

# NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2004

## ***This Month's FRONT PAGE CONTRIBUTION***

***MIND AND SPIRIT Essex Conference,  
Writtle College, Chelmsford 4 February 2004  
NIMHE-EASTERN in association with INTERACT***

John Mahoney, Director of NIMHE-Eastern, The Chairman of this event, must be very proud to represent a region of England, which appears to be flourishing in all areas of positive mental health practice. A mere glimpse at their "Eastforward" publication and gazing upon the projects which Interact has to offer, allows one to witness the progress being made in the field of mental health and spirituality and the growing awareness becoming available to the public.

Peter Gilbert, who is Project Lead on Spirituality and Mental Health for NIMHE in collaboration with The Mental Health Foundation, planted the seed, which promised to be an exciting and stimulating opportunity for growth and enlightenment for all. Balancing the elements of humour and pathos, Peter revealed to us a sense of "how it feels to be at the end of the 'precipice', when the 'rope' which one expects will always remain intact is severed, leaving one in a desolate and abandoned state." Whether he was referring to a genuine climbing experience or was speaking metaphorically seemed unimportant. In that moment, we were transported from a place of 'solitude' into one of relationship' – a common ground. Most listeners would have been able to relate to that admission of helplessness, which eventually leads us to the recognition of 'hope' residing in our willingness to want to turn back and to know our maker. Somehow, if no other words had been uttered throughout the day, the ability to relate to another's despair was sufficient to meditate upon and consider the reasons as to why in our society, any admission of 'need' is frowned upon in favour of 'individualism' and 'self-pity', raising the question of how we can avoid becoming a spiritually parched nation. Martin Aaron later reinforced this point by introducing the concept of 'those who are in need being willing to accept.'

There was a cross section of over 150 practitioners, carers, clergy and charitable organisations, participating in what felt like quite an intimate setting. This inclusivity reflected the diverse nature of mental health, here, being positively replicated on very neutral territory. We heard through testimonies how illness had touched the lives of professionals and non-professionals alike.

The mid-morning parallel sessions provided an invaluable opportunity for group interaction, covering Modern Healthcare and Spirituality, Race, Culture and Clinical Practice, and Mind, Body, Spirit and Younger People. I opted for the latter. Martin Aaron of The Jewish Association for The Mentally Ill - 'Jami' presented the Younger People's group. He gave a very personal account of his own journey along the road of mental health, which had been instrumental in him found 'Jami'. A lively debate ensued, and much concern was expressed about how in our society, children seem to be forced in premature adulthood, outwardly noticeable in the manner in which we allow them to dress, to conform, to what society deems acceptable so as to avoid the risk of children being ostracised or ridiculed by their peer groups. – I was left with the sad thought, that if we do not have the capacity to firmly discipline children in love into valuing their uniqueness and actively cultivate self-control in our own lives where the average family's household's debt amounts to £12,000, it is we who are responsible, by trying indirectly to avoid or deny our own emptiness and suffering. This outward appearance of maturity and conformity might be disguising a child's crippled soul and how much more must we be in spiritually deficit with God?

Continued .....



It was a privilege to have the chance to view the recent "Croydon Mind" film "Hard to Believe", which explores models of good practice in terms of how faith communities can develop a better understanding of mental health problems and thus support people in their community who may be experiencing such difficulties. This provided a panoramic, cross-sectional perspective for mental health practitioners, faith communities and voluntary sectors alike.

Wholesome food for wholesome practice! A hearty and wholesome lunch was provided, befitting for a day where the exploration of wholeness was of the essence.

The title ascribed to the afternoon session was - Faith Communities and Mental Health Services – a Partnership? Headed by Dr Katherine Aitchison – Clinical Senior Lecturer in Adult Psychiatry and Honorary Consultant Psychiatrist – South London and Maudsley NHS Trust. She was warmly welcomed and in a joking manner was eager to defend her own position as a psychiatrist, by attempting to challenge the notion of there 'not being room for two gods in psychiatric care' – referring to psychiatrists who assumed a god-like stance being at risk of invalidating or denying the importance of a patient's spiritual requirements. The admission of her own Faith, combined with her graceful approach and erudite presentation was encouraging as was hearing of her recent project "Change 4 Good" which aims to include prayer as an integral part of psychiatric practice. She expressed her frustrations at not having the necessary time to give to patients to allow for the 'whole-person' approach.

As the final workshops were announced there was a mass exodus and most headed for 'The Church' session. We were allotted 45 minutes to produce a manifesto for 'forward direction in spirituality related mental health!' Some urgent brainstorming ensued and some quite fantastical ideas were fired around and jotted down. Our leader summed up our 'resolution' in five syllables a 'Tri-directional' approach was discovered to be necessary which then became 'Quadirectional', when someone realised something had been omitted. I didn't really get the gist. Then someone at the back asserted "I wonder what does God think about all this – shouldn't we be praying first?" and there was an all round sigh of relief.

Thanks to all the organisers who made it such an enjoyable day!

*Suzanne Heneghan, APCMH Trustee*

*A list of Publications and Films relevant to this article can be found on page 7*

## **20 WAYS TO DEVELOP SELF-ESTEEM by Dr Alanzo Smith**

1. Stop putting yourself down.
2. Work at changing yourself – not others
3. List your good and bad points – accentuate the good and throw out the bad.
4. Don't dwell on the past – press towards the make for the prize of the high Calling of God in Christ Jesus.
5. Don't envy others.
6. Let go of grudges.
7. Don't take things personally.
8. Stop feeling sorry for yourself – learn from your mistakes and move on.
9. Don't try to please everyone.
10. Always stay in control.
11. Don't take the blame for other people's problems.
12. Avoid people and situations that will put you down.
13. Don't accept abuse.
14. Look your best. When you look good you feel good.
15. Expect to have a good day.
16. Have a plan for your life (daily, weekly, monthly, yearly).
17. Take on a responsibility.
18. Look for new possibilities.
19. Treat yourself special.
20. Let God be a part of your life.



This conference was about Spirituality in Mental Health, more than 100 people of various faiths and denominations attended. The conference was excellent in bringing people together to get other people's point of view. It had good points and bad points. It is a long time to sit in the morning sessions being lectured at. Communication has to be two-way. There has got to be adequate question and answer time. It's no use waiting until the workshop sessions begin, because by then the whole point will have lost its impetus. Not only that, the person who is presenting the paper won't be there to answer the questions.

I make no excuses in that this is a subjective report. So I better let you know who I am. I am a retired Chartered Accountant with a degree in Education. I suffered from Mental Illness and got all kinds of labels from the Medical Profession such as Anxiety, Depression and Manic Depression. It started when I was about 30 and now I'm 66. I spent about two years of my life on the East Willows Ward of Cherry Knowle Mental Hospital. The two years was interspaced throughout the years with a week here and a month there. My how the time flies! I was a "Births, Marriages and Deaths Christian, meaning that these were the occasions which I attended a church. Personally, I wouldn't be seen dead in a church.

You've got to have that introduction to know a bit of my background. Another accountant friend said "Craggsy, it's Accountancy that is knacker you." "The pressure is causing all of your anxiety and stress. I've retired from Industry and I lecture in Accountancy and it is a doddle compared with the pressures of Industry." So I took a degree in Education and got a job as a lecturer in Bournemouth.

I've written this to let you know where my life was in '984. This is where I can talk about the conference that was going to be about Spirituality in Mental Health. I found that people didn't talk much about the "Spirit". There was a lot of talk about religion and sunsets and organisation. I think that people seemed to be afraid to talk about how "The Spirit" affected them.

The difficulty that I have in writing this is that I believe that I have changed. I believe that "The Spirit" has brought about this change. In my case, I believe that it is the Spirit of Jesus Christ. I believe that the Holy Spirit with whom I have a personal relationship brings about the change. However, I cannot see myself. It is only other people who have known me for many years who can testify to my change. Otherwise, I would be blowing my own trumpet. The people who found it most difficult to understand were the people who loved me and that means my close family.

You see, my Dad thought that by putting me in for Accountancy that he had given me a licence to print money. I thought that I was going to be a captain of industry, but my ships were the Titanic and the Marie Rose. I was born with a silver spoon in my mouth, but I lost everything. I lost my home, my family, my job, and my money through mental illness. Really, this was the best thing that ever happened to me. My rich friends just disappeared and I was helped by poor people who had something that I didn't have, "The Holy Spirit."

For me the best session was a workshop, which nearly ended in chaos. People tried to define Spirituality. Personally, I don't think that Spirituality can be defined. I am a witness, but I can't define the Spirit who changed me. I said that in my faith as in the Jewish and Muslim faith, "In the beginning there was God". A Jewish lady said, "We call God "Yahweh", which is the Spirit of Breath of God. I agree with this lady entirely, because when I lectured in Bournemouth I became so depressed that I found a huge motor bridge running over a park, I got over the balustrade and thought, "If I jump there will be no more depression." Suddenly, a wind blew up, which put the wind up me! I became so frightened that I got onto the right side of the bridge and started to cry. I said, "God have mercy on me." "God save me." When I said this, out of the blue a man came walking towards me. He said, "Did I see you on the other side of the balustrade?" I sobbed, "Yes". "And what do you think you were going to do?" "I was going to jump off." "But why?" "Oh man, I've lost everything, wife, family, home, money, self-esteem." "Life just isn't worth living." He said, "I'm an off-duty policeman." "I was going in the other direction and my wife said, 'If you don't see to that man quickly, he's going to jump off that bridge'." "Listen, I'll take you to a place where you can receive help.

This policeman took me to St Anne's Hospital at Canford Cliffs in Bournemouth. From then on I was healed a bit at a time. I became a Christian and when I read the Scriptures I found written "He who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved", and I am. My life is absolutely full from waking to going to bed. I used to measure everything in assets and liabilities. I was more interested in what kind of a house or car or education people had. I am like Scrooge; I've had a second chance in that all the money in the world wouldn't buy the smile on my granddaughter's face. I, at my age, have started in business as a Freelance Writer. I write about Mental Health Stigma for the two Health Trusts in Sunderland. I was until recently, Financial Director with the UK Federation of Smaller Mental Health Agencies. This is an organisation with 250 Self-Help Groups as Members. I am now tired of Accountancy and want to concentrate on communication.

I believe in God and I believe that you should treat other people as you would like to be treated. I believe that this conference was excellent in that it brought together people who really have the same object written in their hearts. I think that we have to forget our petty differences and concentrate on the main objects. As far as I could tell from speaking to people who believe and those who don't believe, that is LOVE. FOR IT IS WRITTEN God is Love.

**BILL CRAGGS FCA B.Ed**



**"EMERGING – A PILSDON DIARY" by NIGEL CAPON**

I was somewhat taken by a very pleasant surprise when my book publisher, Jim Cotter, informed me that a review of my book appeared in the APCMH Newsletter. Why should this be so? - You may well ask. Well, back in the 1980s when I was a therapist, working in a psychiatric hospital, I met Dennis Murray, the administrator of APCMH, and with the encouragement of the hospital chaplain, the Rev Vernon Muller, I became a member. So, having heard through Jim, that Pam had written a review, I had no hesitation at all in making contact with her. Pam asked me if I would consider writing about my life since moving to Broadwindsor, and how I have found things since the end of the diaries, which form the main part of my book, "Emerging".

I moved to Broadwindsor, a village near the Pilsdon Community, in April 1997. I must admit, that that move was a difficult one for me. I had a great dependence upon Pilsdon for living – clothing, a room to sleep, food, washing etc and being in the company of people, and living a daily routine, and living in a place that felt safe for me to be. All of a sudden, all those things went out of the window; and not only all that, but this was going to be the very first time that I was going to live on my own.

Why did I make this move? Why didn't I stay at Pilsdon? Because I could have done if I wished. Well, I believe that the therapist part of me took a hand in making that decision. I felt that I needed to make some sort of life of my own, and to be responsible for myself and the way I lived. I felt at the time that I needed some space, away from the community life, in order to establish some confidence within the inner core of my being. I knew that I could rely upon my musical skills, and I will say here right now, that I am a very lucky person to have that skill. I could take some constructive part in church worship – which I did, and became a "rambling organist" and played at various different local churches. I felt it important to relate to all the churchwardens and priests, of the illness and some of the experiences I went through. Hence, I gradually built up a network of supportive people. I also did the same with the people who owned the local shop, post office and the pub. I did this in case anything should happen to me. Don't forget, that I was not at all well – I was on 22 tablets a day – I suffered panic attacks and anxiety, hallucinations and chronic depression. It was not until September 2001 that I decided to try to come off all medication. And do not forget as well, that I had a very supportive consultant psychiatrist, community psychiatric nurse and GP. Also the place where I moved to was sheltered accommodation and had a warden who lived in. I could not have made this move without knowing that was able to "tap in" to 24hr support. It took a very long time indeed for any sort of confidence and self-esteem to build up within myself. I could not live here unless I had the support of local people, some of whom have become very dear friends.

I think I will leave it there for now and write again later on with more news of my life experiences here in Broadwindsor. Just to say that, the countryside in West Dorset, the landscape and seascape is an absolute wonder. To "BE" part of this creation is a source of healing, if one is able to open up oneself to it."

**Nigel Capon**

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**GOD'S WINNING WAY**

Not one of us is perfect  
Not one of us is pure  
But only Christ who gave His life  
can open up that door

The door which lets the light shine through  
with heavenly understanding  
on all our earthly waywardness  
and messes that we land in.

He gently disentangles  
all the things important here  
from the things which really matter  
in His Kingdom O so dear

His power takes hold  
transforming all with loving steady gaze  
His saving grace and blessed peace  
gives life to all our days.

**June Root**



**From Gregory Brian Bridge**

## **DOTEKY (CONTACTS) –**

### **A Mental Health users' group in Liberec, CZECH REPUBLIC**

Ten years ago I started what became a regular series of visits to Liberec (pronounced "liberets") My first contacts there were a family therapist and a remarkable doctor who had built up a team practising medicine in a holistic way (conventional medicine, family therapy, psychotherapy, acupuncture, relaxation and meditation sessions, art therapy, all in a welcoming and caring environment on the edge of the town.) I was invited to give some talks and through this I got to know some of the users of mental health services.

Liberec is a strange town in some ways. Until the end of the Second World War it was Reichenberg, a predominantly German speaking industrial town. After the war, practically all the German speaking population was expelled or fled. People came in from all over Czechoslovakia and beyond to take over houses and jobs. Building a new community on such foundations is not easy.

The Czech Republic, especially Bohemia in which Liberec is situated, has been a largely secular society for generations, from well before the Communist era. But among those who do go to church, Roman Catholics are the majority, followed a long way behind by the Czech Brethren (somewhat akin to the United Reformed Church in this country) and the Czechoslovak Hussite Church (unique, but with some features in common with liberal Anglicans). After that come the Orthodox and the Unity of Brethren. All of these traditions are represented in Liberec.

It was interesting to me that in such a secular country the users whom I met had such interest in religion. Perhaps it was because the people who chose to meet me were self-selecting, but I think it was also because of the acceptance that mental health service users have found in one of the Liberec churches. The Czechoslovak Hussite church in Liberec, under a succession of pastors, has opened its doors and has given respect as well as help to these people, who over time came to form a group.

The group that now calls itself Doteky (Contacts) includes members of all denominations and none. It has affiliated itself to the relatively new but growing federation of user groups in the Czech Republic, "Kolumbus." Its aims are modest and therefore achievable. I count a number of its members among my good friends and I commend to readers the letter from Jiri Sotona, printed here, which gives more information of the group.

#### **Dear Mr Brian Bridge**

*Let us introduce our user group "DOTEKY" in Liberec. All of us are users of mental health services. Lot of us have the large experiences with the big mental hospitals. Heads of our group are no professionals.*

*We organise these activities (since 1996)*

- 1. Visiting our friends in a big mental hospital that is 50 kilometres far from our town.*
- 2. Trips around our town. There is very nice nature, so that we need not travel to the nature a very long distance.*
- 3. Talks on some Christian theses, or themes from our daily life.*

*The user group in Liberec has seven members. Our costs are low. Though this fact we supplicate a foundation in your country for some little money. That is especially for points no.1 and no. 2. of our activities.*

*We decided not to be a juridical person, but the Czech national user organisation "KOLUMBUS" is able to accept the financial gift of a foundation to account and to give it to us.*

Contact person (member of "DOTEKY"): Jiri Sotona,  
Jachymovska 253,  
460 10 Liberec 10, Czech Rep.

Data of our friend organisation KOLUMBUS o.s. with juridical subjectivity:

Address: KOLUMBUS o.s.

Na hradku 257 530 02

Pardubice, Czech Rep.

Thank you very much  
**Jiri Sotona**



## **THE LAW OF THE SEED**

Take a look at an apple tree. There might be five hundred apples on the tree, but each apple has just ten seeds. That's a lot of seeds! We might ask, "Why would you need so many seeds to grow just a few more apple trees?" Nature has something to teach us here. It's telling us: "Not all seeds grow. In life, most seeds never grow. So if you really want to make something happen, you had better try more than once."

This might mean:

- You'll attend twenty interviews to get on job.
- You'll interview forty people to find one good employee.
- You'll talk to fifty people to sell one house, one car, one vacuum cleaner one insurance policy, or a business idea.
- And you might meet a hundred acquaintances to find one special friend.

When we understand the "Law of the Seed", we don't get so disappointed.  
We stop feeling like victims.  
We learn how to deal with things that happen to us.

Laws of nature are not things to take personally. We just need to understand them – and work with them.  
*IN A NUTSHELL:* Successful people fail more often. But they plant more seeds.

When things are beyond your control, here are some things that you must NOT DO to avoid misery in your life:

- You must not decide how you think the world SHOULD be.
- You must not make rules for how everyone SHOULD behave.
- Then, when the world doesn't obey your rules, you get angry!
- That's what miserable people do!

On the other hand, let's say you expect that:

- Friends SHOULD return favours.
- People SHOULD appreciate you.
- Planes SHOULD arrive on time.
- Everyone SHOULD be honest.
- Your husband or your best friend SHOULD remember your birthday.

These expectations may sound reasonable. But often, these things won't happen! So you end up frustrated and disappointed.

There's a better strategy. Demand less, and instead, have preferences!

For things that are beyond your control, tell yourself:

***I WOULD PREFER "A" BUT IF "B" HAPPENS, IT'S OK TOO!***

This is really a change in mindset. It is a shift in attitude, and it gives you more peace of mind...

You prefer that people are polite...but when they are rude, it doesn't ruin your day.

You prefer sunshine...but if it rains, it is ok too!

To become happier, we either need to:

- a) Change the world, or
- b) Change our thinking.

It is easier to change our Thinking!

It is not the problem that is the issue, but rather it is your attitude attending to the problem that is the problem.

It's not what happens to you that determines your happiness –

***IT'S HOW YOU THINK ABOUT WHAT HAPPENS TO YOU!***

***Submitted by MIKE BUSH***

## SPRING IN THE ROUND/ MADRIGAL

Spring Sprung!  
One life done.  
Another comes into being.

Blue sky.  
Life passed by  
One eye always seeing  
New life.

Underground.  
Roots so strong.  
Hear the sound?  
Spring springing.  
Spring sprung.

Julia Gibbs

### A letter to the Editor

Flat No. 1

72 Promenade  
SOUTHPORT  
PRD 0JJ

Dear Sir/Madam

I am always very glad to receive your Newsletter and would like to ask a question. Are there groups in the North West where the vital issues of religious faith and mental health interconnections are being addressed, as they seem to be in the South of England?

I believe very much in the relationship, for example, between mysticism and certain forms of manic behaviour and would welcome the opportunity to discuss this and any other subject with like-minded people on a regular basis.

So please make my address known as best you can in a forthcoming edition. My email address is: [arkonaught7@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:arkonaught7@yahoo.co.uk) OR [arkonaught8@hotmail.com](mailto:arkonaught8@hotmail.com) otherwise feel free to publish my postal address.

Thank you for your kind addressing of my issues and attention

Yours faithfully

Jason Redvers Latham (Aged 44)

### A list of Publications relevant to this months Front Page Contribution

From: National Institute for Mental health in England (DH) and the Mental Health Foundation:

**'Inspiring Hope'** a booklet 'recognising the importance of spirituality in mental health'

From: Central Team, NIMHE Blenheim House West, One Duncombe Street, Leeds LS1 4PL

Free Publications: **'Annual Report NIMHE and Strategic Plan'**

NIMHE [www.nimhe.org.uk](http://www.nimhe.org.uk) Tel: 01132 545000

NIMHE Eastern [John.mahoney@doh.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:John.mahoney@doh.gsi.gov.uk) Tel: 01206 287 583

From: [richard@mindincroydon.org.uk](mailto:richard@mindincroydon.org.uk) Tel: 020 8668 2210 **'Hard To Believe'**, Film £35.00

From: Health Education Authority, Travelyan House, Great Peter Street London SW1P 2HW Free:

**'Promoting Mental Health'** The role of Christian and Jewish Faith Communities

From: INTERACT (head Office) Moulsham Way, Parkway, Chelmsford, Essex CM2 7PX  
[www.interact.org.uk](http://www.interact.org.uk) email: [mail@interact.org.uk](mailto:mail@interact.org.uk)

**'Bridges For Churches'** a range of training and strategy seminars aimed at equipping churches for the challenges of today's society



Association For Pastoral Care In Mental Health A G M

*Reaching The Rainbow  
..... through The Pain*

Revd. Jenny Paterson & Young Quaker Friends

***"CREATIVE MENTAL HEALTH  
& YOUNGER PEOPLE"***

**Saturday 22 May 2004**

**St Pauls Church Centre, 3 Rossmore Road NW1  
Marylebone Station**

***10.00 am till 4.00 pm***

To book a place, email: [johnrawson@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:johnrawson@blueyonder.co.uk)  
or call APCMH message taking service 01483 538936

***Tickets £10.00 / £5.00 Concessions***

To: Pam Freeman 16 Beechwood Court, West Street Lane, Carshalton SM5 2PZ

Please send me ..... ticket(s) for 22 May 2004 APCMH A G M

I enclose a cheque for £ .....

(payable to 'APCMH' together with a stamped address envelope)

Name: ..... Association (if applicable) .....

Address .....

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**THE ASSOCIATION FOR PASTORAL CARE IN MENTAL HEALTH**

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

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