

NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2004

"SOWING SEEDS" This months Front Page Contribution

"What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe – as the Lord has assigned to each his task. I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow" 1 Cor.3: 5,6

In this newsletter, Brother Adrian Tate, a former administrator of APCMH, writes about the success of a project called "Beside" with which he is now involved. He raises the issue as to what should be the balance between "hands on work" and what he calls "church politics" or, in other words, raising awareness of a Christlike response to those suffering from severe mental illness.

We all have different gifts; "if it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage" (Romans 12:7,8). The national committee has spent some time in recent years in discussing the very issue raised by Brother Adrian. We came to the conclusion that the best use of our combined experience, and of our limited resources, is for us to raise awareness and to try to promote the value of "being alongside". We saw our role as that of "encouragers". It would take a very different organisation, and substantially greater resources, to create and run projects on a national scale. But we recognise the importance of "hands on" work. That is what we want to encourage others to do and is, in fact, the role carried out by our branches and affiliated groups, albeit on a fairly small scale in the national context.

Our hope and prayer is that we may be able to sow a few seeds; that others will water and nurture those seeds and that God may make them grow. So we ourselves are very encouraged when we hear of successes such as "Beside". There are a number of other successful projects that have found some inspiration through APCMH. The Growing Together Project in South East Essex is a recent example of a former APCMH committee member promoting a local project that has proved so successful. And Hastings APCMH and Croydon APCMH are examples of former branches that have outgrown APCMH and become separate charities. In all of this we rejoice and give thanks to God.

There are other recent examples of how very small seeds sown by APCMH have developed through the work of others and the grace of God.

- The vision of our former chairman, Jeremy Boutwood, of a nationwide network of organisations concerned with spirituality, religion and mental health has, through the hard work of Mentality and JAMI (the Jewish Association for the Mentally Ill), grown into a regular forum attended by many people from all over the country
- Last year's sponsorship of APCMH by the Young Friends has led to the planning by the Quaker Training Centre of a week-end seminar on mental health for Quaker leaders and elders throughout the country
- Our attempt to interest university pastoral carers in mental health has led to the University Chaplains in London focussing on mental health at their next gathering in November.

Seeds are sown; others water; God makes things grow. We are not always aware of the fruits.

But our aim is not just to encourage projects to develop and grow. We also want to encourage individuals to appreciate the value of "being alongside" each other in our distress. Anselm Lionel-Rajah illustrates this point in his encouraging letter also published in this newsletter.

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Maybe, as I think Brother Adrian is suggesting, APCMH has made little impact on the Church. But I do believe that the seeds that we have sown, and continue to sow, have made a difference, however small.

I would like to end by quoting the words of Jean Vanier in his introduction to his book, *The Broken Body*:

"These pages are to tell you, my brother, my sister, not to run away from people who are in pain or are broken, but to walk towards them, to touch them. Then you will find rising up within you the well of love, springing from resurrection".

John Vallat

SUNLIGHT AND SHADOW

I had not been abroad for over 25 years when I went to Italy recently. Beforehand I felt nervous, as I was to join a group of people I did not know for a sketching holiday on the Adriatic coast, on the site of an old Camaldolese monastery a few miles south of Ancona. But all went well. It was a cloudy day when I set off, and it was wonderful to rise in the plane above the clouds and into the sunshine. The sun is always there, I thought, though it is hidden when the weather is gloomy. This is so obvious that it hardly seems worth saying, but this experience has reinforced my belief that God is always there, above the clouds of our difficulties and disasters.

Behind the hotel where we stayed, which was the side of a mountain, were the ruins of the monks' cells. The weather was variable, though we did have some sunshine. Sometimes a thick mist hid everything from view, and sometimes the wind roared. Since I have come back I have often thought of the monks living their simple, austere life in that beautiful place, so much exposed to the elements.

The natural world, which is both beautiful and harsh, can teach us so much if we will let it. It is hard to understand why earthquakes and hurricanes are allowed to cause devastation. They remind us that there is a power greater than our modern cleverness. I love Handel's music and his respect for the Bible. His setting of Psalm 93 verse 5 is impressive: "The waves of the sea are mighty and rage horribly, but yet the Lord who dwells on high is mightier". The music is tempestuous and overpowering, but absolute confidence in God's almighty power in the midst of the turmoil is splendidly conveyed.

Having said all this, I now feel anxious about a leak from the roof that is appearing in my sitting room. Brown marks streak across the ceiling, and my estate office has been slow to take action. I try to remember that a loving providence is behind it all.

Mary Rowe

*I wish for a world where everything is clear
And my mind can be free from the hate and the fear
I wish for a place where my soul feels at home
And my feet are well grounded and no longer need to roam
I wish for real peace from the moment I wake
Where I am free from the nightmares that make my world shake
I wish for a life that is wide and fulfilled*

*Where my emotions are sable, and my thoughts are not spilled
I wish for a future so I will need to make a start
With patience and hope and a real strength in my heart
I will hold my head high and believe that I can
Be happy and free from all that I am*

From "Caroline's Poems"

A letter from Anselm Lionel-Rajah – Community Worker

Hi there. My name is Anselm Lionel-Rajah. I'm 32 years old and I'm a Community Worker for Macaw, the Mental After Care Association. However, there is a story as to how I came into this role and work.

Basically, I had a nervous breakdown ten years ago. I was taken to Springfield Hospital and my life radically changed from there. I was training to be a journalist but I ended up with a diagnosis of anxiety instead!

The one thing that really helped me through was my faith. I was a Catholic at the time. I'm Born Again now, and my prayer life to Jesus really sustains me in my personal life and in my work.

When I came out of hospital as an outpatient I really wanted to give something back to the people who cared for me. It was kind of ironic because after being on Droperidol and Sulpiride, it really sent me to sleep. So every time I wanted to do stuff I always felt sleepy. I guess I had to obey my conscience and rest up until the medication left my system. It has now, but it has left its scars.

I eventually was discharged in 1996/7. One major help was knowing that there was an organisation like the APCMH that was bridging the gap between pastoral care and working with people with a mental illness to simply support people. May the Lord keep blessing its work.

I always had a great deal of respect for the people who were around and who were involved with its work from across all expression of Christianity.

It's very easy to say to people with mental health problems reading this newsletter that life will get better. It takes a while. How much do you want to live, I mean really *live*. I know my life testifies to a God, a father, who loves me and to the fact that if it was not for Jesus I might not have recovered. I never actually received help from the APCMH but your members certainly helped me to get right with the Lord and indeed, to be clear about my life, hopes and goals at the time, for which I am, and always will be grateful. I have a great deal of respect for what you do.

I have been working in mental health now for about six years! It's the longest job I've ever had. Every day is an education and a chance to remember who, how and why I do this. Only today I had a leaflet from the Samaritans about a young student who took her own life after she graduated. It is such a tragedy, one person lost in this life to this illness for no apparent reason, is one too many.

I can only keep encouraging the people I work alongside not to give up, to get involved in the issues, and get your opinions heard. If I can do it, so can you! You might not believe that now, but you will. I'm not a professional service user.

So, keep going and don't give up the fight. You have so much to contribute to this world, and if people don't want to know, well, that's their problem. Just know that you are unique and your opinion matters, if not to the professionals, it matters to God, who loves you.

Thanks APCMH for being there. You don't know just what a blessing you are to people.

Lots of love in the Lord Jesus.

Anselm.

(MACAW is leading national mental health charity. We work with a range of partner organisations to provide a wide range of mental health services across the country.)

..... AND THEN I FOUND THE LORD.

She suffers depression I hear people say,
She's moody, she's tearful – stay out of her way.

Strange illness, depression, you don't know it's there,
Creeps up on you slowly, then gives you a scare!
Your symptoms don't notice, folks can't see your plight
It's all in your mind, an ashamed silent fright!

You've good days and bad days, and no days at all!
Some days it's so bad, you just stare at the wall.
You lose lots of friends – they don't understand,
They no longer have time to lend you a hand.

Try this medication, my doctor would say.
Hope this one will work and lengthen my day.

So what caused my problem? I think I can see.
Divorce, a move, bereavement. I went through all three!
All at the same time, they hit me real bad!
The whole of my life became empty and sad!

Then a wonderful lady took me from my stuff.
She introduced me to someone who changed my whole life.
I enrolled on an Alpha Course. I'd always believed.
For the first time in ages my symptoms relieved.

As each week went by and I made lots of mates,
My faith grew much stronger. The Lord won my votes.
I knew I felt different. I wanted to see..
How the Lord and Holy Spirit could come and help me.

By the end of the course, I wasn't surprised.
Something inside me said, "pleased be baptised."
Something wonderful happened on that special day!
The gift of the Holy Spirit came to me to stay.

I feel so much better, I don't feel so down.
Whenever I'm miserable, or wearing a frown.
I pray to the Lord, He helps me to pull through.
I know He is with me, to help guide what I do.

I know my depression will still come and go.
I'll have good days and bad days, but now this I know...
The Lord is with me. I just call on His name.
From now on, depression will not be the same.

Lynda West

Sent in by Lidia Chalk (CPN), this poem is by one of Lidia's ex patients. Her poem was inspired by listening to Georgie Wakefield at a Mental Health Awareness meeting

Lynda is at the moment applying for a job as a Carers' Support Worker.

***"Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take,
But by the moments that take your breath away."***

You are special and unique.

You meant the world to someone.

At least 15 people in this world love you in some way.

Someone that you don't even know exists loves you.

A smile from you can bring happiness to anyone, even if they don't like you.

Every night, SOMEONE thinks about you before they go to sleep.

If not for you, someone may not be living.

When you think you have no chance of getting what you want, you probably won't get it, but if you trust God to do what's best, and wait on His time, sooner or later, you will get it, or something better.

When you make the biggest mistake ever, something good can still come from it.

When you think the world has turned its back on you, take a look: you most like turned your back on the world.

Always remember the compliments you have received. Forget about the rude remarks.

Always tell someone how you feel about them; you will feel much better when they know and you'll both be happy.

If you have a great friend, take the time to let them know that they are great.

Contributed by Suzanne Heneghan

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**APCMH AGM 2004 - Reaching the Rainbow Through the Pain**

36 people who attended during the day were very lucky to have the experiences of the Rev Jenny Peterson a chaplain at the Queen Mary University of London and Amanda Headley-White, a young Quaker. Both had had mental health problems and were very frank about how the problems affected them as young students. Jenny found that coming to terms with her identity helped her through and now she sets up a very caring therapeutic environment at St Benet's college in London University, where students feel safe, explore their emotions – play board games and get problems out in the open. Amanda found that art helped her and examples of her work were on display.

***Points to help people to cope with life***

Have friends you can rely on and confide in.

Be your own person

Be happy with your body image

Have "chill out time"

Don't bottle up worries

Get them off your chest

Be an ear for others

Don't panic.

Spend time in a quiet environment,

With light, space, order, plants.

Don't forget how to communicate.

***The Rev Jenny Peterson***



## *Some reflections on the development of APCMH and associated ventures*

This year's AGM with its exploration of Mental Health and young people raised for me several issues that have been with me since I first became involved with APCMI (now APCMH) in the early days of its existence.

The overriding one is:

What should be the balance between "hands on work" and "church politics"

i.e. raising awareness of a Christlike response to those suffering from severe Mental illness?

Clearly our terminology has moved on in the nearly twenty years since APCMI was founded. Political correctness can distort ideas of equality with sameness. True one needs to avoid stigma but yet acknowledge and indeed, rejoice in our differences.

Most people I know have, or have had, problems with their Mental Health. The degree of the consequences has usually depended on the support from the local 'community'. Such was highlighted at the AGM by Jenny Peterson, a university chaplain.

However, some – maybe from genetic sources – are particularly burdened with struggling most of their lives with poor Mental Health. It was for such that APCMI was founded, and in particular, to address the perceived indifference of the Church.

As most readers will be aware the practical 'hands on' response was by providing ONE to ONE befriending, using the human resources of local congregations. Within five years over ten branches were running 'training sessions' followed by some of the participants getting involved befriending individuals.

The initial burst seemed encouraging. But if we are honest such were but drops in an ocean of need. The reliance often solely on volunteers proved in the long term a handicap with most branches in effect not growing.

One exception was the venture in East London - "BESIDE" - in Tower Hamlets.

Funding and the consequent ability to employ staff has been key. Looking at the recent accounts of APCMH (for 2003) the total annual expenditure, including branches, is under a quarter of that for BESIDE. The most active branch (in spending money) about one sixth!

Comparisons as to output are not therefore valid. Indeed getting funding from statutory sources will differ according to the disadvantaged factor of the locality. Tower Hamlets is amongst the top in the country.

But the journey of BESIDE to its relative prosperity has not been smooth. For the first five years local authority funding was about 2.5K pa, equivalent to supporting a four-hour week employee. Indeed in its first ten years there have been three separate times when BESIDE was on the very of closure.

Now with guaranteed funding for three years periods from Tower Hamlets, the Community Funds and two charitable trusts BESIDE has six staff all knowing they have at least two years of employment.

Such has enabled the provision of a wide range of activities thus promoting good Mental Health in the community of members, some of who are taking on the role of volunteers in assisting the staff in facilitating the groups. Volunteers from the wider community, including students from local education facilities, continue to assist both in ONE to ONE and hospital visiting.

Success in the original aim of assisting "clients" to move on from the dependency of One to One appears reflected in the low demand for such support.



The Church element in BESIDE appears now limited to the use of Church premises. Such seems an inevitable consequence of complimenting statutory services.

But what of APCMI(H)'s continued involvement with the Church since one of its members raised the issue at the C of E's synod leading to a debate in 1991?

Have we seen any significant change in attitudes? Has the Church set aside resources other than minor grants from its Urban Fund?

One encouraging event has been the series of conferences at the Maudsley, bringing together the medical and religious professionals. The parallel Bishop John Robinson Fellowship likewise has complemented the aims of APCMH.

For me BESIDE highlights the challenge in witnessing to my faith, while attempting to provide support to those in need outside the Church. "When you visit the prisoners, feed the hungry...you do so to me (Jesus)

*A rough path is sometimes worth the treading if, in so doing, we can tread down the brambles in the path of another. Anon.*

*Adrian Tate, Administrator APCMI 1990-92*

## THE ASSOCIATION FOR PASTORAL CARE IN MENTAL HEALTH

### WHO ARE APCMH ?

**APCMH** is a Christian-based voluntary charitable association that recognises the spiritual nature of a person as being a vital component in the relief of mental health distress. Our aim is to enhance the quality of life, self-respect and spiritual growth of those affected by mental or emotional difficulties. We have a network of supporters throughout the UK and we welcome and encourage people whatever their own faith or beliefs.

Our aims are achieved:

- (a) Through the activities of local branches (drop-in facilities and befriending schemes)
- (b) By encouraging others to provide similar local initiatives and pastoral care
- (c) Through our website and the publication of a national newsletter.

### CALL FOR AN INFO PACK using

The APCMH CONTACT NUMBER: 01483 538936

Or : Our WEBSITE: [www.pastoral.org.uk](http://www.pastoral.org.uk) Lionel Perkin (Webmaster)

Or : Our NEWSLETTER. Editor John Rawson  
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Contributions for the newsletter should be sent to the editor. Send us your poems, articles, what's happening in your own region? stories relating to pastoral care in mental health, what has helped you in your own personal journey to mental health? how your faith and or beliefs relate to your mental health well-being. We also welcome contributions from mental health professionals.

*Please pray for our work and for those whom you know who are in distress. Thank you.*



# Mind in Croydon

is launching

## hard to believe

a film about mental health and spirituality

at Screen NFT2 : National Film Theatre,  
Southbank, London SE1 8XT

on Wednesday 15th December 11.0am – 1.0pm

### Guest Speakers :

Dr. Andrew Powell

Founder Chair of the Royal college of Psychiatrists' Spirituality Special Interest Group

Prof. Peter Gilbert

Project Lead On Spirituality and Mental Health, NIMHE

Richard Brook

Chief Executive, Mind

Admission is by ticket only. You are invited to apply for tickets to :

Mind in Croydon, 26 Pampisford Road, Purley, Surrey CR8 2NE

☎ 020 8668 2210 [admin@mindincroydon.org.uk](mailto:admin@mindincroydon.org.uk)

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

*Invites YOU to drop in for Tea and a Chat*

*on either of the following MONDAY afternoons between 2 pm & 5pm*

*15th November or 20th December*

*and on Friday 31st December we are having a Party*

*Venue: St Paul's Church Centre, Rossmore Road NW1*

*5 minutes walk from Marylebone Station*

*Buses 139 & 189 stop outside*

☎ *Pam Freeman 020 8647 3678 for more information*

### 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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