

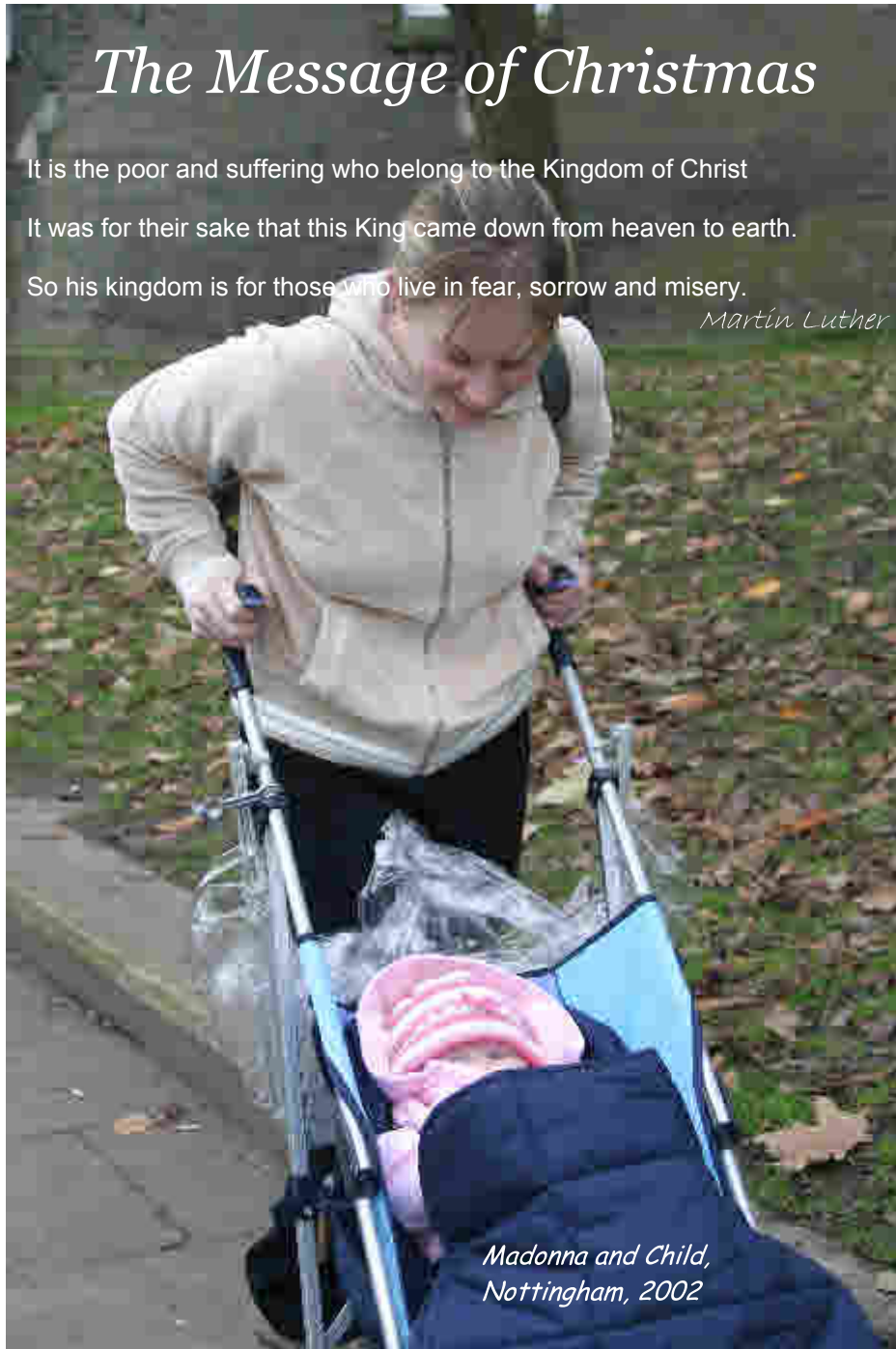
The Message of Christmas

It is the poor and suffering who belong to the Kingdom of Christ

It was for their sake that this King came down from heaven to earth.

So his kingdom is for those who live in fear, sorrow and misery.

Martin Luther

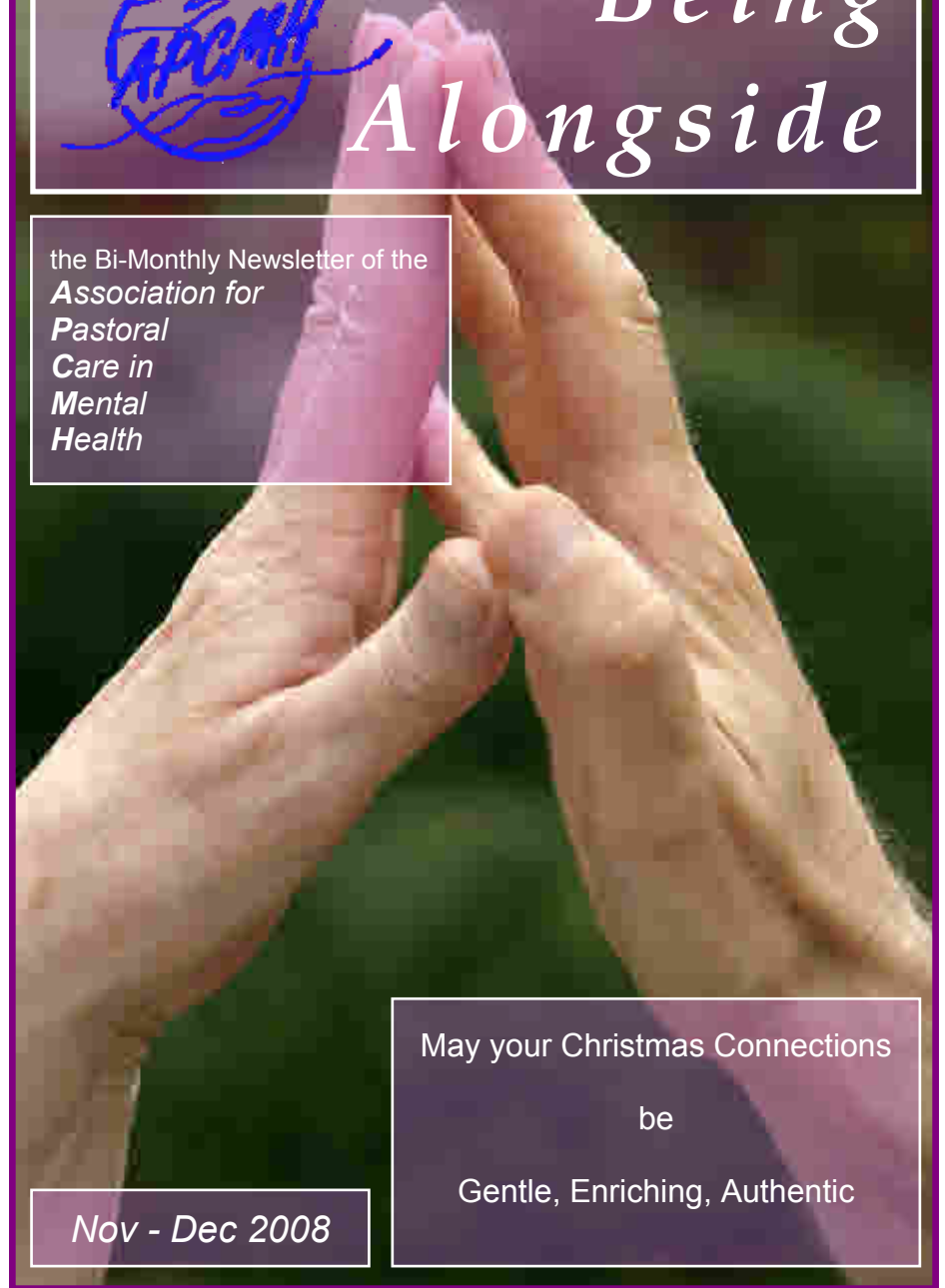


*Madonna and Child,
Nottingham, 2002*



Being Alongside

the Bi-Monthly Newsletter of the
**Association for
Pastoral
Care in
Mental
Health**



May your Christmas Connections
be

Gentle, Enriching, Authentic

Nov - Dec 2008

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 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)

St Andrew's, Frognal, United Reformed Church NW3

2nd and 4th Friday of each month

10.00am-12noon

Aiming to provide friendship and mutual support for those living with mental health concerns, both sufferers and carers, where matters may be explored and discussion encouraged.

contact: The Rev'd Jonathan Dean: 020 7435 7920
or Jean Marsham: 020 8455 1240

Junction of Frognal Lane / West End Lane / Finchley Road.

near Finchley Rd Met / Jub;
113, 82, 13, 46, 268, 328, 139, C11 (West End Green);
Finchley Rd / Frognal (NL Metro),
Hampstead (Northern);
West Hampstead (First Capital Direct)



The Who and What of APCMH

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APCMH is 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.

For Specific Contacts, see above; for General Enquiries reach us:

c/o St Paul's Centre, 5 Rossmore Road, Marylebone, London NW1 6NJ

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All submissions welcomed by the Editor.

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The views expressed in *Being Alongside* are
not necessarily those of the Association.

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degenerative or life-threatening condition and in recent years improved knowledge and understanding, psychological treatments and more tolerable medication have greatly increased people's ability to manage their symptoms and live a normal life.

In this straightforward, accessible and inspiring guide Roz D'Ombriane Hewitt provides information on:

- ❖ *The myths and misconceptions surrounding schizophrenia*
- ❖ *The possible causes and how the illness is diagnosed*
- ❖ *Medication and other treatment options*
- ❖ *Sources of support*
- ❖ *Improving health and well being*
- ❖ *Employment - paid and voluntary*
- ❖ *Complementary therapies*
- ❖ *Counselling and psychotherapy*

The guide also includes the latest research findings and personal accounts of recovery by people with the diagnosis.

'People diagnosed with schizophrenia need to know about issues such as sources of support, counselling, psychotherapy, state benefits, legal rights, and mental health law. Fortunately, all this information and more is now available in a highly readable form in this book. It gives me great pleasure to recommend Roz D'Ombriane Hewitt's work to patients, their families and loved ones, and care givers. She has written an excellent book which will be much appreciated.'

Professor Basant K. Puri

Hammersmith Hospital and Imperial College, London

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Copy for next issue - due January 1st - to the editor by December 1st please, but asap is always better! All contributions welcome!

visit: www.pastoral.org.uk

A Few words from the Chair

Over the past year or two our national committee has been reviewing and looking at various aspects of APCMH's work, through subgroups, committee meetings and time away at Turvey Abbey and I thank all those who have given so much of their time to do this. Our aim has been to build on all the good things and strengths of our organisation with the focus to make our organisation and the invaluable work so many people do relevant for the potential challenges and opportunities of the years ahead. Little did we realise when we first started this journey that we would be given such generous legacies and gifts from Mary McCarthy and others, so it's even more important to ensure we use our resources, including people, wisely.

We have been looking at the values, vision and aims of APCMH and will produce this in the next newsletter, once formally approved by the committee in November. This led us to look at our leaflet and adapt it for today's needs and to make it attractive for a variety of settings. We hope this will be available in the New Year. We have also been looking at the various suggestions received for the change of name of APCMH (including not changing!) and a new logo. This is just the beginning as we look to find ways of spreading our message at a time when it's being heard more and more and to support that work once started. Let's have your ideas and views!

We live in uncertain times. Few of us could have quite foreseen the consequences of the credit crunch continuing to unfold with all its uncertainties for poorer and more vulnerable people in our community. We need people to be alongside one another to listen, support and be available in all sorts of ways. I pray that this crisis will be an opportunity to really look into our hearts and souls as individuals and as a nation and to recognise that we cannot live truly fulfilling lives without some recognition of the spiritual dimension / God and community. Let us offer our experience to one another in humility.

So... watch out for the New Year edition of the newsletter, which will hopefully launch our updated Vision, a copy of the new leaflet and the change of name and new logo!

Stephan Ball
Chairperson, APCMH

Book Review

TITLE: *Moving On: A Guide to Good Health and Recovery for People with a Diagnosis of Schizophrenia*

AUTHOR: *Roz D'Ombraine Hewitt*

PUBLISHER: *Karnac Books Ltd, 2007*
118 Fincley Road, London
NW3 5HT
www.karnacbooks.com

ISBN: *978 1 85575 442 3*

PRICE: *£14.99*



This book is a must for sufferers and carers of those damaged with schizophrenia.

Many issues are tackled from the possible causes to medication, support networks and employment.

I have rarely seen such a comprehensive book on a mental illness in depth and the advice and contact details of support groups is invaluable.

I can do no better than reproduce the book's dust jacket to give readers insight into the book's contents.

I recommend it whole-heartedly.

Pam Freeman

About one person in a hundred will be diagnosed with schizophrenia at some time in their life. The condition can be severe and debilitating with symptoms such as delusions, hallucinations and the loss of concentration, motivation and social skills.. But schizophrenia is not a

Poem

I am a tiny angel, I am smaller than your thumb,
I live in people's pockets that's where I have fun.
I don't suppose you've seen me, I'm tiny to detect
Though I am with you all the time I doubt we've ever met.

Before I was an angel I was a fairy in a flower.
God himself hand picked me and gave me angel power.
Now God has many angels that he trains in angel pools:
We become his eyes and ears and hands We are his special tools.

And because God he is so busy with very much to do
He said that my assignment is to keep close watch on you.
When he tucked me in your pocket He blessed you with angel care,
Then he told me to never leave you And I vowed always to be there.

Title and source unknown, submitted by Kelly

A Prayer

This prayer comes from the Carmelite Order and may be known to some readers; it deserves wide usage when we wish to hold our friends in prayer:

*O God the Holy Ghost,
Thou who searches all things
even the deep things of God and Man ,
So penetrate the springs of personality of N.....
And all who are sick in mind
So as to give them healing
And harmony and stability and lives made whole and free
For the sake of the testimony of Jesus.*

Amen

submitted by Cavan

Old Prayer - Perennial Issue

Those suffering with their mental health will know only too well the pain of social stigma, which can often be more difficult to cope with than the disability. Here is a powerful prayer from a writer, philosopher and commentator of another culture and another time that can be seen as an angry lament; many readers will be able to identify

with. It is in fact by 'Voltaire' of whom Wikipedia writes:



Voltaire was a French Enlightenment writer, essayist, deist and philosopher known for his wit, philosophical sport, and defence of civil liberties, including freedom of religion and free trade. He was a prolific writer, and produced works in almost every literary form, authoring plays, poetry, novels, essays, historical and scientific works, over 20,000

letters and over two thousand books and pamphlets.

He was an outspoken supporter of social reform despite strict censorship laws and harsh penalties for those who broke them. A satirical polemicist, he frequently made use of his works to criticize Catholic Church dogma and the French institutions of his day.

O Thou God of All Beings, of All Words, and of All Times,

We pray that the little differences in our clothes, in our inadequate languages, in our ridiculous customs, in our imperfect laws, in our illogical opinions, in our ranks and conditions which are so disproportionately important to us and so meaningless to you - that those small variations that distinguish those atoms we call men from one another, may not be signals for hatred and persecution!

Amen.

Maytree: a sanctuary for the suicidal

"12 years ago my son took his own life. I wish a place like Maytree had been there for him. It could have made all the difference."
(Maytree sponsor)

Maytree is a sanctuary for those in suicidal crisis, offering what they so often most need – somewhere to stay for a few days that is safe, non-medical, confidential, and where there is plenty of time to talk in an environment of trust. Maytree's house in Finsbury Park, north London, resourced by approximately 90 volunteers, is open to anyone over 18 from anywhere in the UK, free of charge and can take up to four guests at a time.

We believe two things at Maytree, firstly that it helps to talk and secondly that everyone needs to be treated as an individual and with respect. Anyone can contact Maytree direct by phone or e-mail at any time, whether to explore its suitability for someone about whom they are concerned or for themselves. We aim to keep the referral process as speedy and as simple as possible. For those living in London, if we think Maytree might be able to help, we ask them to come and meet us at the house to explore whether a stay might be beneficial and for those in other parts of the country, we do this over the phone.

Each guest's room is simple and comfortable; and there is a shared sitting room, kitchen and a small garden. Guests are free to come and go during the day. The maximum length of stay is four nights. Guests may stay only once at Maytree. Maytree opened in 2002 and nearly 500 guests have now stayed at the sanctuary.

Guest: "I came here a total wreck, - I didn't think I could make it through another day ... I will never forget this peaceful sanctuary. You have left me with hope and inspiration."

If you are experiencing thoughts of suicide, or are concerned about someone who is, please contact us:

www.maytree.org.uk / maytree@maytree.org.uk / 02072 637070

Needing to be Together

At the Lambeth Conference 2008, 650 Anglican bishops and their spouses spent three weeks on Kent University campus in accommodation designed for single students.

Within a few hours of arrival, many couples had arranged beds and desks into 'married suites' - one bedroom and one study. If it seemed a sensible arrangement to the guests, it was not acceptable to the hotel staff. Notes were duly sent informing the distinguished clergy and their spouses that they were not permitted to move furniture and asked to replace items to the original positions.

Some obediently complied with the bidding, but one archbishop's wife refused to undo all their hard work, being of a more determined nature. I met her at a reception on the first Saturday of the conference, to which I had been kindly invited by one of the academic staff (who is also a volunteer in our mental health chaplaincy team).

Quickly we had an agreement between the university and the conference. It just needed the College Master (a woman) and the Archbishop of Canterbury's spouse to get together for two minutes.

The outcome was that the University had no problem with temporary 'family' removals - but that staff would not expect to shift 600 lots of furniture at the end of conference.

We thus made a contribution to Lambeth 2008 being a happier experience for those for whom companionship is integral to their sense of wellbeing, especially when away from home. I went off that night pondering on the companionship needs of others - often prevented by unnecessary rules and unthinking or fearful organisers of various services - religious or otherwise.

Peter Richmond

Peter is Area Mental Health Chaplain for East Kent.

Spiritual Crisis Network presents

free public talk and book launch of

Madness, Mystery and the Survival of God

by Isabel Clarke

(Consultant Clinical Psychologist and Editor of
"Psychosis and Spirituality: exploring the new frontier")

Introduction to the Spiritual Crisis Network

by Annabel Hollis

Friday 5th December 2008 from 7pm

At St Marylebone Healing and Counselling Centre

St Marylebone Parish Church

17 Marylebone Road, London NW1 5LT

(opposite Regents Park York Gate)

Refreshments provided

Donations to SCN appreciated

Profits from book sales on night to SCN

For more information visit

www.isabelclarke.org/psychosis_spirituality/launch.html

www.spiritualcrisisnetwork.org.uk/

Did You See..?

... **Headroom**, an initiative to make viewers more aware of mental health? Their first film was on **Controlling Anger** and the second **Cracking Up** coincided with World Mental Health day in October. It is the story of Alastair Campbell, Tony Blair's top advisor for ten years.

As a young, dynamic and ambition-driven journalist, he became reliant on alcohol to fuel his drive. Eventually he was drinking 16 pints and a bottle of whisky a day - but he was not deemed a true alcoholic. His GP later explained the mind can become like a pressure cooker and alcohol is a form of letting the steam out.

He transferred from the **Daily Mirror** to the newly formed **Today** paper in 1986 and the pressure was intense. The climax came when he was in Scotland to cover the Labour Party Conference and his behaviour put him in a police cell for the night.

He described his psychoses, hearing voices and music inside and outside his head. Every noise was a message. Road signs were sending confusing signals and he became very, very scared and thought he was about to die. When the policeman asked if he felt all right he thought he meant was he Right Wing!

He was transferred to a BUPA hospital for a week. The bells in his room were Red and Blue which he felt carried further political messages. He felt he was being tested and he was failing. Part of the test was to get rid of all his worldly goods.

On return to London he was slumped in depression in which his obsessive personality played a big part.

He believes his eventual recovery was due to the loving support of his partner and two journalist friends, one of whom had him to stay in the peace of the country. He talked non stop for 8 hours about himself. His partner of many years, and by whom he now has three children, recalled how fearful the situation was being unable to really understand or know how to help. She and the MP Patricia Hewett were his strong pillars - Patricia Hewett had had much experience with a depressed sister.

It also helped sharing with a fellow female journalist who suffers from drug-resistant depression - 30% of depressives have this problem. When you know you are not alone in this sort of situation is an immense support.



Tony Blair who had known him for years invited him to work on the pre-election campaign in 1997. Tony assured him he had faith he would be able to do the job which is a courageous step for an employer to take.

So for 10 years the "buzz" was on again, part of which is the need to be loved, not that No.10 makes one lovable. By this time his children and partner were giving him the love he needed.

When the years of hard slog arrive he lapsed into another bout of depression and he accepts that he does have a depressive illness.

His remedies are to try to turn the bad into good. He takes exercise. Past experience is very important. Today he feels the rhythm of his

mood. He knows that is always going to end.

Medication for extreme times is necessary and can combine with psychotherapy. Tailoring the treatment package to the individual is very important.

It is said 27% of Members of Parliament have experienced mental health problems but they fear hostile media attention if this was public knowledge.

*Fenella Denning
Oct. 10th 2008*

Just a Reminder.

*If you require **extra copies** of Being Alongside, or, your copy has failed to arrive in the post, contact Pam: 020 8647 3678.*

*If your **e-mail** copy has failed, contact Steve: 01303 277399*

*If you have a query about your **membership / subscription** status, please contact Captain Mark Dadds: 020 7724 8517*

and kissed me on the cheek. When I got back from the store an hour later, I found him.'

'But there was something a bit strange. It seems just before Daddy died, he must have leaned over and rested his head on the chair beside the bed. What do you make of that?'

The minister wiped a tear from his eye and said, 'I wish we could all go like that.'

submitted by Jill Izod

Second Chance

A few weeks after I nearly died from a suicide attempt, I went to the church across the street from the campus. I was parishioner there, however occasional, and in light of being able to walk in through the door instead of being carried in by six, I thought I would see what was left of my relationship with God. I purchased a ticket to a Bach recital that was being performed in chapel. I went to the church early; my mind was still dull, and everything in it; my heart frayed and exhausted.

But I knelt anyway, and spoke into my hands the only prayer I really know or care very much about: 'God be in my head, and in my understanding' I said to myself. Somehow, despite the thickening of my mind, I got through the rest. But then I blanked out entirely as I got to the end, struggling to get through what had started as an act of reconciliation with God. The words were nowhere to be found.

I imagined for a while that my forgetting was due to the remnant the poisonous quantities of lithium I had taken, but suddenly the lines came up into my consciousness: 'God be at mine end, and departing'. I felt a convulsive sense of shame and sadness, a kind I not known before, nor since. Where had God been? I could not answer the question then, nor can I answer it now. I know, however, that I should have been dead but was not - and I was fortunate enough to be given another chance at life, which I realise others were not.

*from: Night Falls Fast - Understanding Suicide
by Kay Redfield Jamison*

Daddy's Empty Chair

A man's daughter had asked the local minister to come and pray with her father. When the minister arrived, he found the man lying in bed with his head propped up on two pillows.

An empty chair sat beside his bed. The minister assumed that the old fellow had been informed of his visit. 'I guess you were expecting me', he said.

'No, who are you?' said the father. The minister told him his name and then remarked, 'I saw the empty chair and I figured you knew I was going to show up.'

'Oh yeah, the chair,' said the bedridden man. 'Would you mind closing the door?' Puzzled, the minister shut the door. 'I have never told anyone this, not even my daughter,' said the man.

'But all of my life I have never known how to pray. At church I used to hear the pastor talk about prayer, but it went right over my head. I abandoned any attempt at prayer until one day four years ago, my best friend said to me, 'Johnny, prayer is just a simple matter of having a conversation with Jesus. Here is what I suggest: Sit down in a chair; place an empty chair in front of you, and in faith see Jesus on the chair. It's not spooky because he promised, 'I will be with you always'. Then just speak to him in the same way you're doing with me right now.'

'So', the old man continued, 'I tried it and I've liked it so much that I do it a couple of hours every day. I'm careful though. If my daughter saw me talking to an empty chair, she'd either have a nervous breakdown or send me off to the funny farm.'

The minister was deeply moved by the story and encouraged the old man to continue as he had been doing. Then he prayed with him, anointed him with oil, and returned to the church.

Two nights later the daughter called to tell the minister that her daddy had died that afternoon.

'Did he die in peace?' he asked.

'Oh yes, I think so from the look on his face. When I left the house about two o'clock, he called me over to his bedside, told me he loved me

Meditation: Sowers of Hope

Sowers of Hope: this is what we are all about. We plant the seeds that one day will grow. We water seeds already planted, knowing they hold future promise.

We lay foundations that will need further development.

We provide yeast that produces effects far beyond our capabilities.

We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realising that.

This enables us to do something and do it very well.

It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord's Grace to enter and do the rest.

We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the Master Builder and the Worker. We are Workers, not Master Builders; ministers not messiahs.

We are prophets of a future not our own.

*Oscar Romero, Archbishop of San Salvador,
murdered whilst saying Mass, 24 March 1980.*

Help is at Hand

Samaritans:	08457 909090
Saneline:	08457 678000
Rethink Advisory Service:	020 8974 6814
Young Minds Parents' Information Service:	08000 182138
Carers in the Community:	01642 818332
MIND:	08457 660163
Maytree	020 7263 7070

A couple of thoughts for Christmas - the first is fresh and tender, but the second expansively reminds us Christmas (and Easter) are forever...

Poem: The Manger (Luke 2)

Basic wood design, rough and ready
I've seen everything, and then some.

Well, I'm fair flummoxed this evening!
This poor young couple arrive, she's
Really going through her contractions.

I've seen all sorts of animals born here
(and a few conceived in the hay loft):
But this will be the first human baby.
Phew, what a palaver! The animals
Seem to have it so much easier.

Well, would you believe it, instead
Of holding the feed for the animals
I have become a temporary crib!

It's more like Piccadilly Circus in here,
With all the comings and goings,
And me, playing the vital supporting role,
In tonight's spell-binding drama.

Hay, spelt, barley and millet will be
A real come down after tonight!

Jean Wearn Wallace

visit: www.pastoral.org.uk

Poem: Flying Visit

When 'time' and 'time-warp' intersect
On peopled planets blessed with grace,
Christ comes in Person to inspect
Each globe, arms open for embrace:

No dissidence will He detect
Which undermines its happy race -
Yet, while addressing his Elect,
Marks down a less Elysian place.

There, evil's inroads disaffect
Created virtue's fallen face:
Joy's forfeit can alone correct,
By sharing, shame, the bad or base -

And so, as past pangs recollect,
Winged wanderings at last retrace
Their path where sinners still reject
Our Hope, here flown from outer space.

Giles de la Bedoyere



Many thanks to all our contributors whose offerings are always so appreciated.

I can only put in what I receive, so I hope you're working on your next offering...!

Steve