



Mind & Spirit Chelmsford: l > r: **Dr Sarah Egger** (Chair of Spirituality Special Interest Group at the Royal College of Psychiatrists); **Peter Gilbert**, (Professor of Spirituality and Social Work at Stafford University); **Richard Walne** (director of Partnership & Specialist Services SEPFT); & **Brian Loader** (InterAct & Event Organiser).



Being Alongside

July - August 2009

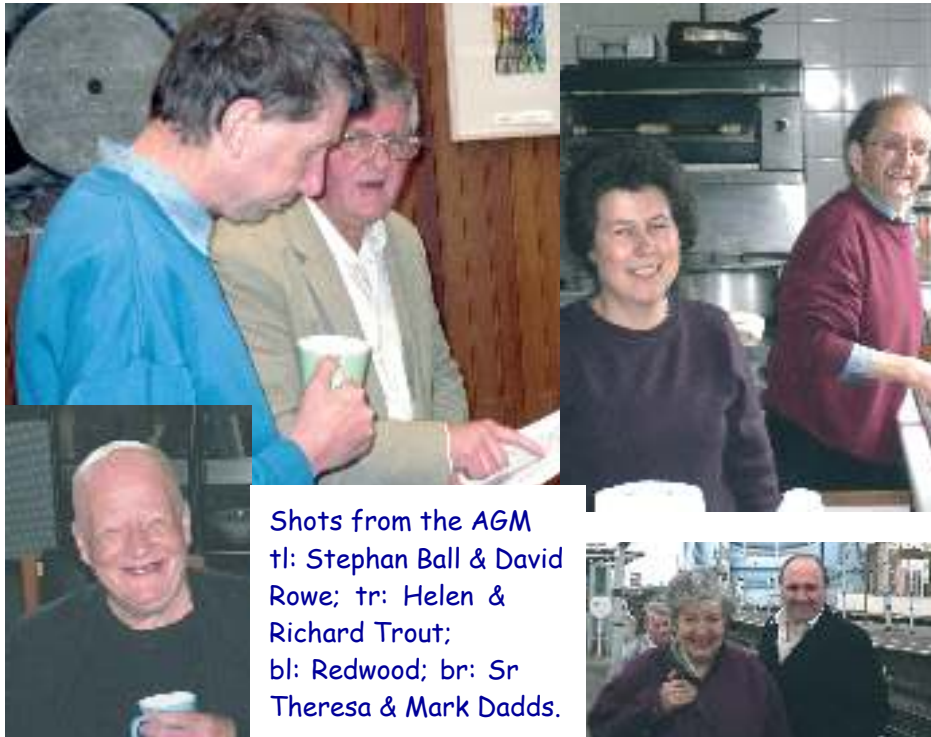
The Bi-Monthly magazine of *Being Alongside* / APCMH



Left: **A 'Positive' Psychologist:**
Ann Morisy, Community Theologian,
Keynote Speaker at AGM.

Below: **Drumming for Their
Dinner?**

Lunch Time Drumming Class at the
Inter-Act Mind and Spirit Day on
Wednesday 22 April, led by Steve Ball.



Shots from the AGM
tl: Stephan Ball & David
Rowe; tr: Helen &
Richard Trout;
bl: Redwood; br: Sr
Theresa & Mark Dadds.



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

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)



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Being Alongside / the Association for Pastoral Care in Mental Health (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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limited company: 3957730

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

Origination by BA; printed by **PrintInc**: 020 8255 2110

If you're quick, lucky & have a bob or two ie £25 & up...

One-Day Conference

Tuesday 23 June 2009, St. Paul's Cathedral

Depression: A Way Forward.

The conference aims to bring together the medical and pastoral communities in order to explore the different ways that one can approach the treatment and handling of depression in its various forms. It is hoping that by bringing the medical community together with clergy a sharing of knowledge can result that will benefit all parties.

Call **Robert Gordon 020 7489 1011** for details & a registration form, or do it online at **www.rsm.ac.uk/diary**

Session one: **What is depression?**

Session two: **Personal journeys**

Session three: **Care in depression**

Session four: **Joint therapeutic working**

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

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Next Issue:

- our Patron Prof Andrew Sims's new book
- more on Jean Marsham's Conference
- G. Q?. calculate how grateful you are!

Meanwhile, many thanks to all our contributors whose offerings are always so vital. Contributions are welcome from all areas of the community. Whilst we 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 September 1st - to the editor by August 1st please, but sooner is always more helpful!

Front Page

Living Life Mindfully in the Present Moment

Our AGM and workshop have come and gone – I'm thankful to all those who came and shared and learnt in what for most of us was a new and delightful venue. One of the key points I took from Ann Morisy's workshop was her challenge to us to think in more positive and creative ways and to have more of an attitude of gratitude in our lives. (See p 8).

A growing area of convergence between spirituality and mental health seems to be around living in the present moment and mindfulness. These are, and have been, key components of Christian contemplation and Eastern meditation, such as Buddhism, often forgotten or neglected in the West. 'There is but one now' (Meister Eckhart); no other moment exists since the past has gone and the future is still to come. 'This is where I am now' – Jesus exemplified quality living in the moment throughout his life.

Mindfulness can be defined as the 'moment-to-moment, non-judgmental awareness, cultivated by paying attention' (most often through the practice of meditation). Jon Kabat-Zinn. Thich Nhat Hanh, a Vietnamese peace Buddhist, recounts: The Buddha was asked: "What do you and your disciples practise?" and he replied: "We sit, we walk and we eat". "But sir, everyone sits, walks and eats". The Buddha replied: "When we sit, we know we are sitting; when we walk, we know we are walking; when we eat we know we are eating". 'When we are mindful, deeply in touch with the present moment, our understanding of what is going on deepens and we begin to be filled with acceptance, joy, peace and love'.

Each one of us contains the seed of mindfulness that needs to be nurtured regularly. Thich Nhat Hanh suggests that one way to practice this inner peacefulness is to begin by walking peacefully. As part of this he encourages us to smile – even the beginnings of a smile and to keep it there. He likens it to the half smile of the Buddha. 'As you learn to walk as the Buddha walked, you can smile as he smiled. Why wait until you are completely transformed and completely awakened? You can start being a part-time Buddha right now!' 'The half smile is the fruit of your awareness that you are here, alive, walking. At the same time it nurtures more peace and joy within you. Smiling as you practise walking meditation will keep your steps calm and peaceful and give you a deep sense of ease... Don't be afraid to smile!' A colleague at work found herself frowning on her way to work when thinking of all the things she had to do that day; she then

Day for Life

2009: **England & Wales 26 July**; Ireland 4 October

Day for Life – the day in the (Roman Catholic) Church's year dedicated to celebrating the dignity of life from conception to natural death – will this year focus on the theme of suicide.

The main emphasis of Day for Life will be on the pastoral dimensions of this difficult and sensitive subject. It will highlight why the (Roman Catholic) Church believes that every life is worth living and look at the reasons why people contemplate suicide, including acute mental illness and the possible spiritual factors involved. It will also point towards the support that the professional services can bring and hopefully help to reduce the stigma too often associated with mental illness and depression.

Building upon last year's focus on mental health; the bishops hope this year's day with its particular focus on suicide will help raise awareness of the vital role played by families and a supportive parish community in supporting and sustaining those who may be struggling to cope.

Connecting with the 2009 theme, this year's title will be:
'You are precious in my sight' Isaiah 43:4.

check out: www.dayforlifearchive.org/2008/index.htm



L: Rev'd Paul Walker
Hospital Chaplain & CPH .
R: Linda Wonnacott Art
Therapist, at Chelmsford.





Being Alongside

Association for Pastoral Care
in Mental Health

Alternative Methods of Dealing with Mental Distress

a Day of Professional Talks with Q&A opportunities

Wednesday, 21 October

09.30 - 10.00	Registration
10.00 - 10.45:	Frances Treuheurz: Homeopathic Medicine
10.45 - 11.30:	Deidre King: Autogenics
10.30 - 12.15:	Isobel Clark: Spiritual Crisis Network
12.15 - 1.45:	Lunch (including drinks) provided!
1.45 - 2.30:	Roz Hewitt: Alexander Technique
2.30 - 3.15:	tba
3.15 - 4.00:	Plenary tba

£40 organisations, £18 individuals
£7.50 Concession Rate: Please apply.

S.A.E. please, with cheque made out to 'St Andrew's Church' to:

Jean Marsham, 'Conference', 9 Kingscote, Hodford Road,
Golders Green, London NW1 8NH

Tel: 0208 455 1240

Places limited to 100.

Please apply by 30 September as no tickets available on the day.

practised a half smile, found it harder to have negative thoughts and even found people smiling back!

I'd like to invite you to practise a half smile in silence wherever you are or as you walk along mindfully. See what a difference it might make to your day (not to mention others too!). Happy (half) smiling!

Acknowledgments:

Jon Kabat-Zinn; *Arriving at Your Own Door: 108 Lessons in Mindfulness*. Piaticus, 2008

Thich Nhat Hanh; *The Long Road Turns to Joy*. Parallax Press, 1996

Stephan Ball Chairperson, *Being Alongside / APCMH*

NB: most members will find a Renewal Form for Membership to BA / APCMH and Subscriptions to the Newsletter in this mailing.

Thank you for your continued support.

A Thank You Letter

The following came in mid May from the Psychiatry Research Trust (Charity Number 284286) in response to *Being Alongside's* Readership generosity - reproduced with permission:

In your March / April 09 issue you reproduced my letter seeking General Funds for The Psychiatry Research Trust (pages 8/9). The purpose of this brief letter is to thank you very much indeed for so kindly doing this.

As a result of your publication I am delighted to tell that we have received several donations. Each one has been acknowledged, but I would be grateful if you could pass on a general Thank You to your readers from The Psychiatry Research Trust.

With Kindest Regards, Mr Leslie Pain (Trust Director),

PO Box 87, De Crespigny Park, Denmark Hill, SE5 8AF. 020 7703 6217
e-mail: l.pease@iop.kcl.ac.uk website: www.psychiatryresearch.org.uk



'Resources for the Journey' 3rd Essex Mind and Spirit Conference

The focus for this 3rd Essex Mind and Spirit Conference was on personal experiences and local initiatives – showing the positive impact of spirituality on the journey through mental health. 150 people gathered in the beautiful and peaceful surroundings of Chelmsford Cathedral on 22 April to listen to national leaders and local 'service users' tell their personal stories and to participate in workshops which provided opportunities to learn about resources for the journey through mental ill-health.

The conference programme responded to requests made at the second conference in February 2007 (reported on in *Being Alongside*, May-June 2007) that there should be more about local initiatives in Essex. So the focus was particularly on activities going on in the county in training professional and faith groups and in fostering local initiatives to bring together service users, faith representatives and professional mental health staff to provide holistic support. Delegates were provided the opportunity to see how these local initiatives could be further strengthened by setting them in the context of the national scene.

Ruth Jackson, Associate Dean of the Faculty of Health and Social Care at Anglia Ruskin University (ARU), welcomed people on behalf of the sponsors (ARU, the two Essex mental health NHS trusts, the Anglican Diocese of Chelmsford and InterAct) without whom the conference would not have been affordable to many delegates.



Richard Walne (right), Director of Business Development at North Essex MH Partnership Foundation Trust and Conference Chairman, set the tone for the day by telling of his own journey through



APSCC Conference 2009 30/06/2009 - 01/07/2009

Acknowledging the spiritual - an ethical essential?

As Britain becomes more multi-cultural, spirituality and its expression - religious or otherwise - is becoming more important. The issue of religion and the role of spirituality in the health and wellbeing of clients is therefore a key issue for counsellors, and the focus of the 2009 APSCC conference.

Workshops will explore spirituality across assessment, supervision, pastoral care, ethical practice & training, providing practical advice & encouraging debate. Also, we have 2 speakers and the opportunity for group reflection. The conference will be thought-provoking and informative, whilst contributing to members' personal and professional development.

To book, call our Customer Services department on 01455 883300. Or, download a booking form from www.apsc.org.uk.

when alongside people confronted by harsh circumstances, the positive psychologists seem unembarrassed by drawing on religious practices. Emmons writes: "The religious traditions encourage us to do more than react with passivity and resignation to a loss or crisis; they advise us to change our perspective, so that our suffering is transformed into an opportunity for growth."

Emmons amplifies how this comes about: "Religious traditions ... articulate visions of how we should respond to the fact that life is full of suffering... People can adopt an attitude toward their suffering that allows it to be a meaningful component of life, perhaps opening the threshold to a deeper, more authentic existence. By allowing existence itself to be a gift and ourselves to be enfolded in the grace or generosity of God, especially in trying times, the commitment to keep praising God is to enact gratitude".

Ann Morisy

Reproduced with permission



Felicia, Mark and Sister Theresa



mental and physical ill-health and how his own Christian faith had helped him on his journey to recovery. It was a powerful reminder that there are many people in senior positions whose personal experience strongly influences the policies they adopt in their work.

In the first keynote address, Dr Sarah Egger, Chair of the Special Interest Group in the Royal College of Psychiatry, likened the pathway through illness to a journey over time (diagnosis to recovery) arrivals and departures (relapsing etc), stages and routes (treatment strategies and other contributions to recovery).

Sarah touched the hearts of many delegates when she spoke about her own passion for walking and noted that companions and guides are met along the way (carers and professionals) and for some, walking sticks (faith, religion, spiritual growth, transcendence), provide enormous help over life's particularly difficult patches.

Dr Egger shared her clinical experiences of the role of spirituality in life's multi-faceted journey and talked about her involvement in two recently published projects *Values in Healthcare – a spiritual approach* and *Lifting your Spirits*. She defined Spirituality as

'The essential human, personal and interpersonal dimension which integrates and transcends the cultural, religious, psychological, social and emotional aspects of the person, or more specifically concerned with soul or spirit'.

The conference was then addressed by representatives of four 'cluster groups' from different parts of Essex, focussing on 'Resourcing Mental health staff in Essex', 'Resourcing Local Communities (through faith-based drop-ins etc)', 'Resourcing Faith Communities (through mental health awareness training, including a newly released CD) and a presentation in which service users shared personal reflections, entitled 'At the Sharp End'.



Anne Dyster (left), gave a moving cameo entitled 'God hasn't finished with me yet'. She described herself as a 'sufferer and therapist' and provided a very personal account of her journey through nervous breakdown, medication, bouts of depression and of being treated for the symptoms but not the cause. She felt that her psychiatrist didn't display hope for her but through a series of happy coincidences (or were they?) she came to the conclusion that there was a reason for her existence and that 'My God hasn't finished with me yet'.

An excellent lunch was followed by a participative drumming session in which delegates were able to experience for themselves the way in which joining in group activities could lift the spirit. (see cover photo).

There was a large range of parallel workshops and seminars from which delegates were left with the difficult task of choosing just one. These included Taking Spiritual Histories (Dr Larry Culliford), Solution-focussed Therapy (David Hawkes, ARU), Mindfulness (Simon McVay), Therapeutic Art (Linda Wonnacott), Relaxation and Exercise (Mary Burman) and Resources for Spiritual Self-help (Peter Goble), as well as 4 workshops which explored the continuing work of the 'cluster' groups, based on the morning's presentations.

Delegates returned from their groups to hear Prof. Peter Gilbert, N.I.M.H.E lead on Spirituality, photo pto, in the second keynote address – 'Essex Mind and Spirit in the context of the National Scene – Jewels for the Journey'. Like other speakers, he 'opened his heart' and told of his own journey through mental ill-health. He made the point that we are all 'pilgrims' (literally 'strangers'), strangers in a strange land. He said

"As a sign of hope for the future, when one looks at the language used in the literature around recovery, one can see how closely aligned it is with spirituality. At the heart of the approach is a recognition and understanding of the recovery of our underlying spirit, the spark, the breath of

The surprise is how little impact 'Circumstances' have on people's wellbeing. Research suggests just ten percent. If we can get the motivation to engage in positive or meaningful intentional activities, circumstances associated with health, money, and even upbringing have a surprisingly small impact on wellbeing. So lottery winners are no happier one year after their win, and at the other end of the scale, people with paralysis are often not as unhappy as might be expected.

This potent model suggests we are inclined to over-rate the impact of circumstances and underestimate the significance of our 'agency' (i.e. our ability to engage in meaningful intentional activities), and it is this that helps to account for the effectiveness of religious commitment and practice in coaching and sustaining change in people's lives.

Attitude matters

The commitment to follow Jesus in the way he lived his life, is a major contributor to empowerment which enables a sense of purpose to flourish. Embracing a faith commitment impacts on our attitude to our circumstances, and when our attitudes change so too do the micro-actions in which we engage.

Layard quotes Victor Frankl, who concluded from his experiences in Auschwitz that in the last resort "everything can be taken from a man but one thing, the last of human freedoms - to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances." Becoming a Christian is about making an effort to choose one's attitude to one's circumstances. Gratitude matters more than anything!

To help people take full advantage of the scope for intentional behaviour to improve wellbeing, positive psychology focuses on attitudes, and the attitude which is given most attention is that of gratitude. Gratitude or gratefulness "is a knowing awareness that we are recipients of goodness," so writes Robert Emmons. He goes on to note that an "Essential aspect of gratitude is the notion of undeserved merit." Here Emmons could be describing 'Grace'.

The process of acknowledging the gift. or generosity that comes from others encourages us to look outside ourselves, and through this we begin to locate ourselves within an intricate pattern of relationships that grow stronger through the dynamics of mutuality and obligation.

But for some, circumstances are such that gifts and generosity are rare, or circumstances so hard that gratitude seems impossible. Here,

It is this business of 'circumstances' that diminishes the impact of money on wellbeing. Layard's analysis highlights 'habituation' (which means we quickly get used to our circumstances), as one of the reasons why the anticipated delight associated with high earnings or a windfall dulls quite quickly. Basically we get used to what we have and the lifestyle associated with wealth becomes routine.

Circumstances matter, but not as much as we think

The second factor that Layard identifies is that of status anxiety. We cannot resist comparing our circumstances with others: rivalry is hard to resist. So, rather than relax in financial security, we find ourselves having to negotiate a new batch of worries about losing out on the advantages that others have secured. In other words, we rarely assess our circumstances objectively, but rather we assess them in comparison with others.

The work of positive psychologists suggests that circumstances matter, but not as much as we think. There is an inclination to cede too much potency to 'circumstances' in making sense of our lives, 'circumstances' have acquired a more potent status in our life script than is warranted.

Our inclination to overestimate the degree to which we are limited by circumstances may be due to what psychologists refer to as 'the focusing illusion's, "Nothing in life is quite as important as you think it is while you are thinking about it."

Positive psychology, which has been energised by the work of Martin Seligman', is based on research that suggests we are inclined to overestimate the impact of circumstances on our lives and underestimate the scope we have for 'intentional activity'. There are three things that have been identified as having an impact on wellbeing: (Source: Lyubomirsky, Sheldon & Schkade):

Circumstances account for 10%
Intentional Activity accounts for 40% and
Set Point accounts for 50%

The Set Point comes from our genes. Our genes play a significant part in whether we are upbeat or prone to gloom. This doesn't mean that those with gloomy genes can never be happy, just that when happy the gloomy genes are prone to pull us back to our 'Set- Point'.



life that gives us not just 'life' but what the Jews called 'invigorating life'. If individual recovery, and discovery, is to endure, then services must engage with the heart and become organisations of recovery, where we all journey together".

Richard Walne closed the conference by declaring that it had been an exciting and thought-provoking day. He would ensure that every effort was made to find ways of continuing the Essex Mind and Spirit initiative.

There were many positive comments, typified by the following:

'I'd just like to say that as someone who used to be described as a 'service user' I thought that the conference was amazing – very positive – and much more forward-looking than when I started my recovery from psychotic depression in 1992 – and had to find my own way (on the journey).

If you came to this conference, you would have found lots of ways forward: the professionals who presented and mingled so well, the workshops at which huge amounts were learned and shared, and the people attending who were so positive. The agenda might look much the same as lots of conferences, but there really was something warm, positive and special about 'Resources for the Journey. The highlight for many was the sharing of personal positive experiences of spirituality by both professionals and service users.

Post conference note – Essex Mind and Spirit has recently received the wonderful news that it has been awarded a **Faiths in Action Grant** which will enable it to be set up as an independent organisation and to continue the excellent work which has been initiated over the last 5 years by InterAct and its partners in the faiths, voluntary and statutory sectors. Hopefully, this grant will ensure a further conference in a couple years time!

Brian Loader,

Chair: Essex Mind and Spirit

Ann Morisy at the A.G.M.

Ann Morisy was a great success at B.A.'S recent A.G.M. Here is an excerpt from her Workshop on *Positive Psychology*. For sake of space, footnotes and references have been removed. Photos, distributed throughout the newsletter, are by Suzanne Heneghan.

Positive Psychology and the Contribution of Faith.

Faith? A positive link with wellbeing - 'Doing business with God' - American researchers suggest that going to church once a week:-

- improves people's wellbeing equivalent to their salary being doubled (Cited in *Life Satisfaction: The State of Knowledge and Implications for Government* pub. By The Prime Minister's Strategy Unit Dec. 2002)
- Also the work of Dan Blazer and Erdman Palmore *Religion and Aging in a Longitudinal Panel* The Gerontologist, Vol 16 1976 - and this work has been regularly repeated by other researchers and on each occasion a positive experience of growing old is strongly linked with 'doing business with God'.
- Religious experience has survival value i.e. when people feel they are at rock bottom or in a sudden crisis from which they have no way out, the experience of God's 'alongsideness' enable people to 'dig deeper and hang in. And particularly significantly, having once had a religious experience the person is invariably more open to the needs and fragility of others; Religious experience lessens the likelihood of 'authoritarianism' (i.e. assuming one is right and everyone else is wrong) and reassures that 'all will be well and all manner of things will be well'. (See David Hay, 2006 *Something There* London: DLT)

Faith is good for young people - Who says?

- John J Dilulio ... regularly!
- Leslie Francis and Mandy Robbins regarding urban 13-15 year olds in England, noted in the report *Spiritual Health and the Well-being of Urban Young People* the following findings:
 - Confirmation of lots of other research that having a sense of purpose is important to the flourishing of young people.
 - Young people were more likely to have a sense of purpose if they:
 - had a religious affiliation prayed regularly

- believed in eternal life.

Detailed analysis suggested that each of these 3 factors were independently related to 'sense of purpose' (i.e. these 3 religious factors were not attributable to economic differences etc). This highlights the potential value of the spiritual dimension to young people's lives. Young people who were identified as having a religious affiliation and / or were regularly involved in prayer fared better than other young people on a number of different measures of wellbeing:

- they will more likely to have a 'sense of purpose'
- they will be more likely to have an active and constructive relationship with the community and the environment
- they will be more likely to have positive views towards ethnic diversity.

The independent significance of religious affiliation and prayer in relation to sense of purpose and overall wellbeing suggests that a strong spiritual dimension to young people's lives might act as a protective factor, promoting well-being and mitigating the impact of other factors such as poverty and family change.

Google John J Dilulio *Faith Factor*. For more, also visit www.religionandsocialpolicy.org. Also of interest maybe *Saving Souls, Serving Society* (2005) by Ronald J Sider and Heidi Rolland Unruch OUP; *Urban Hope and Spiritual Health: The Adolescent Voice* (2006) Leslie J Francis and Mandy Robbins, Epworth Press; *Spiritual Health and the Wellbeing of Urban Young People* by Gwyther Rees, Lesley J. Francis and Mandy Robbins, published by the *Commission on Urban Life and Faith*, University of Wales (Bangor), The Children's Society. Copies of this report (two versions are available - 8 page or the fuller 32 page version) can be downloaded from www.cuff.org

This research has been written up in more detail in *Urban Hope and Spiritual Health: The Adolescent Voice* (2006) Leslie J Francis and Mandy Robbins, Epworth Press.

The report *Spiritual Health and the Wellbeing of Urban Young People* from which this evidence was drawn was produced in 2006 and was based on the analysis of questionnaires returned by 23,418 young people from urban areas.

Richard Layard, the economist who has pioneered work on wellbeing and wealth, makes a case that is almost shocking in its simplicity: Even for those who are only moderately financially secure, more money brings disappointment.