



Let your Autumn Glory shine through

The Barnabas *Drop - In Sessions*

*'Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas
(which means Son of Encouragement)' Acts 4:36*

St. Paul's Community Project in partnership with BA / apcmh

Mondays 2pm - 5pm

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

Wednesday 10am - 12pm

A more reflective discussion time with tea and biscuits, an opportunity to all share concerns or to receive one-to-one support (by appointment).

Free. All Welcome.

Venue: St Paul's Church Centre, 3 Rossmore Rd, NW1
(5 mins walk from Marylebone Station; buses 139 & 189 stop outside)

call: Captain Mark Dadds, or Sister Theresa: 020 7724 8517

'When he arrived and 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)

Mental Health Support Group (The Dymphna Group)

Jean Marsham regrets to announce that this group,
previously meeting at St Andrew's, Frognal,
United Reformed Church NW3
is to close until further notice.

She thanks all those who came along and / or helped in any way,
trusting that it was a positive experience for all concerned.

Jean Marsham

020 8455 1240

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Many thanks to all our contributors! Your offerings are so vital. Submissions are welcome from all areas of the community, especially insights from the varying faith communities. Whilst we all appreciate a well balanced magazine, I can only put in what I receive - so I hope you're working on your next piece...!

Copy for next issue - due November 1st - to the editor by October 10th please, but sooner is always more helpful!

Front Page



Until recently Felicia Houssein served on BA / apcmh's National Committee. From her contribution below, it is clear how aptly she was able to offer inspiration and practical guidance. Her 'Front Page' tells of pain and obstacles that began early and continued long, but that help did make itself known, partly through, as is often the case, helping others.

Looking back on my adventurous(!) Journey through a long depressive illness, I remember, probably around the age of nine, asking myself: "Are we trained to smile or is it natural?" The answer came swiftly: "We are trained to smile because it's polite to smile." No hesitation there. But even more indicative of my state was (ever since I remember) a strong sense of envy whenever a funeral procession passed by; and once watching from the top of a double-decker bus, wishing I was in that coffin on my way to 'pushing up the daisies'. It never occurred to me that this should have been of some concern.

I seldom shared my thoughts with anyone else, child or adult. I would describe myself as an almost mute child, painfully shy. My one form of self-expression was playing the piano from the age of six. I was allowed piano lessons when it was discovered I was playing everything by ear learnt by my elder sister, and I entered a wonderfully creative relationship with an extremely talented piano teacher, who had fled the Russian Revolution, and on reaching France had become Cortot's teaching assistant at the Paris Conservatoire before settling in London. She adored not only music but children, and drew music out of me like a ready-made gift. A few years later she lost a ten-day-old infant, and not long after disappeared from my life with a long illness. Had I been allowed to know the truth, it wasn't as long, as I feared, and only found out when a visitor to

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>>> our House remarked: "Oh yes, she died, didn't she!" My mother had meant well by protecting me, but with my already strong religious beliefs (where from I never knew), I would have been far happier to know she was with God.

Although with a wonderfully kind second teacher, through family circumstances my piano learning came to an end. By the age of thirteen I had lost my father to a complete mental breakdown (with the total loss of his great creative abilities), my home and the Bechstein piano. On reaching secretarial college I had an immediate fast typing speed, but found no real use for my hands until I volunteered at a Home of Healing and was straightway put to work as a nursing auxiliary. But by then I was aged forty. So what of the intervening years?

With hindsight it's obvious I was a depressed child. By the age of nineteen I was in a serious state of depression. At first I blamed burdensome circumstances, one after the other. Recognition of my illness was, at that time, the most arduous phase of all. Once there, however, intuitively I sought the right help. Somehow a handpicked team evolved, ordered, it seemed, by a kind of divine economy. Throughout there was no searching for the right priest, therapist or doctor. The number varied, when, for example, psychoanalysis was replaced by combined pastoral and specialised medical care in one person under the Church's Healing Ministry.

I was totally unaware, from the amazing care I was given, that it was very early days for co-operation between religion and medicine. My Central London church, for many years close to my various places of work, became my mainstay, financing my weekly sessions of psychotherapy for over three years, at the instigation of its Vicar, who saw me faithfully on a weekly basis, except for essential times away during an extremely demanding ministry. But always without fail, it was he himself and not his secretary who rang me if for any reason (and very rarely) he found himself unable to keep an appointment. As many of our readers will appreciate, there is no hoodwinking the depressive, no jolly along. To have someone willing to remain alongside, who was not afraid to let me see that he did not always know the answer, lessened the gap between myself and the God who humbled himself.

Readers may recognise this last sentence from my article published in this magazine, Mar - Apr 2008, based on one commissioned by the Catholic Herald in the early Eighties. This arose out of a spate of

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>>> correspondence in that newspaper's columns, bringing me into contact with Jane Linden, from memory, the founder of an Association for Pastoral Care in Mental Illness. I wonder if any reader might recognise this as the forerunner of our APCMH and possibly our origins? I have long wanted to trace our history and any connection. Our title *Being Alongside*, because of my own phrase above, rings most authentic bells and inspires the utmost confidence in me for those affected by any mental health problems.

My earlier article sets out in detail my progress through those darkest of days, relieved from time to time by astounding moments of transfiguration, which could only have been God - given; including a Chance (?) meeting with a priest while hiding out in a convent in Southern Cornwall and the penance he prescribed for me:

He brought me forth into a place of liberty, he brought me forth, even because he had a favour unto me.

Psalms 1:8

The place of liberty I am still exploring nearly fifty years on.

My dramatic healing during one Holy Week snatched me back from the brink, having already written my farewell letters. From one of them:

I only pray to God that I have enough tablets. Though... whatever the outcome... I promise you that if I should be returned to consciousness, I will live life with my whole heart and never again question the wisdom of God.

In a last desperate bid I opened my Bible, at Colossians 3:1-3

Were you not raised to life with Christ? I repeat, you died: and now your life lies hidden with Christ in God.

The words of the set reading for the Epistle on my 'first' Easter morning!

My subsequent work in mental health started at a wonderful place in Bromley, Kent: The Stepping; Stones Club; now, according to the latest telephone directory, Stepping Stones House, run by the Bromley Community Mental Health Team. In earlier days, attached to Bromley Hospital and overseen by a psychiatric sister-in-charge, it had been founded in 1946 by occupational therapists who saw how much mental

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>>> health and other patients benefited one another. A host of creative activities took place there. I taught them relaxation, but later was much more involved: wrote a monthly newsletter and became a member of the Executive Committee. To my surprise one day a fellow member told me:

I always know which table you're on, Felicia, (in the canteen), because that's the table where the laughter is!

On moving to Tunbridge Wells I became involved in the work of the Crossways Community (mental / spiritual; health); and although no longer teaching relaxation, am still, involved in two prayer groups of this wonderfully supportive organisation. My latest find, though, is a remarkable Healing centre on the Isle of Wight (non-residential, but devoted to mental and spiritual health): Carisbrooke Priory. It is great to have been lead to these great centres of healing and to see the wonderful encouragement and support offered to sufferers such as I myself once was, and underpinned by such devoted service and care: thanks be to God!

Felicia Houssein

Think Outside the Box!

A CPN decided that a simple experiment would add emphasis to her talk to a self help group.

Four worms were put into four jars of different substances:

The first worm was put into alcohol.

The second worm was put into cigarette smoke.

The third worm was put into chocolate syrup.

The fourth worm was put into good clean soil.

These were the results:

The first worm in alcohol - DEAD.

The second worm in cigarette smoke - DEAD.

The third worm in chocolate syrup - DEAD.

The fourth worm in good clean soil - ALIVE.

The CPN asked "What can we learn from this demonstration?"

Maxine, who rarely spoke, mumbled under her breath "As long as I drink, smoke and eat chocolate, I can't get worms!"

Supplied by Jill Izod

A Friend...

Accepts you as you are.
Believes in you.
Calls you just to say "Hi!"
Doesn't give up on you.
Encourages you.
Forgives your mistakes.
Gives unconditionally.
Helps you when you need a hand.
Ignores your little flaws.
Just wants to be with you.
Keeps you close to their heart.
Loves you for who you are.
Makes a difference in your life.
Never judges unfairly.
Offers support.
Picks you up when you're down.
Quiets your fears.
Raises your spirits.
Says nice things about you.
Tells you the truth when you need to hear it.
Understands you.
Values the good things in you.
Walks beside you through sun or rain.
Xplains things you don't understand.
Yells when you won't listen.
Zaps you back to reality when you need it.

(from the web)

Which Way Happiness?

In general, the further West you go, the more happiness is located in the individual's efforts and rewards. We are encouraged to 'better' ourselves, to join the 'race' and celebrate the 'victors'. But the further East you go, the more survival is a communal effort and 'salvation' is a communal reward.

For those of us embedded in the world of mental health, it is interesting to contemplate which direction is more nurturing.

This poem perhaps mildly chastises a 'Western' mind set, nevertheless needs the corrective that says no-one is indispensable, but we are all irreplaceable.

Sometime when you're feeling important,
Sometime when your ego's in bloom,
Sometime when you take it for granted
you're the best qualified man in the room,

Sometime when you feel that your going
would leave an unfillable hole,
Just follow these simple instructions
and see how they humble your soul:

Take a bucket and fill it with water
put your hands in it up to your wrists
Pull them out and the hole which remains
is the measure of how you are missed.

You may splash all you like as you enter,
You may stir up the water galore,
But stop - and you'll find in a minute
that it looks like the same as before.

The moral of this is quite simple,
Do just the best that you can,
Be proud of yourself yet remember
There is no indispensable man.

submitted by Ella Romanovskij

Time, Lord?

To those familiar with Einstein's Theory of Relativity, Time as the Fourth Dimension is a concept de rigueur. Meanwhile, fans of *The Doctor*, *Star Trek* and the like will have oft contemplated the potential for Time's expansion and compression as ways of moving through space. Yet Time's elasticity has long been honoured by those attempting to comprehend human behaviour. This (anonymous) piece brings together the different ways we experience Time and the different characteristics of relationships:

A Reason, a Season, or a Lifetime

People come into your life for a reason, a season, or a lifetime. When you figure out which one it is, you will know what to do for each person.

When someone is in your life for a **REASON** it is usually to meet a need you have expressed. They have come to assist you through a difficulty, to provide you with guidance and support, to aid you physically, emotionally, or spiritually. They may seem like a godsend, and they are!

They are there for the reason you need them to be.

Then, without any wrong doing on your part, or at an inconvenient time, this person will say or do something to bring the relationship to an end.

Sometimes they die.

Sometimes they walk away.

Sometimes they act up and force you to take a stand.

What we must realise is that our need has been met, our desire fulfilled, their work is done. The prayer you sent up has been answered. And now it is time to move on.

When people come into your life for a **SEASON** it is because your turn has come to share, grow, or learn. They bring you an experience of peace, or make you laugh. They may teach you something you have never done. They usually give you an unbelievable amount of joy. Believe it! It is real! But, only for a season.

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>>> **LIFETIME** relationships teach you lifetime lessons; things you must build upon in order to have a solid emotional foundation. Your job is to accept the lesson, love the person, and put what you have learned to use in all other relationships and areas of your life. It is said that love is blind whilst friendship is clairvoyant.

Author unknown

www.beingalongside.org.uk

www.pastoral.org.uk

***two addresses -
same well loved website!***

Who is Disabled?

*If you fail to see the person,
but only the disability,
then, who is blind?*

*If you cannot hear your brother's cry for justice,
then who is deaf?*

*If you do not communicate with your sister
but separate her from you, who is disabled?*

*If your heart and your mind do not reach out to your
neighbour,
who has the mental handicap?*

*If you do not stand up for the rights of all persons,
who is the cripple?*

*Your attitude towards persons with disabilities
may be our biggest handicap and yours too.*

Tony Wong.

The Meaning of Time

This, following on from the previous page, re-inforces the idea that time is relative; units of time, it seems, are not always of equal importance. An old adage might have relevance:

*it's not the hours you put in that's important,
it's what you put into the hours that really counts.*

To realize the value of ten years:

Ask a newly Divorced couple.

To realize The value of four years:

Ask a graduate.

To realize The value of one year:

Ask a student who Has failed a final exam.

To realize The value of nine months:

Ask a mother who gave birth to a stillborn.

To realize The value of one month:

Ask a mother Who has given birth to A premature baby.

To realize The value of one week:

Ask an editor of a weekly newspaper.

To realize the value of one minute:

Ask a person Who has missed the a train, bus or plane.

To realize The value of one-second:

Ask a person Who has survived an accident.

Time waits for no one - Treasure every moment you have.

Author unknown

The Heart of Being Alongside (1)

The old man placed order for one hamburger, French fries and a drink.

He unwrapped the plain hamburger and carefully cut it in half, placing one half in front of his equally aged partner.

He then carefully counted out the French fries, dividing them into two piles and neatly placed one pile in front of her.

He took a sip of the drink, she took a sip and then set the cup down between them. As he began to eat his few bites of hamburger, the people around them were looking over and whispering.

Obviously they were thinking, 'That poor old couple - all they can afford is one meal for the two of them.'

As the man began to eat his fries a young man came to the table and politely offered to buy another meal for them. The old man said, they were just fine - they were used to sharing everything.

People closer to the table noticed the partner hadn't eaten a bite. She sat there watching and occasionally taking turns sipping the drink.

Again, the young man came over and begged them to let him buy another meal. This time the woman said 'No, thank you, we are used to sharing everything.'

Finally, as the old man finished and was wiping his face neatly with the napkin, the young man again came over to the little old lady who had yet to eat a single bite of food and asked 'What is it you are waiting for?'

'The Teeth!', she answered.

www.beingalongside.org.uk

www.pastoral.org.uk

***two addresses -
same well loved website!***

The Heart of Being Alongside (2)

Suffering and wanting a fast result? Healer needing to be Rescuer? Wrong, says the well loved Henri Nouwen:

Compassion is hard because it requires us to go with others to the place where they are weak.

As busy, active, relevant ministers we desire to do away with suffering by fleeing from it, or finding a quick cure for it. We want to earn our bread by making a real contribution.

This means first and foremost doing something to show that our presence makes a difference.

Thus we ignore our greatest gift, which is our ability to enter into solidarity with those who suffer.

*Henri Nouwen
from The Way of the Heart.*

*Thanks to all those who offer contributions to
Being Alongside.*

Keep 'em coming!

Meanwhile, if you know the originator or copyright holder, please do acknowledge.

Thanks,
Steve

A Couple of Helps

*I want to beg you as much as I can to be patient.
Towards all that's unresolved in your heart
And to learn to love the questions themselves,
Like locked rooms.
Or like books that are written in a foreign language.*

*Do not seek the answers that cannot be given to you
Because you would not be able to 'live' them,
And the point is to 'live' everything.*

*Live the questions now,
Perhaps you will then, gradually,
Without noticing it,
Live along some distant day Into the answer.*

Maria von Rilke

*To forgive someone is not to say that what the person did to
you is 'OK'.*

*It says that what the person did to you cannot finally destroy
you.*

Joan Chittister

Housework

If all goes to plan, by the time you read this issue it will be available on the website in a more convenient and accessible way. Our thanks are due to Webmaster Lionel Perkin who has plunged long and hard into the depths of the ether to make this happen.

Sofa Sophistry

The following is the philosophy of Charles Schulz, the creator of the '*Peanuts*' comic strip.

You don't have to actually answer the questions. Just ponder on them. Just read this straight through, and you'll get the point.

1. Name the five wealthiest people in the world.
2. Name the last six Wimbledon Ladies Singles winners.
3. Name the last five winners of X Factor.
4. Name six people who have won a Nobel Physics Prize.
5. Name the last six Oscar winners for best actor.
6. Name the last ten FA Cup Winners.

How did you do?

The point is, none of us remember the headliners of yesterday. These are no second-rate achievers; they are the best in their fields. But the applause dies.. and awards tarnish... achievements are forgotten. Accolades and certificates are buried with their owners.

Here's another quiz. See how you do on this one:

1. List a few teachers who aided your journey through school.
2. Name three friends who have helped you through a difficult time..
3. Name five people who have taught you something worthwhile.
4. Think of a few people who have made you feel appreciated and special.
5. Think of five people you enjoy spending time with.

Easier? The lesson:

The people who make a difference in your life are not the ones with the most credentials... the most money, or the most awards. It is the ones who care the most.

*It's not what you said they'll remember -
it's how you made them feel.*

Fridge magnet advice to Teachers.



Well, I Woke Up This Mornin'...

Raymond Kay, left, gave a talk to The Guild of Health earlier in the year. He battles with agoraphobia and wants to do something for fellow sufferers. He is full of ideas and energy: he has an outline for a short course for sufferers and carers, designed a set of small marketable games which can generate employment and develop funding, and is working on a lo-tech process to assist crop yield in desert areas. He is looking for partners who can assist with funding and entrepreneurial experience. If you would like to know more, visit successfulfailures.com.

How would you feel if you woke one morning and found that you could not get out of your bedroom? Not because of a door locked from the outside; not due to a slipped disc, a broken leg or arthritis, but because you simply could not summon the courage or confidence to take a few steps across the room.

I imagine that each of us gathered in the crypt of St. Marylebone's Parish Church on July 17th had left home earlier with no fear or panic. After all, it is everyone's habit to go "out and about" is it not? Well, no - it is not! And as we listened to Raymond Kay's story that morning we learned just how severe an illness Agoraphobia can be.

Ray told us of his early life and described graphically the frightening events that, as he grew older, led to the decline in his health until he was completely in the grip of this devastating illness. At times he struggled with his emotions and clearly found it hard to continue his talk, but always he managed to "pick up" again. He explained that he is often weighed down with anxiety, but that finding God has made a great difference to his life. He spoke with humility, but also with confidence, especially when he began to tell us of the mission on his heart.

Ray is fired with a desire - indeed a worthy desire - that all people should be correctly informed on the subject of Agoraphobia. "The fear of

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>>> open places" is the rather bald definition given in most dictionaries, but we were enlightened further and learned that there had been times when it was impossible for him to step out of bed, let alone leave his room. On consideration, this near-unimaginable symptom must bring true torment of the mind. Ray's ambition, then, is to educate people and give some idea of the various difficulties suffered by Agoraphobics so that, hopefully, someone with knowledge would be nearby to give support.

Ray gives his talks up and down the country wherever and whenever he can and has sent out notes and information to chains of shops and supermarkets. Most of these are required to have some staff trained in First Aid and Ray hopes that they could also learn to recognise, and respond to, symptoms of Agoraphobia. This seems an excellent idea and is obviously a real driving force in this young man's life.

Raymond Kay left us after sharing a very acceptable and varied sandwich lunch and after this we were told a little more of his story by the man who is now his friend and his mainstay. I guess we all wonder how he will progress, but one thing is certain - Ray has a driving ambition and a will to succeed.

Rosemary Whittingham

Help is at Hand

(These numbered were checked & validated on 14 March 2010)

Samaritans: **08457 909090**

(national number which will put you through to your nearest branch)

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

Rethink Advisory Service: **08454 560455**

Young Minds Parents' Helpline: **08088 025544**

(9.30 - 4 weekdays, free from mobiles and landlines)

Carers in the Community: **01642 818332**

(led by Edna Hunneysett. This is her home number)

MIND: (Mon - Fri 9am - 5pm) **08457 660163**

Maytree: (24 / 7: but leave message if no live answer) **020 7263 7070**



The Who & What of Being Alongside

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'Being Alongside' is the operational name for the 'Association for Pastoral Care in Mental Health', (apcmh), 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 United Kingdom and it welcomes and encourages people whatever their own faith or belief system. Governed by its National Committee, APCMH is primarily concerned to promote and encourage "being alongside" people experiencing mental or emotional distress.

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Dusk

It's past 7.30pm the evening shadows fall,
I guess it's the time I love best of all.

I look across the patio and see the garden I love
And now I think I hear the sound of a dove

Maybe in that beautiful willow tree
Where the leaves rustle so gracefully.

The cat sits on the fence once again
Looking for birds that come not again

while the sky slowly turns from blue to grey
And we come to the end of another day.

Irene E Stubbs

ed: The photo of a sunset - Coltishall, Norfolk Broads - does not match Irene's words precisely but hopefully there is enough of a connection to appreciate both. Now that we can have colour pictures on front and back covers as well as b/w throughout, why don't you email me yours for inclusion in a future issue? steve.press@pastoral.org.uk