity, and the inevitable imbalance of power that "doing things to others" sets up, but by cultivating this way of being truly present to others, as we are, and not as we would like to be, or even how we think they would like us to be! The task that APCMH has always set itself, if I have understood it rightly, is to encourage us all to BE rather than to DO. Any activity we engage in together must arise out of this basic way of relating to each other, and that is deeply spiritual.

Someone offered me a poem last week after I had been asked to speak at our local MIND AGM, it points us to the most basic of human needs, authentic relationships. It runs like this,

Listen! When I ask you to listen to me, and you begin to tell me why I shouldn't feel that way, you are trampling on my feelings.

When I ask you to listen to me, and you feel that you have to do something to solve my problem, you have failed me, strange as that may seem.

LISTEN! All I asked was that you listen. Not to talk or to do, just hear m.

Advice is cheap: 50p will get you both "Dear Marge" and Bill Graham in the same newspaper.

And I can do for myself - I am not helpless, maybe discouraged and faltering, but not helpless.

When you do something for me that I can and need to do for myself, you contribute to my fear and weakness.

So please list and just hear me.

And if you want to talk - wait a minute for your turn - and I will listen to you!"

Simply and directly the poem warns us of the difficulties we all have of remaining open and ourselves when we stand before one another, and how our urge to help others can simply increase their disempowerment. So APCMH must be about the business of encouragement and facilitating the abilities that lie in each one of us.

Henri Nouwen puts this into a spiritual context in another deceptively simple paragraph in a series of retreat addresses to pastoral workers, called "The Way of the Heart". He warns us against what he calls the compulsive ways in which we live. I've stuck these few words on the wall of the chaplaincy office and in my study at home, and it acts as a checkpoint in the days when I get tempted to get above myself, which is frequently! or on the days when there seems to be no way ahead, another frequent occurrence!

Nouwen says this: "Compassion is hard because it requires the inner disposition in us to go with others to the place where they are weak, vulnerable, lonely and broken. But that is not our spontaneous response to suffering. What we desire most is to do away with suffering by fleeing from it, or finding a quick cure for it. As busy, active relevant ministers, we want to earn our ready by making a real contribution. This means "we think" doing something to show that our presence makes a difference. And so we ignore our greatest gift, which is our ability to enter into solidarity with those who suffer."

That, above all is the purpose of this Association - to create within ourselves the personal and inner disposition to be truly compassionate and that means of course a compassion for ourselves as much as it is a compassion for others, or we are moving away from any sense of equality in our relationships. We need, as the listening poem reminds us, to 'take' as well as give. I am not as hopeful as Rogers in thinking that this is simply impulsive - our own Christian tradition, along with most other religious traditions, offers us ways to cultivate the inner disposition. And that's the topic for a whole lot of other talks! The basics are to acknowledge within ourselves, and all others the capacity to find meaning, and to relate, and to love.

Simone Weil uses one word to sum up the mark of an authentic human relation - "Hesitancy".

In other words, we shouldn't walk towards any meeting with another carrying any preconceptions - even about how they were with you yesterday. Every meeting with another has immense potential if we do not try to control it. That is our discipline - to UN-encumber ourselves of the baggage that gets in the way of appearing before the face of one another, of the face of God.

You might feel at the end of all this that I haven't answered the question about what precisely spiritual resources we have. The giddy joke is that in the end the resource is... **us**.

THE RIVER OF YOUR LIFE : A MEDITATION

In the quietness I want you to picture your life as a river. I want you to trace that river back to its source, that fine spring of water bubbling up. Two cells came together. A baby is born. What do you know of your origins? Is this a warm, sheltered place, or is it barren and exposed, rocky, hostile?

Now as your river of life widens into a stream, think of your early years. Does your river trickle down gently and peacefully, or are its waters swirling through rapids, white, frothy, turbulent among jagged protruding rocks?

Look along the banks of your river. Are there tributaries great and small flowing into your river, mixing their waters with yours? What are the relationships which have influenced you over the years - family members, friends, work colleagues, encounters with God, perhaps? What are the important life events that have shaped you - opportunities for education and employment, marriage, loss, illness, retirement, bereavement?

Has your river been blocked, dammed up - your plans thwarted, your hopes and dreams frustrated?

What are the obstacles in your path?

Perhaps your waters have cut a new path around them.

Perhaps your river has gone underground. You have lost sight of your deepest desires.

Or maybe your river has dried up altogether in arid wasteland - your life seems meaningless, wasted.

Or your waters may be oozing out into bogland - stagnant and slimy, going nowhere. Perhaps you have reached lock gates and are imprisoned even now in the lock chamber, watching your water level slowly fall, surrounded by walls, dark and dank. Trapped. Terrified. Waiting.

Are you flowing under bridges - the low constricting tunnels of oppressive and exploitative relationships, or the high and gracious overarching of God's loving authority?

Take a moment now to look down into your waters. Are they crystal clear and transparent? Can you see right down to the newly washed pebbles on the river bed, your waters sparkling in the sunshine of God's love?

Are your waters opaque and glassy, reflecting back only your own image? Are you too introspective, self-absorbed? Or is your river brown and muddy, polluted by pride, greed, envy, lust, indifference? Is there debris floating on your waters - the debris of careless living perhaps, or sinful attachments, broken dreams?

Just as the landscape affects the course of your river, so too, the river of your life moulds and shapes the terrain through which it flows. I invite you now to consider what impact you are having, either good or bad, on your environment - on your families and those close to you, on your neighbourhood and your church. What impact does your life have on more global issues, such as social justice, war, the environment?

Perhaps you feel that your river is just wearing away imperceptibly at lumps of hard granite.

Perhaps you are carving out a deep and decisive valley in rich loamy earth. Or perhaps your river has widened and is meandering across a lush fertile coastal plain, sustaining life - trees, vegetation, fish, wildlife.

Do people bathe in your waters, sail their boats along your course, build houses on your banks, a tiny village, perhaps, with a church, or a humming metropolis?

Take time now to reflect on the progress of your river from its minute beginnings right down to the present day. What are the landmarks on its course? Where are you now? Where are you heading? What is your hoped for destination?

Miranda Woodrow

ST DYMPNA

With regard to the query about St Dymphna, the patron saint of the mentally ill. She was the daughter of an Irish prince who fled from the incestuous advances of her father to Gheel in Belgium, where he followed her and murdered her about 600AD. It was seen by the medieval mind as devil possession so she became the patron saint of the town and of the mentally ill.

The town has a tradition of caring for the mentally ill going back into the mists of time, but has records of care going back 600 years when the work was in the care of the church. Sufferers came to Gheel to pray at the shrine of St Dymphna where there was a small hostel where they could stay for 9 days. Some returned home but those who for various reasons did not, were taken care of by families of the district as a religious work of devotion to the saint.

While the setting up of the National Insurance Law in 1850 Gheel received special status and the whole district of Gheel became recognised as a mental hospital to include its system of foster family care, and under the control of and financed by the state.

They take patients from all the Flemish speaking part of Belgium (there is now another similar facility in the French speaking part.) There is a hospital which is used to assess patients on arrival and care for those who are not suitable for family care, mostly the elderly confused and those in family care who are temporarily not so well and need to be stabilised again.

The area is divided into districts with a full team of supporting family care staff. Great emphasis is placed on occupation, either by working in the home or business of the host family or in workshops spread around the area.

The hospital furnishes the patient's room and pays the family a sum that covers the cost and the amount of care needed. The patient also receives if they are not in paid work quite a generous allowance. (They need to be able to pay their way to activities organised by the hospital, ie a trip to the opera in Brussels or a holiday, and pay to join in the leisure activities of the families. Although some families may undertake this work for financial reasons most do it as part of the tradition and there is a waiting list of families wanting to do this work.

Emphasis is on support of the patients and the host families in the community. The information I was given when I was there some years ago was that they 130 beds in the hospital with 15 districts with almost 60 patients each. The whole supported by a staff of 200 and the care of almost 700 families and the acceptance of the mentally ill by 32,000 of the inhabitants of the area.

There are ordinary psychiatric hospitals in Belgium, but those who are cared for in Gheel tend to be both mentally ill and mentally handicapped, or who are older and who, for various reasons, are somewhat disabled and are in need of care and support and not suitable to live in ordinary situations. When I was there I was told that they were concerned about the rising costs. On the other hand, because of better treatments the numbers needing their special sort of care were declining. Acceptance and loving care, with a high degree of support and above all, the back up of the hospital immediately it is needed. It seems to me that the secret of the people of Gheel is acceptance and lack of fear of the illness. I am sure their success is due to the high level of support to both the sufferers and their cares, also swift intervention in a crisis, thus preventing difficulties in the community.

We need to find the mentally ill the right sort of care and a place in the community.

Nick & Gail Cotton

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Dear John

Thanks to help from a reader of the APCMH Newsletter, I have tacked down the Shrine of St Dymphna to :

Augustian Sisters,  
St George's Retreat,  
Burgess Hill  
Sussex,  
RH15 0SQ  
Telephone: 01444 235 874

Leaflets are available.

Best wishes  
Eric Mulvihill



## ***"HERE AND THERE"***

### **From the Guildford Branch**

We have run a very successful series of eight seminars called "God be in my Head ... and in my understanding" beginning in January '98. Looking at various aspects of mental health and the importance of friendship and various aspects of mental health and the importance of friendship and community support. Aim to de-mystify and de-stigmatise mental health. Those attending were mainly from the local churches. Average attendance was over 60 and 140 different people came to at least one of the evenings.

As a result there have been follow up courses at Cove/Farnborough and Woking. There is now a drop-in at Cove Methodist church called "2with a little help from my friends". In the past our local awareness-raising has led to the formation of another group in near-by Haslemere where there is now a project involving a regular weekly drop-in, a greenhouse project and outings.

This autumn in Guildford, we had "God be in my head ... and in my understanding" Part 2 on the theme "Spiritual Hospital" or "Hospitality and Spirituality". This covered spiritual diagnosis, healing within a Christian community (Pilsdon Community) and staying well in the community with spiritual support. Attendances were lower, averaging about 25, but the content and general atmosphere were excellent.

Tapes of all the talks from both courses have been prepared and are available at cost price. £1.50 per tape or £10 for all 8 tapes.

On World Mental Health Day 1999, we took part in a Multi Faith Celebration with representatives from 10 faith communities in Guildford. This was led by a Buddhist mental health worker, Joanna Al Zuhari, a member of our Guildford committee, with great sensitivity. Many people who have experienced the mental health system attended as well as mental health workers and members of the various faith communities. The vision and impetus for this event came from the grass roots of the community rather than from the leaders of the faith communities.

"Quiet Days" are very popular with our members. We have been to the Franciscan Friary at Chilworth, near Guildford for sharing thoughts and prayers and songs and a n "agape" meal. The building itself is very beautiful and special and the setting in the Surrey hills is peaceful. It is a time for sharing and reflection.

We have also had quiet days at St Francis Church near Loseley House and in their new chapel at Loseley, built by James Moore Molyneux, who kindly supports us.

Over the years we have arranged a number of other open services or times of worship. We have encouraged those who have had personal experience of mental or emotional difficulties to participate fully- for example in playing their own songs or reading their own poems and prayers.

The Rainbow Fellowship ran for seven years as a fortnightly Fellowship and Bible Study group at the local Mental Health Resource Centre. It has recently disbanded as more of its members felt confident to join in with their own churches.

Finally we do want to work in partnership with others where possible. We have recently been involved with the West Surrey Health Promotion in a conference on 3 November looking at ways of developing partnerships for assessing and meeting spiritual needs. A local church, St Saviour's, has also asked John to explore with them ways in which they can better respond to mental health needs and the first meeting took place this week.

***Clare Vallat***

### **From the Forest Hill Group**

The Group continues to carry on in the hall of Christ Church. It is situated in an area where there are many large Victorian houses which are suitable for use as hostels or are divided up into flats and bed sits. There are three hostels within a short walk from the centre, and several others not too far away. We get between 20 and 30 users each week. We find that the users appreciate somewhere warm and welcoming where they can enjoy each others company and that of the volunteers. We have some games billiard and table tennis tables.



From time to time we organise a special evening such as music, cookery or craft demonstration. Bingo is very popular and in the summer outings. This year we went down to the river to the Thames Barrier. Above all our volunteers provide someone to listen as our users as they try to cope with life's difficulties.

We have a team of dedicated volunteers who man the centre on a rota. It is good that we have enough to do this so that volunteers are not under too much pressure.

Lewisham Social Services produces an excellent Mental Health Directory in which we appear along with all the other Mental Health organisations in the Borough. Our chairman, Solomon Brown, is the ex deputy mayor of Lewisham. He is very actively involved in other organisations and gives us the benefit of his experience on the local council. Three of our members are on the Mental Health sub committee of the Community Health Council, each wearing the hat of a different organisation so that we are involved in the general mental health scene.

We are lucky in that we receive generous financial support from some of the local churches and the Rotary Club. A collection on Mental Health flag day and a day collecting at local super market covers our running expenses without having to go in for a lot of fundraising. There is some doubt over the future of the hall at Christ Church. We have been going for nearly 12 years and we have every hope that we shall continue somewhere for a long time to come.

*Nick and Gail Cotton*



## Christ, our Model of Maturity

It has been my privilege to be associated with APCMH from its early days, and have found myself in general agreement with the articles published in its periodic Newsletters.

Back in 1947 I commenced as student nurse, when the mentally ill were kept away from centres of population, all doors locked, and only basic custodial care given.

After qualifying as a RMN I spent 7 years at another large institution catering for juveniles with learning difficulties, when upon my return was given charge of most wards following major upgrading, then invited to be manager of a mixed Industrial-occupational unit employing about 200 for another 7 years. Finally, up to the time of required retirement at 55, was for the period of 12 years, manager of its day-care hospital, with up to 100 in attendance over a week. Since then, I was appointed minister of a free church, which grew three-four fold over my 8 1/2 years of ministry.

I say this humbly, giving God all the glory, to whom I am so grateful in giving me such opportunities in what might be described as a stressful and demanding profession, in which I'm sure I could not have survived without my Christian faith.

My main ministry now that I've "retired" (although I've never been so busy) is in helping needy people to enjoy a much improved quality of life along Christian lines, in which I feel to have been inspired to have several books published, and tapes made. These are now free, so as to be within the reach of the large number of lower-income-group friends who write to me ... quite a few from developing countries overseas, some of its leaders interpreting tapes and translating books.

It seems a long time since I took that preliminary course for intending applicants to the Anglican priesthood some 50 years ago, but feel that the Lord has given me strength to emulate Christ, who was described in Acts 10: 38 as "One who went about doing good".

I feel strongly that more churches should develop 'drop-in' centres where needy people may call in and find trained and 'emphatic' volunteers who are trained and willing to help them with their maladjustment problems, and I'm happy to have been used in this direction when the travelling distance has not been too far away.

Having read countless books, and listened to lectures by many so called 'mind experts', most of them based on a medical and secular philosophy of life, I long since came to the conclusion that no drug manufacturer would ever develop a pill with 'personality changing' qualities ... for only the Gospel is geared to the concept of change. Jesus alone being our 'Model of Maturity' whatever claims are made on the manufacturer's glossy literature.

Continued .....



Continued .....

Of course I am in favour of such medication as will lessen, and in some instances virtually eliminate the distress of hallucinosis, and those tranquillisers which enable distressed people to cope with the acute stage of initial crisis, so long as these don't become addictive.

But we are mistaken in thinking that the brain alone is the organ of the mind, or that all thought is predetermined by physiological or chemical changes. Scores have written to inform me how my books and tapes have helped them to find what someone called "the missing ingredient" .... namely a religious faith. In fact I have yet to meet a person with a history of what the layman calls "neurosis" or "maladjustment to life", who has made any real and permanent headway in the direction of improvement towards recovery, from a functional mental disorder without first making a firm Christian commitment. Genuine mental illness, on the other hand, when first line symptoms are apparent, insight greatly diminished, and though-disorder evident, as in severe schizophrenia, Alzheimer's disease etc., even they can respond to tender loving care being shown towards them, and a kindly Christian influence brought to bear. We should never "write off" any one of God's creatures, whatever their condition, or damaged background.

I have known occasions when rationality has returned, and who is to know how God may well restore to normality in the after life, those who have been seemingly imprisoned within the confines of mental illness?

It is when a person begins to realise that this life is but the preparation for a great eternal future, and we decide now where, and with whom that future will be spent ... and become concerned about the fact of eventual accountability towards God, that we are motivated to make an intelligent contribution towards our own improvement rather than simply give ourselves the 'illness excuse' and expect a professional person who is trained to only recognise presenting symptoms, and prescribe medication for its hopeful 'cure'.

I deplore the Church's rigid 'divisions', which in spite of some cosmetic gestures towards unity, continues to set up barriers, both to genuine seekers after truth, with their various worship styles best fitted to seasoned Christians; and worst still, their exclusiveness in debarring from ministerial participation those who fail to comply with their particular denomination rules and regulations.

Small wonder that we witness such a decline in this country's faith, and should not blame the TV along for the widespread abandonment of the one-time social habit of churchgoing; although we are right in preserving doctrinal purity, and protecting ourselves from fanatical excesses, which some may experience, but only offend the enquirer.

I received an aerogramme from a psychiatrist with whom I had worked for a time, but left the profession, saying that about 90% of his case-load were the result of social and marital maladjustment problems.

He had taken on the management of a small private general hospital back in his native India. "Not much neurosis about here," he wrote. "Those with problems usually go and talk to a priest!" We may not think much of the prevailing religion in his area, but the principle is right.

Personally, I have yet to meet someone who has a history of mental breakdown, who has not found the Lord to be "a very present help in trouble" (and I have a great number of 'ex-depressive friends). This all hinges on whether or not a needy person chooses to avail himself of help through the Church's ministry, together with the therapeutic support of this Christlike people one sometimes find there. Thank God, the man at the Pool of Bethesda responded positively to Jesus' question, "Will you be made whole?" ... even after suffering 38 years!

**Pastor Ken Bunting**

### **The Association for Pastoral Care in Mental Health**

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

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

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