

Welcome to the First Edition of Pastoral Care News

aimed at supporting individuals, Churches and Christian Ministry in the broad area of Pastoral Care.

“And who is my neighbour?”

(Luke 10:29)

Jesus' reply to the above question would have rocked the very foundation of the one who asked as He told the story of the 'Good' Samaritan.

As a prison chaplain I often find myself asking the above question as I strive to help ex-offenders reintegrate into the community. When I ask what kind of support they need when they leave prison, 90% usually reply "One good friend so that I don't find myself drawn back to my old relationships and environment".

Reintegrating into the community for the majority of ex-offenders is a scary and precarious business. Prison can feel safe, offering structure and security. This is often the only time some of the men I meet have ever had such security. Support, on release, is imperative if they are to succeed in living productive and fulfilling lives. This support is difficult to find in the community, and sadly, also from our Churches where one would expect a loving and compassionate response if not a firm and challenging one with

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Research into 'Counselling Needs of Children & Young People'

Professional research was conducted in Swindon secondary schools revealing:



Julia Drown M.P. pictured with Shirley Ludford (BBC Wiltshire Sound) & Mike Fisher at the radio launch of the Report.

- 63% of children and young people between 11-17 years wanted someone to talk to.
- Ages 11,15 & 17 most frequently wanted to talk about their problems.
- 1/3 wanted to talk to a counsellor but most did not know how to go about finding one.
- Many young people would prefer to talk to someone they can relate to, but did not want to talk to someone they didn't know.

Is there more of a role that the church could take?

For a summary of the Report's findings send an A4 stamped addressed envelope to The Willows. Full reports are also available at £9.50 (Includes p&p).

The Causes & Effects of Stress

Stress is now one of the most widespread and endemic health conditions to permeate our Western society.

At times the level of stress that we experience or the events that we find ourselves dealing with, can leave us feeling quite overwhelmed. It helps to be aware of the situations that can cause stress.

The results of stress can be:

- Fatigue
- Ill Health
- Increased conflict
- Depression
- Reduced work performance
- Strained relationships
- Burnout
- Breakdown

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“And who is my neighbour?” (Luke 10:29) (cont’d)

boundaries – these are qualities a good friend displays!

There is a scheme for sex-offenders on release called ‘Circles of Support and Accountability’. But, ALL ex-offenders need similar support groups. A group means that not just one person holds the responsibility and that the group gain support from one another as well as offer it to the ex-offender. There may need to be boundaries set to protect all concerned but often that can feel safer for an ex-offender.

Could you or your Church be a ‘Good Samaritan’ and welcome your neighbour from Erlestoke Prison to help in his reintegration?



I would be very happy to come and offer advice and support to any Church prepared, in turn, to give support to those in our congregation at Christ the Carpenter Chapel, Erlestoke Prison, who are wanting, with God’s help, to change their lives for the better.

Rev. Di Whittall

Prison Chaplain – Erlestoke Prison.

The Causes & Effects of Stress (cont’d)

- Overwork – constantly working too long hours, not taking breaks or holidays.
- Dealing with too many demands at once.
- Having too high expectations of oneself or others.
- Being unclear about expectations.
- Receiving insufficient support or guidance.
- Trying to meet conflicting demands.
- Having too many unresolved personal needs.
- Not being aware of one’s own limitations.
- Worries about family, friends or others.

- Anxiety about money, health, the future.
- Self-doubt.
- Fraught relationships.
- Feeling, or being, under-qualified for the work being undertaken.
- Dealing with change.
- Major life event.
- Boredom.
- Significant loss.

There are, of course, many other things that cause stress.

*Christians
are not
immune to
stress!*

Coping with Stress

- Identify and deal with the causes of stress.
- Talk to somebody about it.
- Seek effective support to help with any crisis.
- Adopt a healthy lifestyle – diet and routine.
- Exercise regularly – get fit and stay fit.
- Re-evaluate your priorities.
- Improve your self-image.
- If you need to, change your behaviour.
- Change your thinking and see things positively.
- Get regular support from a reliable source.
- Define achievable objectives and take action.
- Aim to be in control of your life.
- Relax and have fun.
- Ensure some rewarding and satisfying direction to your life.
- Give time to prayer, meditation and the development of your faith.
- Maintain a balance between your spiritual, psychological, emotional and physical needs.
- Know that things do have a purpose, even when we can’t see one!
- Contact the Willows Christian Counselling Service for help.

To book your place in a Willows Workshop on Stress – see page 6.

Information sheets on Stress and action packs by Dr. Bill Munro are available from The Willows.
Cost - £2.00 + p.p.

Next Issue:

Articles on Self-Harm. The Significance of Attachment Theory. Hospital Chaplaincy. Stress and Burnout.

Strengthening and Mending Relationships

Being a follower of Jesus doesn't guarantee that relationships between people will always go smoothly. Think of the confrontations between Jesus and his disciples, or between Paul and Barnabas.

While this article looks at how relationships can be improved, it's vital to recognise that even the best problem-solving techniques won't penetrate the resentment felt from a lack of forgiveness. We want to draw readers' attention to the role of prayer, or perhaps more accurately, to the *changed focus* for prayer implied by the theory of relationships underlying this article.

The Blame Game

When a relationship goes wrong, we usually blame the other person and identify the cause of the problem as some aspect of their personality – "John isn't a listener, he just pushes me away". John felt under pressure from Jane because she always wanted to talk about her difficulties at work. His attempt to get some respite seemed to Jane like she was being pushed away.

"Susie is such a disobedient child. I have to shout at her all the time". When twelve year old Susie was asked how she knew when to obey her mother, she said that it was when her mother started to shout.

The Beginning of Wisdom

The 'causes' of relational problems may be due to something other than individual 'personality traits'. When people blame the other person, they are usually failing to see that it's the habits and roles that *both* of them have developed that contribute to their troubled relationship. To recognise that, when a relationship begins to go wrong, all parties are likely to be caught up in an unhelpful relationship *pattern*, is the **"beginning of wisdom"** in attempting to solve relationship problems. Simply blaming the other party is not helpful. Also, there is the disadvantage that blaming someone else puts the solution out of *one's own*

control – all one can do is to wait around until *the other person* changes! It's generally more useful to think about how to change the patterns of interaction between people rather than how to change the people.

There are situations where the behaviour of one of the parties in a relationship is so outrageous or dangerous that the well-being of the other is severely compromised – for example, in child abuse or domestic violence situations. Then, the first priority of any intervention is to 'name' what's going on and to ensure the safety of the victim.

The Road to Change

If a person wants a relationship to change, they can change it. The key is in recognising the pattern into which they and their child, spouse, boss or friend are locked. Sometimes, it seems as if the harder we try, the worse the problem becomes. But if it doesn't work, the reasoning goes that we need to try harder, rather than doing something different.

To avoid these unhelpful patterns, it's useful to:

- **Set goals for the relationship**
This helps people to identify what they need to do *differently* to achieve the goals. In goal setting, people describe what *they want to accomplish* rather than what their child, spouse or whoever is *doing wrong*.
- **Identify the patterns that work**
No matter how severe or long-standing the problem, there are always problem-free times in any relationship – when a couple who "don't communicate", for example, do communicate. These "exceptions" provide the clues to solving problems. By examining what's different between problem and problem-free times we can learn what to do more of, to make more time problem-free.

Jane, for example, was able to recall that there were occasions in the past when John did ask her about her day. She also remembered what she was doing differently during those times – *she* showed some interest in John's day, and that this resulted in conversations about *both* of their days. Also, these times usually occurred during dinner.

Jane decided to try something different the following week. Rather than get John to talk about things right after they got back home, she waited until they were having dinner, and then asked him how his day had gone.

Keeping Change Going

When people see improvements in their relationships, it's vital to keep changes going and not to lapse back into old destructive patterns. The key is to ask, "What needs to happen to keep these changes going?" "Is there anything that might occur in the coming weeks that would present a challenge to me/us doing what's necessary to keep the changes going? How will we handle such a situation?"

What if it isn't working?

It's important to notice if attempts to improve a relationship aren't working, so that people can either do something different or decide that they have tried hard enough.

If no progress has been made after trying various techniques, then questions need to be asked:

- Has a particular approach been given enough time? Every situation is different, but usually two or three weeks of a particular action are necessary for change to show itself.
- Is there another approach that can be tried?
- Have the parties talked it through with a friend or appropriate professional?
- Should they seek professional help from a relational counsellor?

Prayer can make a difference in the creative act of working out goals and deciding what steps can be taken to bring them into being and to maintain the changes. We will need to focus prayer on changing the patterns to which all parties contribute.

The full article can be found on the Willows Website.

Prayer or Therapeutic Help?-Some reflections

Questions that Christians sometimes ask include:

- "Should Christians take medication or is that lacking faith?"
- "Should Christians talk through their concerns with a counsellor or would that mean they are denying the Holy Spirit?"
- "Shouldn't the Church meet all a Christian's needs, rather than relying on outside help?"

Well, perhaps it is less a question of either/or and more a question of both. What could be better than both prayer and practical help? It is sometimes easy for Christians who want to be true and loyal to trusting God, to miss the fact that God has probably had a hand in providing the very solution to the problem they are worrying about.

In the past, the Church has been instrumental in providing health care to the sick, help for the destitute, housing for the dispossessed and education for the disenfranchised. Many developments in our world were inspired and initiated by Christian caring organisations, until the time society was able to take these on for itself in the form of the N.H.S., Social Services, Education Department and Housing Associations, to mention but a few. Using what God has provided, far from lacking faith, is a fulfilment of His "good provision."

In reality, we all need healthcare, someone to talk to, practical guidance and support as we go through life. These are not an alternative to prayer, but are often essential for survival. What better than to pray for needs to be met in an appropriate way, thanking God in the process. The danger of looking only to the Church is that we might lose sight of the rest of His creation, rather than engaging with it.

Mike Fisher

Diploma in Christian Counselling

At a recent Service of Thanksgiving in Swindon, Willows Counsellors were presented with their Diploma in Integrative Christian Counselling after completing a Willows Diploma Course. The Ven. Alan Hawker who is the Archdeacon of Malmesbury and a member of Willows Board of Trustees, presented the awards.



Keep the Faith and The Faithworks Charter

Faithworks has launched a new campaign to petition the Government to 'Keep the Faith' and not force Churches and Christian charities to compromise their core ethos and values by dictating who they can and cannot employ. It is also calling on Churches to demonstrate to the Government that they are committed to professional service without discriminating or proselytising by signing up to the Faithworks Charter, a set of best practice guidelines.

The 'Keep the Faith Campaign' is a clarion call to Government to think again and to implement legislation which will unambiguously protect the freedom of Churches and other faith organisations to employ those who believe in the core values of those organisations.

The Faithworks Charter provides principles for Churches and Christian agencies committed to excellence in community work and service provision in the UK. It prescribes an approach to community service that is free from discrimination, respectful of people of all faiths and none, and which never imposes Christian faith or belief on others. The Charter provides best practice guidelines for Christian social projects that will help them to access statutory partnership and funding. Our goal is that the Church will begin to be taken just as seriously as a key welfare provider of the twenty first century, as it was in centuries past.

Please consider adopting the Faithworks Charter in your Church and signing and returning the enclosed petition. Visit the website at www.faithworks.info

Willows overall aims are:

- To equip the church to reach out to a hurt and needy world.
- To provide Christian counselling services. To receive referrals from individuals, who may have been recommended by their G.P's, Health Authority, Social Services, churches or other agencies.
- To ensure that Christians involved in providing counselling are trained to the appropriate level of competence and effectiveness.
- To encourage collaboration between churches, the local community and other organisations in meeting individual needs.
- To provide encouragement and support to individuals and churches in their task of helping others.

Other Willows Activities

Willows has been represented:

- At a meeting at the House of Commons on the subject of sexual and ritual abuse coinciding with a new book launch.
- At the Trauma and Abuse Group, Association of Christian Counsellor's National Steering Committee.
- At Spring Harvest, where we sent two counsellors on the Pastoral Care Team.
- On a group exploring Spirituality and counselling with a group of theologians and therapists at Bristol.
- On two radio interviews in March/April.

Setting up a Pastoral Care Team

Who is Involved?

If we are Christians, we are all called to love and to care. It is an essential part of being a Christian.

When Jesus was asked which commandment was most important, he replied:

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: Love your neighbour as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these.” (Mark 12:30-31 N.I.V.)

And in the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus defined our ‘neighbour’ in the widest possible terms, cutting right across boundaries of colour, class or creed. And the way we care for others is a reflection of the way we care about our Lord. (Matthew 25:35-40)

So we are all involved in Pastoral Care. In most churches, a lot of very effective caring takes place between individuals in the church. Some have house groups which are structured to enable pastoral care to be shown between members of the same group.

Just as in the early Christian Church there was a need to commission and authorise some people to exercise a special caring role (Acts 6.) So some churches set up specially commissioned and authorised teams. These teams did not take over the caring role exercised by individuals or in house groups, but supplemented them and worked alongside them.

That’s what happened to us at St. John’s Church in Haydon Wick. We decided, some nine years ago, that a specially commissioned and authorised Pastoral Care Team should be set up to care for the members of St. John’s.

The first leader of the team was Jean Dean who handed over to Edna Webb five years ago. Edna and Jean now

share the leadership. Members of the team all worship at, and are part of the membership of, St. John’s Church. They are approved and authorised by the Vicar and are subject to supervision by the leaders.



Jean and Edna

What does the team do?

Members of the St. John’s Pastoral Care Team:

- Visit the sick (in hospital or at home)
- Care for the elderly and infirm
- Lend an listening ear to those who need it
- Get alongside those who are lonely
- Get to know people who are new to St. John’s to try to integrate them into the fellowship
- Identify particular problems and bring them to the attention of the church leadership (subject to confidentiality)

Some members of the team are specifically involved in Prayer Ministry and are available to pray with anyone who needs prayer at any time. Generally, members of the team do not get involved in Counselling although we are able to recommend suitable counselling agencies when the need arises.

The importance of training

Training is important. Some members of the team have attended listening, pastoral care and a variety of other related training courses. Some are trained counsellors. All are encouraged to recognise the limits of their own competence and learn when to refer to the leaders if issues arise which go beyond that competence. The team has a Policy Statement and Ethical Code and Procedures which recognise the unique status, value and dignity of each individual within God’s Creation. The team encourages pastoral carers to treat each individual with respect to ensure they are kept free from harm.

Confidentiality

One of the key questions which worries people is whether the issues they discuss with a member of the team will be the subject of gossip. All members of the team know that strict confidentiality is paramount. Except where confidentiality cannot be guaranteed (eg, where there is an ongoing risk of harm to children or young people) confidentiality is carefully preserved. Team members also know that they must not breach confidentiality in the context of corporate prayer.

Setting up a Team

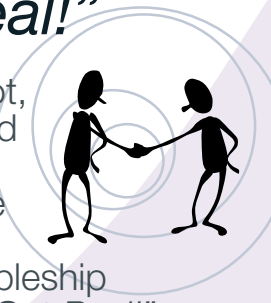
Every situation is different. When we decided to set up our team at St. John’s, the following were of vital importance and may be of help to others:

- **Prayer.** Every aspect of setting up a team needs to be committed to the Lord and surrounded in prayer.
- **Leadership.** The church leadership needs to discern those who have the required spiritual gifts both to lead, and be part of, a Pastoral Care Team.
- **Training.** Training needs must be identified and met.
- **Authority.** Clear lines of authority need to be laid down and understood by the team and by the church membership.
- **Supervision.** The members operate under the supervision of the Team Leader(s).
- **Accountability.** Team members need to understand that they are accountable to the Team Leader(s), and the Team Leaders that they are accountable to the Church leadership (in our case, the Vicar).
- **Confidentiality.** This is vital, but the limits of it have to be clearly defined and understood.
- **Policy and Procedures.** It is helpful if these are in writing and are given to all team members so that there can be no room for misunderstanding.
- **Prayer.** If prayer was the first important point, it is also the last. **Pray without ceasing!**

Rev. Andrew Dean, Assistant Minister, St. John’s Haydon Wick.

“Get Real!”

Rosalyn Abbot, the author and national co-director of the ten-week pastoral discipleship programme “Get Real!” recently presented a ‘Taster Day’ Willows Workshop at Harnhill Centre of Christian Healing entitled “*Getting real in relationships*”.



The course seeks to help churches explore God’s fundamental design for community, based on relationships with the Trinity, and to encourage and equip individual Christians to pursue honest and open relationships with God and others.

If you are interested in the possibility of Willows arranging a full Get Real! Discipleship Course in the Swindon area – whether or not you attended our ‘Taster Day’ – we would like to hear from you. Please contact Grace Hempstock, Training Manager at Willows, if this would be of interest to you or members of your church fellowship.

Training

We are preparing a brand new course for the **Introduction to Pastoral Counselling**, which will fulfil the criteria of ACC Level 1. The course will run on Monday evenings for 12 weeks from March 2003 (term-time only). This course will be suitable for those already involved in pastoral care, who wish to develop listening and counselling skills. It will also provide a foundation for those considering the possibility of undertaking a Certificate level course in Counselling.

Willows Workshop Programme at Harnhill Centre of Christian Healing

On Saturday 13th July, Vanessa Clark and Mike Fisher will run a workshop entitled **The Therapeutic Place of Touch**. This will look at the significant place of touch in our growth and development, and its place in our healing and recovery.

Vanessa has been a psychotherapist for twenty years in London and Oxfordshire. Mike, Director of Willows and also of Kingsway Consultation Services, has an extensive background in social work. Both work with survivors of sexual and ritual abuse and with those suffering from the effects of early life trauma and separation from their mothers.

Programme for 2002–2003 – advance dates for your diary!

Saturday	Topic	Speaker
16 Nov ‘02	Journeying Through Grief and Bereavement	David Payne
15 Feb ‘03	Understanding and Working with Eating Disorders	Helena Wilkinson
08 Mar ‘03	Coping with Stress and Those Who Are Stressed	Dr Mark Doggett & Mrs Stella Doggett
10 May ‘03	Journeying with God, Being Effective with People	Fr Gerrard Hughes
07 Jun ‘03	Working with Those Traumatized by Disaster	Nicky Gale and Mike Fisher
12 Jul ‘03	Working with Dissociation	Mike Fisher

Workshops are organised jointly with Harnhill Centre of Christian Healing. (Booking form available from Willows. Bookings made direct to Harnhill – Tel. 01285 850 283).

‘Tailor-Made’ Short Courses Now Available

Could Willows be of help with your own church training programme? We can provide short courses, tailored to meet specific needs within the area of **pastoral counselling and listening skills**. To discuss any training requirements, please contact Grace Hempstock, Training Manager at Willows.

Two New Trustees for Willows



The Rev. Allan Bucknall, a retired Hospital Chaplain and Rev. Jan Partridge, Methodist NSM Minister in West Swindon and Occupational Therapist joined the Willows Board of Trustees in January.

The Willows
COUNSELLING SERVICE



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