

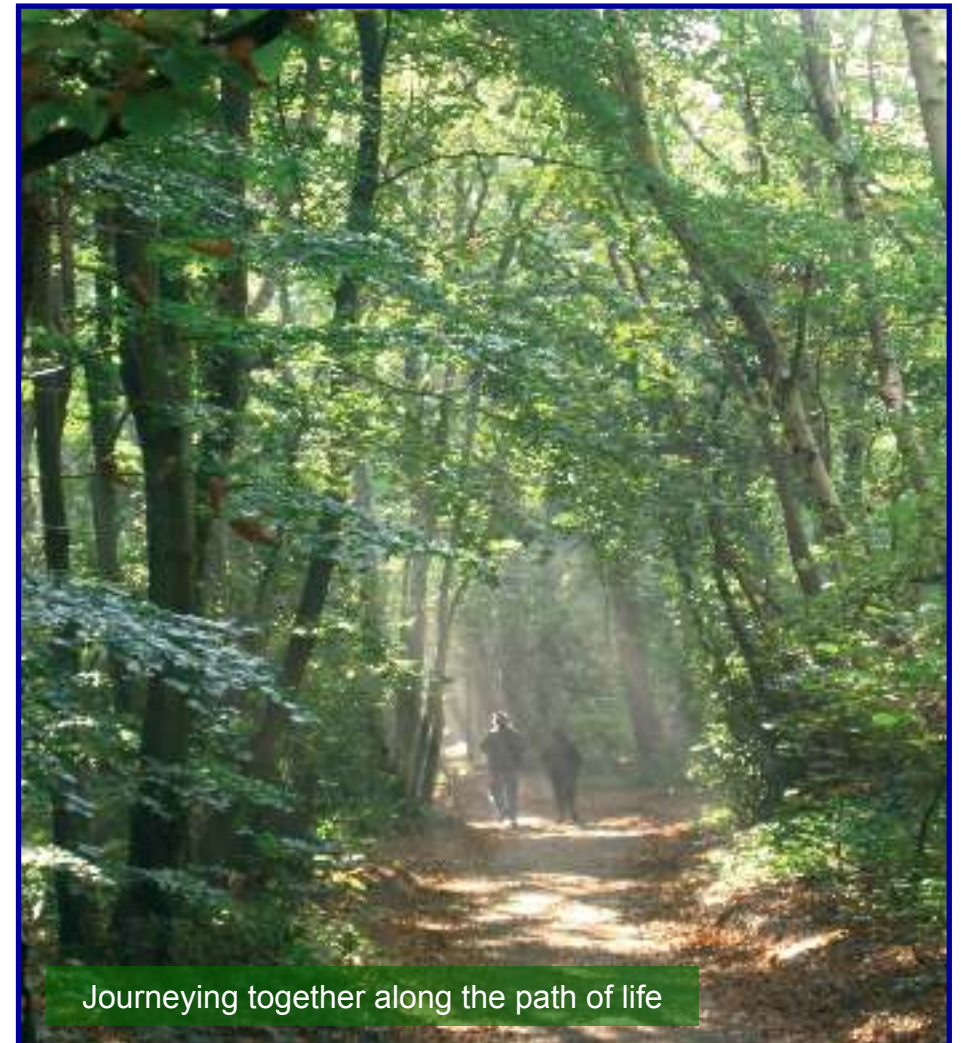
Rembrandt's *Prodigal Son*:
A pictorial meditation on
rejection, stigma, forgiveness and
reconciliation.



Being March - April 2009

Alongside

The Bi-Monthly magazine of *Being Alongside* / APCMH



Journeying together along the path of life

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)

St Andrew's, Frognal, United Reformed Church NW3



2nd and 4th Friday of each month

10.00am-12noon

Happy
Birthday!

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 & What of Being Alongside

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Being Alongside / 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.

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

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The Eight Commandments.

Pinched from the February 2008 issue of Candis, a family orientated magazine which contributes significant proportions of its subscription income to charity eg BLISS, British Heart Foundation, Marie Curie Cancer Care, Charities Aid Foundation. Subscribe on: 0844 545 8100.

- 1 Do something you Dread.
- 2 Break Out of Your Comfort Zone.
- 3 Get Out More.
- 4 Stay in Touch.
- 5 Grow Something.
- 6 Be Nice.
- 7 Limit Your Expectations.
- 8 Have a Laugh.

I know you'll have heard it all before, but have you tried it?

Sticks and Stones...

mental health thoughts from The Guardian:

Take care using language about mental health issues.

In addition to such clearly offensive and unacceptable words as *loony maniac*, *nutter*, *psycho* and *schizo*, expressions to avoid because they stereotype and stigmatise.

Use *victim of*, *suffering from*, and *afflicted by*, "a person with" which is clear, accurate and preferable to "a person suffering from".

Never use schizophrenic to mean "in two minds", or as a noun.

Avoid writing "the mentally ill"— say *mentally ill people*, *mental health patients* or *people with mental health problems*.

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

Front Page

This issue we have a contribution from National Council member Miriam Reyes who recounts and assesses her faith journey through trials and tribulations. It is a story of courage and optimism which we can all admire and emulate. However, she is most anxious to mention the invaluable help she had from Sister Teresa.

I came to the UK in 1985 through the troubles and difficulties in the The Philippines: I found the the violence and poverty traumatic. Also, I was about to become fully committed within a radical group, but after discussions and prayer and advice from an ex Benedictine Nun, I declined.

Looking back to my student days, my five years in the convent and the way I was enabled to come to the UK I see I was not always as open to God's Quiet Voice as I should have been. Maybe He was seeking to shout at me through the violence and poverty issues that I was having to face.

Coming to the U.K. also had its traumatic moments: culture shock and much other unexpected stuff! The greatest trauma was that although I was a teacher I was unable to use my skills and education to help others here. But despite the difficulties & struggles my Prayer Life suddenly took on a New Dimension. I started asking God for His Grace and I came into a Personal Relationship with Him.

In 1990 after giving birth to my daughter I chose to stay out of work to give her my full attention. As I was breastfeeding her it was a bit hard to get back to work and finally trying all spices to wean her, then at the end of the 2nd year I got a job in a Health Authority where I was badly treated and this resulted in both a Court case and clinical depression.

By God's Grace it eventually resulted - as promised in Rom 8:28 *All things work together for good* - in my increasing interest in both Mental Health and those also suffering trauma of various kinds. Deo Gratias for the Scripture Class led by Rev'd Sir Charles Dilke at the London Oratory that continually nourishes, strengthens and affirms my faith since 1997. The Holy Scripture constantly gives me a mental orientation which puts

To Whet Your Appetite for:

Alternative Methods of Dealing with Mental Disorders

Herewith more about the Day Conference at St Andrew's, Frognal, United Reformed Church NW3 (Hampstead), to take place on 21 October, 2009 as reported in our last issue..



*The third keynote Speaker is **Rosalind***

Hewitt (above).

*She qualified as an Alexander Teacher in 1996 and is a member of STAT (The Society of Teachers of the Alexander Technique). During research for her book *Moving On: A Guide to Good Health and Recovery for People with a Diagnosis of Schizophrenia* (Karnac Books) she talked to several people who found that the Alexander Technique helped them to manage their symptoms and various physical problems, such as backache.*

Rosalind's talk will include a practical demonstration and ideas for using the Technique to promote good health a sense of well-being.

More anon...

Just a Reminder.

*If you require **extra copies** of Being Alongside, or, your copy has **failed to arrive in the post**, please contact **Pam**: 02086 473678.*

*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**: 0207 724 8517*

Positive Psychology:

'A borrower from faith....and an encourager of faith'

Ann Morisy - Community Theologian

Sat 16th May 2009

Everyone welcome

10am Coffee

10.30 Workshop: Positive Psychology
Ann Morisy

1pm Lunch

2pm *Being Alongside* / **APCMH A.G.M.**

2.45pm Open Forum

3pm Prayer & reflection

Location: All Saints Church

100 Prince of Wales Drive

Battersea London SW11 4BU

(Nearest rail: Battersea Park or Queenstown Road)

To reserve a place or to speak at the Open Forum call:

Mark Dadds APCMH Secretary 0844 800 9744

Or email: mark.dadds@pastoral.org.uk

NB: Suggested donations for the day including lunch £5-£10 and may be sent by cheque made payable to: **APCMH** St Paul's Church Centre Rossmore Road London NW1 6NJ or may be given on the day.

worldly things in perspective and proportion. Laus Deo for my unceasing enthusiasm to learn more through APCMH seminars and conferences, which I attended from 1996; becoming a Member in 2005.

Today, I help out as a volunteer at the Barnabas group at St. Paul's. It was a great privilege to go with the group to minister in a sheltered housing *Songs of Praise* event. The fragile and the frail become strong in that situation and I hope to go again. I also helped the group do shoe boxes for *Samaritan Purse* which have gone all over the world to war torn and poverty stricken places. The words of the Magnificat: *The Poor will be filled with Good Things* have helped me come to terms with the violence and the poverty issues I faced in the Philippines and elsewhere.

In 2009, a New Year for New Grace and New Hope for All! Trust you too will come through some of your struggles - which obviously will be different from mine - knowing the Truth of this final verse from the well known devotional poem *Footprints* by Mary Stevenson:

*The Lord replied, "My precious, precious child,
I love you and I would never, never leave you during your
times of trial and suffering. When you saw only one set of
footprints, it was then that I carried you."*

and Romans 8:35, 37-39 (New Jerusalem Bible):

*Can anything cut us off from the love of Christ --
can hardships or distress, or persecution, or lack of food
and clothing, or threats or violence?*

*No; we come through all these things triumphantly
victorious, by the power of him who loved us.*

*For I am certain of this: neither death nor life, nor
angels, nor principalities, nothing already in existence
and nothing still to come, nor any power, nor the heights
nor the depths, nor any created thing whatever, will be
able to come between us and the love of God, known to us
in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Miriam Reyes

A Plea From Pam

I'm sure many readers are familiar with the comedy series *Keeping Up Appearances*. The main character, admirably played by Patricia Routledge has an overwhelming, overbearing personality so that many do all they can to avoid her - even the vicar. No one in the programme seems to have got through to her and become a real friend.

Very sadly some readers of our newsletter who are lonely and seeking friendship have felt their churches only pay lip service to the commandments of Jesus: to

*love God with all your heart and and mind
and your neighbour as yourself.*

They attend churches where they find there is usually a warm welcome on a Sunday but no interaction during the week - no social or spiritual gatherings where they can feel part of the whole scene; where people seem genuinely interested in them as people.

I know I am very lucky belonging to a community where all are welcomed - an inclusive church with many opportunities to meet up during the week. I think it is sad that our ethos of being alongside is failing to reach those who could help many who suffer with mental health problems. Sufferers go to a church expecting to find Christian fellowship and friendship where they will be accepted and not stigmatised.

I know there are many churches who do care and who do reach out to the community. All I can suggest is that people do seek out these churches and avoid others where they are made to feel unloved and unwelcome.

If any readers can suggest other ways forward please write to the editor who will publish your thoughts in future issues. I feel it would be very remiss of me not to signal up these concerns as I have been talking to people recently who feel that BA / APCMH gives out messages that are not picked up by many church communities.

Pam Freeman

~ ba ~

Ed: Perhaps after the bad news here & on p5, folks could write in with any good news?

There is Hope

This is a clip from The Observer 24 Feb 08 in which a new book by Dr Paul Keedwell of the Institute of Psychiatry in London is reviewed

...a recently published population survey of Dutch adults, to show that, after their depression, many patients seem to be able to cope better with challenges.

'For most, their vitality, their social interaction and their general health actually improved on recovery - and so did their work performance. I know from patients that it can also make you more realistic in your outlook; you develop more empathy to those around you.'

Keedwell suffered a bad spell of depression in his thirties. 'It went on for months, but I did come out of it, and I think I was a better doctor as a result. I certainly had more empathy with my patients. It also made me put my problems into perspective and I probably had a little more humility.'

The book (*How Sadness Survived*) describes the creativity of those who have experienced dark periods of depression, such as John Stuart Mill and Winston Churchill. Aristotle saw it as a state of immense moral and spiritual value because of the insights it could bring.

According to Keedwell, the strongest argument for depression's usefulness 'lies in its ability to force us to take stock of ourselves and ask: "Why have I allowed myself to become so frustrated for so long?" If depression did not encourage us to reassess things, we would merely return later to the same battle!'

submitted by Suzanne Heneghan

Jump to It!

Lord of the Future,

hold out your hands and catch me when I jump.

Eddie Askew

Something for Lent..?

Wilderness Rock

Sat here in the wilderness
daily roasted, nightly frozen;
it's a quiet life for a rock.

Our highlight of the year
is the rains, you wouldn't
believe the difference;
all around us turns into a
flowery garden, with insects.

Into our peaceful reverie
comes this guy, wanting
solitude, prays a lot, doesn't
eat or drink, just prays.
Played out in front of our

astonished eyes, is the war
of the worlds, mighty evil
challenging the power of
hungry and thirsty love.
Magic tricks, incredible

visions, and persuasive
sales talk, get the evil guy
no where at all. After the
command for evil to get lost,
it's angels, food and water.

Phew, they have all gone,
now it's back to normal,
being a wilderness rock.

Jean Wearn Wallace

With a Little Help from My Friends

A certain Dr. Mortimer Wheeler
some time ago declared that the only
real way to help a person with mental
health problems towards
improvement is the slow, patient,
influence of the mature person upon
the ones who suffer.

I am only too aware of the kind
of 'Christlike' character demanded of
those who try to 'be alongside' those
who have special challenges.

It has been my task to befriend
many with easily recognisable 'first
line' symptoms of a deep-seated or
chronic nature who fail to respond to
others' most earnest efforts.

To resort to the clinically
detached technique of trying to
arouse the reactions of some past
experience, and then hoping the
person may re-adjust to life using his
own limited resources may be of help
in some instances, but we who know
and trust the Lord should seek to
help those in need, and not imagine
it to be only a medical matter.

Ken Bunting, R.M.N. (Rtd.)

To Alert the Vulnerable

*The identity of this letter's writer is withheld, for, as you will see, it is
a sad tale of how things can go unintentionally wrong so easily:*

*I was brought up a Catholic at a time when guilt,
fear and worries about going to hell featured strongly.
After my breakdown I left it and joined another
denomination.*

*Recently a friend said that the Catholic Church
had changed and they now preach a loving God. So on
Christmas Eve, because I could not go to my usual
church, I decided to go to Midnight Mass at the Catholic
Church just around the corner.*

*I expected the dismissal to be along the lines of
'Peace be with You' but was shocked to hear instead 'God
save us from the final damnation.'*

*I went home, alone, with this playing in my head
and hardly got any sleep that night. Friends said, 'How
depressing'; they wouldn't go to a church like that and
nor will I ever again. It can be very frightening for
people. Religion can cause mental distress. Is it any
wonder there has been a slogan on buses saying:*

'There is probably no God, so enjoy life'.

Name and Address Supplied

*How tragic that a place where we all, and especially the vulnerable,
hope for sympathy and care has, on this occasion, been a source of
discomfort and fear. See Pam's Plea overleaf on a similar theme.
Meanwhile, whatever we feel about 'sin', let us never forget that God
forgives and Love redeems.*

~ ba ~

54321 - Faith Steps for Mental Health

I am looking for help testing a mental health promotion project aimed at faith communities.

54321 is based on conversations I have had with service users, carers, church leaders, health and social care and health promotion workers. The theory is that each of the partner groups needs to put into the promotion process those things that are the most important as far as they are concerned.

I am looking for groups and individuals to think about - and come up with brief descriptions of the things they have found most helpful in coping and hoping, in recovery and discovery, using faith and faith communities as a key recourse. I need to substitute my 'recollection' of what has been said to me with actual quotes and consideration from people who know.

Five things *service users* tell me they find helpful from faith:

1. Spiritual activities that help,
2. friends who stay,
3. values not based on money,
4. use of music, art and poetry,
5. an open minded approach to life.

Four things that *carers* tell me they find helpful from faith:

1. Sharing the care with others,
2. being part of a bigger 'family',
3. a place for yourself,
4. trusting that God knows how it all fits together.

Three things that *faith communities* tell me they find helpful from in people who experience mental health problems:

1. Insights into life that others miss,
2. a reminder to work with people as they are,
3. helpful connections with health and social services

Two things that *service providers* tell me they value from faith:

1. Encouragement for service users to stick with treatments,
2. real support for service users and carers.

The Best Therapy?

Your whole body must be united in laughter... You should shake with merriment from head to foot... I want you to laugh with your whole heart and soul, with all the breath of life... You will see how the laughter that comes from such a heart overcomes the world.

Teachings

Sri Ananda Maya Ma

**Happy Birthday to
The Dymphna Group:
2 Years Young on 13 April!
Keep up the Great Work!**

see inside front cover

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

Essex Mind and Spirit Conference

'Resources for the Journey'

22 April, 9.15am to 4pm @ Chelmsford Cathedral

Due to the success of the 2007 conference, we are presenting a third.

It will focus more on local initiatives within 'cluster' groups across Essex and within the faith, service user, carer, and mental health professional groups that form the Essex Mind and Spirit partnership.

Co-chaired by **Dr Richard Coleman & Dr Patrick Geoghegan.**

***Resources for the Journey* Dr. Sarah Eagger**

Chair of the Special Interest Group in the Royal College of Psychiatry

Presentations from Essex Mind and Spirit cluster groups

Resourcing faith, professional, community & service user groups in Essex.

Lunch – provided.

Parallel seminars and workshops Including: Solution Focused Therapy, Taking Spiritual Histories, Mindfulness, Therapeutic Art, Relaxation and Exercise, Spirituality and Well-being.

Essex *Mind and Spirit* in the context of the national scene.

Professor Peter Gilbert

national lead on mental health and spirituality

£15. Please register asap **by 3 April latest.**

Only 220 places which will include some free places for the unwaged.

Apply to:-

Karen Latham: 01245 546433 / karen.latham@nepft.nhs.uk

**NEPFT, Stapleford House,
103 Stapleford Close, Chelmsford, Essex, CM2 0QX.**

One thing I have found from faith that promotes my own mental health: Being part of something that helps me both cope now and keep hope alive.

I am looking for real examples of experiences of faith steps for mental health.

From the input I hope to produce a small advice leaflet for local faith community leaders to enable their better understanding and support .

Please send your 54321 ideas to Peter.Richmond@kmpt.nhs.uk

Peter Richmond

The Rev'd Peter J Richmond
St Martin's Hospital
Littlebourne Road
Canterbury
CT1 1TD
01227 812047/ 21

~ ba ~

*visit:
www.pastoral.org.uk*

Quiet Time

O God you are the unsearchable abyss of peace,
The ineffable sea of love, and the fountain of blessings.

Water us with plenteous streams from the riches of your grace;
And from the most sweet springs of your kindness
make us children of quietness and heirs of peace.
Amen.

*Clement of Alexandria
2nd century CE*

Help?

This is an excerpt from an appeal letter doing the rounds on behalf of the:

PSYCHIATRY RESEARCH TRUST
Registered Charity Number 284286
January 2009

The Psychiatry Research Trust, which exists solely to raise money for research at the Institute of Psychiatry, London, is desperately short of General Funds. I am asking for your support for the special appeal which aims to raise £1million over the next twelve months.

As I am sure you know, the Institute and its associated Bethlem Royal and Maudsley Hospitals form one of the most prestigious organisations of its kind in the world. Its work is vital, not only because it is directed at securing better treatment for sufferers but also because it seeks to understand the underlying causes of mental illness and brain disease with the aim of finding means of prevention of and, if possible, cure.

Here are just a few examples of recent research studies funded:

- In Alzheimer's Disease, we have isolated a brain enzyme which points the way towards successful treatment
- In the field of Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (ME) we have developed a successful new treatment for a previously untreatable condition
- In Child Psychiatry, we have discovered abnormal genes that can produce anti-social behaviour in children and depression in adults, thus opening the way to the development of new treatments
- We have supported research work in the Eating Disorders Unit which has now attracted a further grant of £2 million by the Department of Health.
- We have established the country's first research unit for the study and treatment of De-personalisation
- In the near past, we created the highly successful interactive computer self-treatment programme for depression "Beating the Blues"
- The work of our specialist group researching Parkinsonism and its possible physical causes is showing highly promising results.

These examples are just a few of the many research studies ongoing at the Institute of Psychiatry which affect people of every age from children

to the elderly. The work affects us all either directly or through our families and loved ones. And many of the people who recognise this are generous donors to the Psychiatry Research Trust. Indeed, since our inception in 1982, despite having only one and a half paid staff, we have raised over £12 million for Institute research.

Because the vast majority of these donations, however, is earmarked for particular projects specified by the donors, our need for General Funds has now become acute. Hence the launch of our new appeal.

Please help us if you can. Yours sincerely,

Leslie Paine

OBE MA(Oxon) Trust Director

PO Box 87, De Crespigny Park, Denmark Hill, SE5 8AF

020 7703 6217

l.please@iop.kcl.ac.uk

www.psychiatryresearch.org.uk

The nature of one Reality must be known by one's own clear spiritual perception: it cannot be known through a learned man.

Similarly the form of the moon can only be known through one's own eyes. How can it be known through others?

The Crest-Jewel of Wisdom

Shankara

The First Healing

The first revelation of God to a person is through a Mother's Love to her baby, before the baby has language, before it is old enough to know anything directly about God.

If a Mother evokes the baby's capacity for loving, then it will be able to return love for love, and will grow up capable of seeing in this human life, a manifestation of the indefinable things we mean by the word God.

Harry Guntrip