

Being Alongside Spring Issue 2016

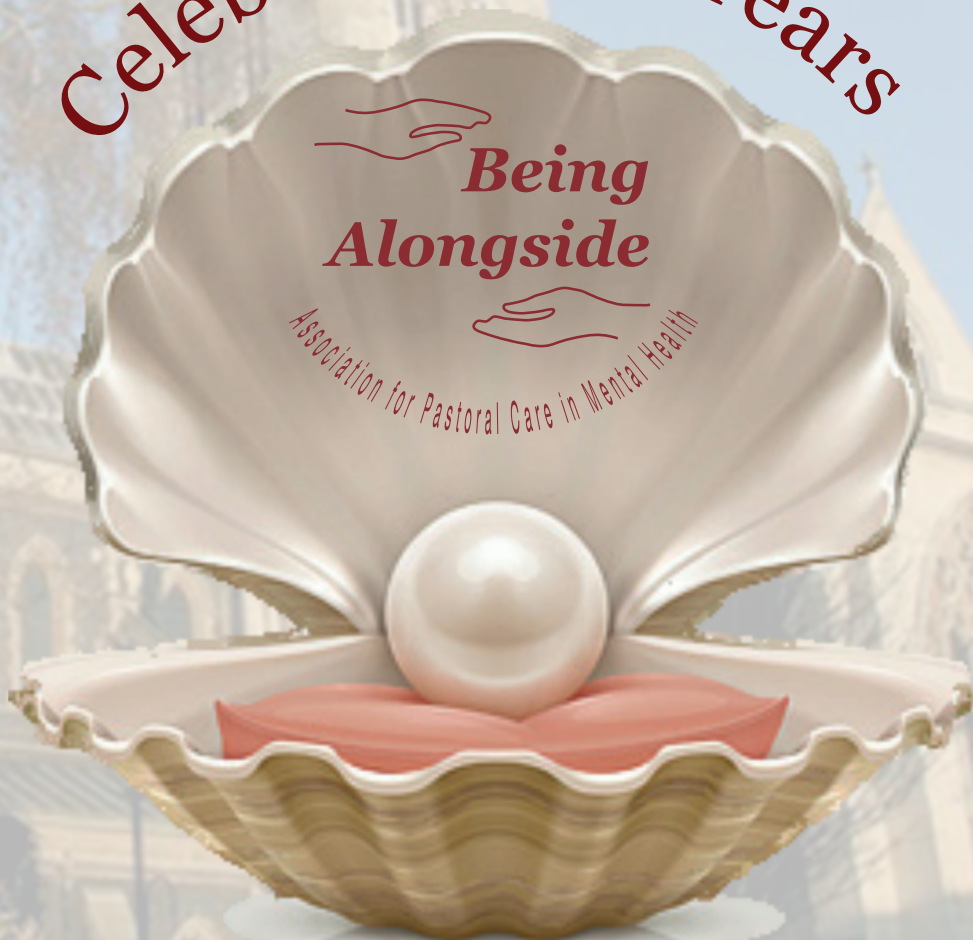


the quarterly magazine of
Being Alongside / APCMH
*a Christian based charity supporting
those living with mental ill health*

Celebrating 30 Years


**Being
Alongside**


Association for Pastoral Care in Mental Health



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The Who & What of BA / APCMH

Patrons:

Professor Andrew Sims, The Rev'd Canon Roger Royle

Phone us, local rate, on 02033 972 497 plus one of these options:

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Co-ordinator:

Pam Freeman: 02086 473 678

or write to us: BA / APCMH
c/o St Paul's Centre, 5 Rossmore Rd, NW1 6NJ

'Being Alongside' is the working name for the 'Association for Pastoral Care in Mental Health', a Christian based, voluntary association of individual members and affiliated groups who recognise the importance of spiritual values and support in mental health. It has a network of supporters throughout the UK. It welcomes and encourages people whatever their faith or belief system. Governed by its National Committee, BA / APCMH is primarily concerned to promote and encourage "being alongside" people experiencing mental or emotional distress.

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UK Reg'd Company: 3957730

All submissions welcomed by the editor:

e-mail: editor@beingalongside.org.uk

Views expressed inside are not necessarily those of the organisation.

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Words from the chair

We are sad to report the departure of our editor, Steve Press, for pastures new (see Page 6) and before Trevor Parsons (also Page 6) takes over we are in an interregnum period, so this edition is brought to you by myself and Suzanne. I am a 'flaneur' and Suzanne is a 'dramaturge' so please forgive our efforts as temporary editors. But it has been fun crafting its look.

The many references to pearls are because we are gearing up for the charity's 30th Anniversary being held in Southwark Cathedral on Sunday 19th June. There is an invitation enclosed along with a questionnaire plus an stamped addressed envelope for reply.

For some time we have failed to inform you of what has been happening at national level but there have been some notable achievements along with the disappointments. Maybe our finest days were in May 2015 when for 4 days we manned a small stand in the vast ExCel Christian Resources Exhibition in Docklands, dishing out sweets, leaflets, newsletters, advice sheets, bags and bonhomie to anyone who would listen. There were some 400 stalls – ours was the only one addressing mental health issues and I think it was ground worth breaking. You never quite know if your message gets through but several contacts have resulted from the seeds we sowed.

Our helpline number 02033 972 497 is rarely called but when help is requested we do our best – in autumn last year a call came through from the BBC Religious Affairs Department. This enabled me to harp on about mental health chaplaincy (being cut nationwide sadly) and spirituality in 'illness' to Alex Strangways-Booth and for her to chat to some of our friends in Forest Hill – her programme is due out on national radio very soon. And in the offing is an invitation to talk about us on Clare Balding's Sunday morning Radio 2 show.

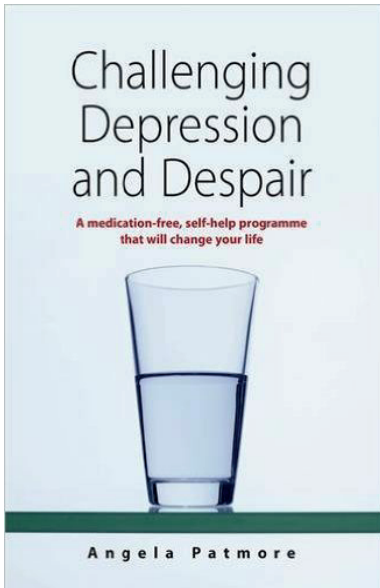
Other news ... the A.G.M. is on Saturday 7th May in Hampstead and everyone is most welcome. Details are on Page 15. Some of the open drop-ins associated with or affiliated to us have changed their hours but these are listed near the end. Please let us know if you hear of other good groups around the country where you are given a touch of TLC because as the Glaswegian band Frightened Rabbit say in one of their songs, "I need human heat".

The first recipient of our Stephen Sykes Bursary Award is a gem – do read her testimony on pages 10 and 11.

'Bonne continuation' as my friends at L'Arche, Trosly-Breuil would say,

Jamie Summers

Book Review



I was heartened by this book and have ordered spare copies from www.abebooks.co.uk to send to friends. POSTSCRIPT (01626 897100) also have remaindered ones available for £3.99.

Angela is from the ‘tough love’ school and wants to reclaim stress and depression from the giant pharmaceutical companies and rename them as normal feelings and experiences to be faced down and defeated.

She has her critics. “Widely regarded as a heartless bitch” (The New Statesman) but her book is inspirational, quoting John Clare, Milton, Shakespeare and Wordsworth and recommending pieces from Mozart, Beethoven, Holst and Rossini to pull you away from self-pity and victimisation to emotional strength.

Really brilliant.

Jamie Summers

This book is offered as a lifeline to people at the bottom of the bottomless pit of depression, a powerful, mind destroying emptiness that saps the strength and the will.

Theories about abnormal psychology and psychiatry can lead to morbid introspection and self-diagnosis on the part of the patient victim, or the victimised patient.. The sufferer may then be trapped in a cycle that confirms his or her status as a ‘mental patient’ and produces more negative thoughts, more anxiety, more symptoms and more treatment.

To be of any real use to someone in despair, a self-help programme must provide, step by step, a practical stairway out of hell. This is that stairway.

Farewell to Steve

Steve Press, who has served BA/APCMH for many years, in many capacities, including facilitating a retreat at Turvey Abbey and latterly as editor of this magazine, has resigned his position as editor in order to concentrate more fully on another interest.

I first met Steve at a conference being held at St. Marylebone Parish Church and was immediately struck by his warmth and generosity of spirit. Over the intervening years he has always supported me in my attempts to do something for people suffering from mental distress, from advertising the drop-in that I used to organise to being a real help in supporting a conference that dealt with mental health matters.

Steve and his input will be missed by many people including myself, but our blessing goes with him as he embarks on this latest venture.

Jean Marsham

Our new editor

“Having grown up in a vicarage as part of a church family which was, and still is, affected by the mental illness of a loved one, I feel at home with the aims and ethos of Being Alongside,” says Trevor Parsons, who will be editing our magazine from June onwards. Recommended to us by a friend of our chair, Trevor has helped to produce publications for a broad range of organisations on topics which include music, local government, national politics, drug user advocacy, sustainable transport activism, tourism, and information technology. “The magazine is clearly a cherished centrepiece of Being Alongside,” adds Trevor. “I look forward to sustaining its appeal to 'insiders' while also furthering the understanding of B.A.'s work among a wider readership.”

Psychosis or spiritual experience?

People with psychosis may hold unusual beliefs (delusions), describe hearing voices or have other experiences that seem out of touch with reality, but people who are mentally well may also describe this kind of experience. Some people have spiritual experiences that are like psychotic symptoms, for instance believing in angels or identifying themselves as a white witch or hearing the voice of their god. When someone who has always held such beliefs becomes unwell, these experiences are not necessarily symptoms of their mental illness.

Whether or not such experiences are a symptom of psychosis, staff need to respond sensitively to people who describe these experiences or are in a state of heightened awareness. Being open minded shows respect for their spiritual beliefs. Encouraging people to talk about their experiences gives them an opportunity to be heard and understood which may reduce any distress they feel.

"In some ways, being in a shamanic journey is similar to delusional states that I have been in. But the journeys typically last 30 minutes, not a couple of months, there is a supportive environment and also set techniques for leaving ordinary reality and most importantly coming back... I once went on a journey to find out more about my fear. I found my fears and confronted them and as a result, their impact was lessened considerably,"

From 'Making space for spirituality'
Mental Health Foundation 2007

Need funding for a new mental health initiative? Try these options:

Being Alongside / APCMH's Treasurer:

02033 972497, then select option 1.

and / or

The Dominic Beer Memorial Trust:

56 Marmora Road, London SE22 0RY

Email: contact@dominicbeermemorialtrust.com

Web: <http://www.dominicbeermemorialtrust.com>

Poem

How can I love my neighbour as myself
when I need him as my enemy
– when I see in him the self I fear
to own and cannot love?

How can there be peace on earth while
our hostilities are our most cherished possessions
defining our identity, confirming our innocence?

Eric Symes Abbott



Haiku Poetry from Gail Cotton, Committee Member

A branch, a star
through this small window
the mind's eye opens
Sydenham wood in spring
under my boot
an early primrose

Gail Gowers Cotton is a member of the Poetry Society and the British Haiku Society. Her poems have appeared in the Societies' journals as well as in other specialist magazines. She "scatters" her work by leaving poems on buses, in cafes and tucked into library books. Copies available from: www.calinfo.co.uk/haiku.htm.

Rt Rev'd Professor Stephen Sykes Memorial Bursary

As the BA National Committee announces its first Bishop Stephen Sykes Award, (see following pages), we would like to encourage others to apply.

We have made available six bursaries of up to £1000 which are intended to support and assist with course literature, travel or related expenses associated with the course.

Application Criteria:

1. The applicant must provide evidence of in-patient psychiatric care and/or outpatient history. We intend to prioritise those with more severe mental health difficulties, however all applicants will be considered on merit.
2. Age suitability for applicants 21+.
3. The chosen course must hold the status of national accreditation at a nationally accredited college or university and a place must have been obtained prior to application.

Application forms may be obtained from:

mcollins16@sky.com

Or write to:

Marlene Collins, Company Secretary

BA / Association for Pastoral Care in Mental Health

29 Braxfield Road,
Brockley ,
London SE4 2AW

BA awards its first Stephen Sykes Bursary

Dear Ms. Collins,

I am writing to ask for an application form for the Stephen Sykes award.

I am starting a postgraduate course in October, a two year Post Graduate Diploma in Theology.

I have ongoing mental health problems (bipolar and dissociative disorder as well as being autistic). Due to my mental health problems I am staying where I currently live and travelling to university for my tutorials and lectures in term time.

This is to prevent me destabilising, and has been approved by the university and encouraged by my mental health support worker.

Commuting will mean that I will be able to remain in my home church (who are very supportive) and near to friends who support me, and also with the same mental health support (counselling and support worker).

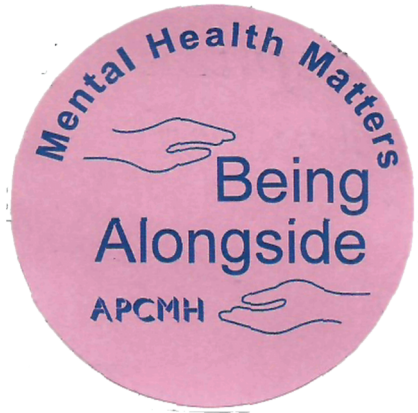
However, the commute is going to cost me a lot of money and I am on benefits and have no family financial support. I would like to apply for a grant towards my travel costs.

Please could you let me know if I am the sort of person you are looking to support, and if so please could you send me an application form?

Thank you very much, E

Dear Marlene,

Thanks so much, I have received the cheque. I would love to let you know how I am getting on from time to time -- should I email this address to correspond with the trustees too?



So far I have had my first tutorial and got feedback for my first essay, which was very useful. Now I am in the middle of writing my next essay, which is due on Monday. The pace of work is intense! I am coping so far though, and really enjoying the subject matter.

Thank you so much for the money you have sent, it is going to be incredibly helpful.

Best wishes, and regards, E

Dear Marlene,

The course is still going well. I got a good report at the end of last term, and a mark of excellent for my latest essay. So far, so good.

Best wishes, and regards, E

Pearls for thought

“Life always bursts the boundaries of formulas. Defeat may prove to have been the only path to resurrection, despite its ugliness. I take it for granted that to create a tree I condemn a seed to rot. If the first act of resistance comes too late it is doomed to defeat. But it is, nevertheless, the awakening of resistance. Life may grow from it as from a seed.”

— Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *Flight to Arras*

“Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap but by the seeds that you plant.”

— Robert Louis Stevenson

“What are you planting today to harvest Tomorrow?”

— Lailah Gifty Akita

Peter Sommers: Born 30th Jun 1924 Died 7th Dec 2015

I first met Peter when we shared time on the National Committee together. I was at that time the Development Officer for the Croydon Branch. I liked him immediately and found him very supportive. He had a deep spirituality that crossed the boundaries of all denominations, indeed his funeral was taken by a Greek Orthodox priest. He had been baptized in the River Jordan by Bishop Kallistos.

Suffering from severe headaches he was discharged from the RAF and spent 6 months in the Netherne Hospital in Croydon. There he was subjected to insulin induced comas and ECT without anaesthetic. He found great strength from the camaraderie of other patients. Although he never returned to hospital he struggled with dysthymia (an all pervading depression).

Despite this sadness he loved walking, travelling (especially Russia), art, music, literature, words and in particular Shakespeare, history and geography. He spoke several languages and in his last year was relearning German. He also loved talking to people, asking strangers their name and where they came from, entering into real communication with them.

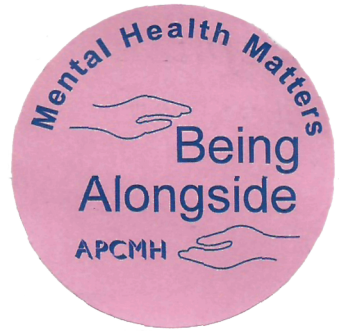
Peter's contribution to BA / APCMH was his committee work, challenging us to think in different ways. He emphasized valuing every person without judgement until “we had walked a mile in their shoes”, the importance of humility and a sense of journeying, both individually and together in the company of Jesus.

Mary Wright

Typique de Moi

by Katie Ruth

I haven't done the washing up
I haven't fed the cat
I've got that wedding next weekend
And haven't bought a hat!
Procrastination
Should be my middle name
I want to improve
But every day's the same.
I haven't done the paperwork
My desk is piling high
But all I want to do is sit
And gaze up at the sky.
Should I tell my doctor
I have low energy
Or just perhaps
Am I lazy?
We all have potential
So what is mine?
I should try my best
That will be fine.



Lord, have mercy

Lift this cloud

from me.

Take my hand

And guide me.

Strengthen me.

Hold me firmly

So I can hold

My head up high

And the cloud

disappear.

Lord, You are my Saviour -

Help me!

by Pam Earp

Being Alongside Spring Issue 2016

Very recently our Chairman, Jamie Summers and John Vallat (former BA / APCMH Treasurer, Chairman and Secretary) spent three consecutive days at John's home performing some very necessary spring cleaning and sprucing our thirty year old archive. It is good that our new Chairman is injecting some new vigour and a fresh dynamic which sustains our enthusiasm and keeps us away from too much passive contemplation. He has reproduced and redesigned our leaflet from scratch and pays regular visits to Forest Hill as well as keeping all round good contacts with other branches as he endeavours to encourage the springing forth of new affiliates and groups nationwide.

It is also encouraging to discover many pearls from the past wending wisdom for the future. You may remember a letter, part of which appears below, was written to us in 1998 from our Patron Rt. Rev'd Professor Stephen Sykes (sadly now deceased) in which he explains to us his reasons for becoming involved with APCMH.

Suzanne Heneghan

'....when I served as Bishop of Ely it struck me that the major Christian Churches were unsure how to respond to mental illness, which in my view was as physical as chicken pox, though much more difficult to treat, because the brain is incredibly complex. I have made a practice of showing this video to small groups and invited discussion. Invariably it has elicited tales of personal experience suffered by friends and family members... It contains some very attractive and moving passages.

Here is the copy of 'With a Little help from my Friends'. Could it be put on the internet? It turns out to be my only surviving copy, and if you could manage it, I would like it or a DVD back if you make one.

*Yours sincerely,
Stephen Sykes*

Thanks to the efforts of Steve Press who many months ago arranged and converted this video to DVD and then for internet use, Stephen's request has been realized so that we can now witness the film on our BA Website www.beingalongside.org.uk via the **YouTube link**. God works mysterious wonders as his Spirit moves within and around us!

Suzanne Heneghan

Annual General Meeting

of

Being Alongside / APCMH

on

Saturday 7th May 2016 2pm - 4pm

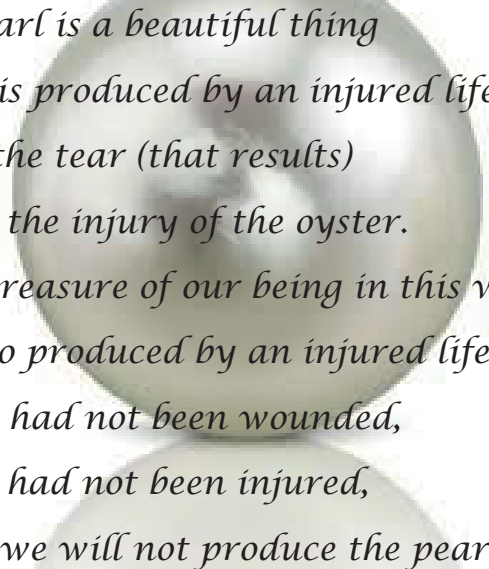
St Andrew's

United Reformed Church

Frogna Lane, Hampstead, NW3 7DY

Buses 139,189,82,13,113,328, Cll

tube to Finchley Road or West Hampstead



*A pearl is a beautiful thing
that is produced by an injured life.
It is the tear (that results)
from the injury of the oyster.
The treasure of our being in this world
is also produced by an injured life.
If we had not been wounded,
if we had not been injured,
then we will not produce the pearl.*

Stephan Hoeller.

In Crisis? Help is at Hand

Sane: (6 -11pm each night) **08457 678000**

Rethink Advisory Service: 08454 560455

Young Minds Parents' Helpline: **08088 025544**
for help for young people up to 25. 9.30 - 4 weekdays, free calls

Pastoral Care for Carers (Margaret): 01642 865668

Pastoral Care for Sufferers (Catherine): 01642 877936

MIND: (Mon - Fri 9am - 5pm) pastoral help: **0300 123 3393**
 legal help: **0300 466 6463**

SAMARITANS (24 hrs) phone 08457 909090

The Barnabas *Drop - In* Sessions

St. Paul's Community Project *is affiliated to Being Alongside / APCMH*

Mondays 3pm - 5pm

Plus various activities: Table tennis, dominoes, scrabble, art / craft, poetry reading, tea / sandwiches / cakes and chat.

First Wednesday of the Month 10.30am - 12noon

Coffee Morning and chat. All welcome.

Venue: St Paul's Church Centre, 5 Rossmore Rd, NW1 6NJ

(5 mins walk from Marylebone Station; buses 139 & 189 stop outside)

call: 020 7724 8517

When he arrived & saw the wonderful things God was doing, he was filled with excitement & joy, and encouraged the believers to stay close to The Lord whatever the cost. Barnabas was a kindly person, full of the Holy Spirit & strong in faith. As a result large numbers of people were added to the Lord.

(Acts 11:19-24)

Forest Hill Drop-In is affiliated to Being Alongside / APCMH

St Saviour's Church Hall, Brockley Rise,
junction with Herschell Road, SE23.

6.30pm to 8.30pm every Wednesday

Tea, coffee, snacks and chat.

More Drop-In Sessions

Methodist Central Hall Westminster

Emmanuel Room, (Entrance) Methodist Central Hall,
Matthew Parker Street, Westminster.

Buses: 11, 24, 148, 211 Tube: St James's Park, Westminster

On the 2nd and 4th Fridays of each month, 2.30pm and 4.00pm.

Coffee, tea and sandwiches

Deacon Kina on 0207 654 3871

Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church

235 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2H 8EP

Bus: 134 Tube: Tottenham Court Road

020 7240 0544 / church@bloomsbury.org.uk

www.bloomsbury.org.uk

Weekday drop-in for tea, coffee and biscuits **Mon-Fri 10am-4pm.**

Sunday lunch Sunday lunch from 1pm - 2.30pm at the Friendship Centre. Tickets are available on a first come, first served basis from 10.15am on Sunday.

Saint Marylebone Parish Church

Open Door

17 Marylebone Rd, NW1 5LT

Buses: 18, 27, 30, 205, 453 Tube: Baker St, Regents Park

On the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of each month, 2.30pm - 4pm

fellowship and conversation. Free refreshments All welcome.

Contact Jackie Kesses 020 7935 7315

Email: jackie.kesses@goolemail.com

Also at Saint Marylebone Parish Church

Meeting with Coffee

On the 1st and 3rd Fridays in the month, 11 - 12.30.

020 7935 5066 / healing@stmarylebone.org

Being Alongside / APCMH

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Membership / Subscription Form 2016 - 17

Please complete this form and return - **asap** - to:
***B.A. / APCMH Treasurer / Membership Secretary ,
c/o St Paul's Centre, 5 Rossmore Road, London NW1 6NJ***

Title & Name:

Address:.....

..... Postcode:.....

Tel: Day: Eve: Mob:.....

Please Tick the Membership category you'd like:

(one) Standard £12 ☐

(one) Concession £5 ☐

(one) Group (5 copies) £25 ☐

Donation to funds - please write amount in:

Total (*please make cheques out to 'APCMH'*)

Gift Aid Declaration (for Tax Payers):

I am a tax payer and would like BA / APCMH to treat this, & all future payments, as a Gift Aid Donation. (In any tax year you must pay an amount of income or capital gains tax of at least equal to the amount of tax that we reclaim on your payment - currently 25p for every £1 you give.)

The Flower

How Fresh, O Lord, how sweet and clean
Are thy returns! ev'n as the flowers in spring;
To which, besides their own demean,
The late-past frosts tributes of pleasure bring.
Grief melts away Like snow in May,
As if there were no such cold thing.

Who would have thought my shrivel'd heart
Could have recover'd greennesse? It was gone
Quite under ground; as flowers depart
To see their mother-root, when they have blown;
Where they together All the hard weather,
Dead to the world, keep house unknown.



These are thy wonders, Lord of power,
Killing and quickning, bringing down to hell
And up to heaven in an houre;
Making a chiming of a passing-bell,
We say amisse, This or that is:
Thy word is all, if we could spell.

O that I once past changing were;
Fast in thy Paradise, where no flower can wither!
Many a spring I shoot up fair,
Offring at heav'n, growing and groning thither:
Nor doth my flower Want a spring-showre,
My sinnes and I joining together;

But while I grow to a straight line;
Still upwards bent, as if heav'n were mine own,
Thy anger comes, and I decline:
What frost to that? what pole is not the zone,
Where all things burn, When thou dost turn,
And the least frown of thine is shown?

And now in age I bud again,
After so many deaths I live and write;
I once more smell the dew and rain,
And relish versing: O my onely light,
It cannot be That I am he
On whom thy tempests fell all night.

These are thy wonders, Lord of love,
To make us see we are but flowers that glide:
Which when we once can finde and prove,
Thou hast a garden for us, where to bide.
Who would be more, Swelling through store,
Forfeit their Paradise by their pride.



George Herbert

John 16:31-33

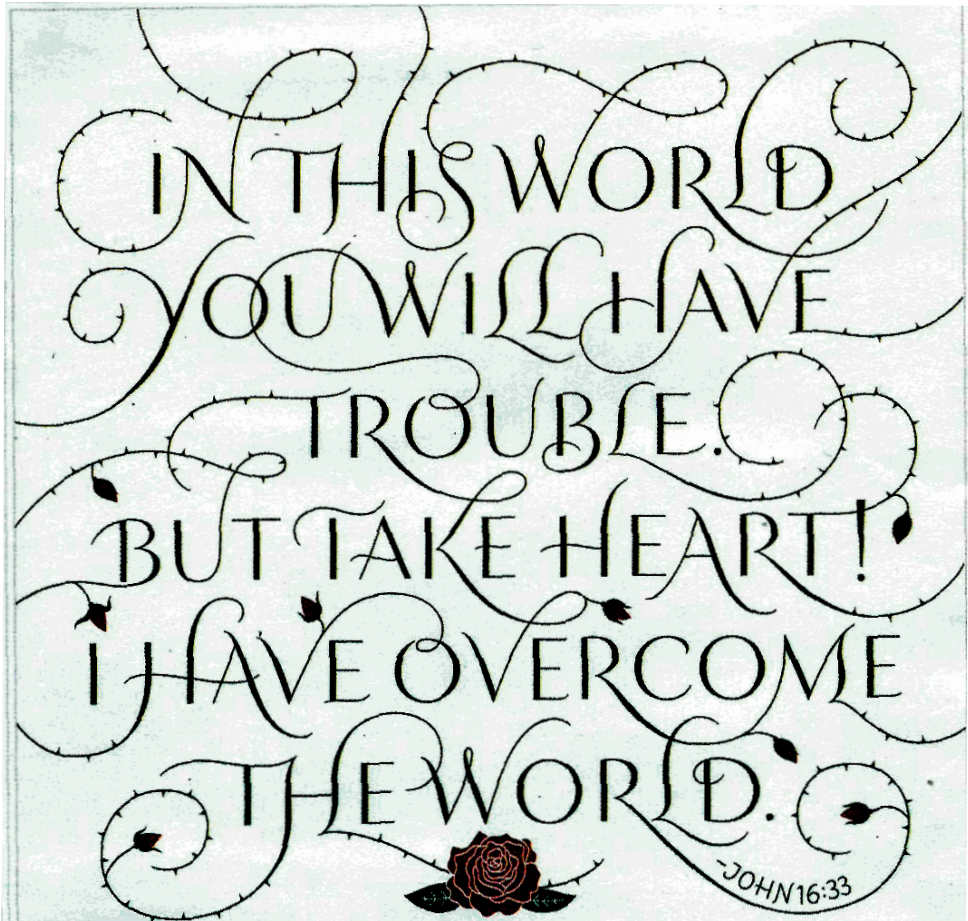
31 "Do you now believe?" Jesus replied.

33 "A time is coming and in fact has come when you will be scattered, each to your own home. You will leave me all alone. Yet I am not alone, for my Father is with me.

33 I have told you these things, so That in me you may have peace.

In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

New International Version



Being Alongside Spring Issue 2016

The acquisition of wisdom is above that of pearls

Job 28:18

Being Alongside / APCMH
invites you to celebrate 30 years

**Southwark Cathedral
Sunday 19th June**

Speaker: Rev'd Andrew Wilson

6pm Healing Service

Donations gratefully received, cheques can be made payable to 'APCMH'



NAME:

NUMBER OF GUESTS:

(Please tick which part of the celebration you wish to attend)

3pm TEA

☐

6pm HEALING SERVICE

☐

BOTH

☐

Please book by 30th April 2016

by returning this reply slip in the prepaid envelope to:

Marlene Collins

29 Braxfield Road, Brockley, London SE4 2AW

Tel: 02033 972497 / 1

Email: mcollins16@sky.com