

If you would like to receive a regular mailing of Pastoral Care News, please let us know.

Does the Church make a difference?

Kathleen Ben Rabha - Social Responsibility Officer for Wiltshire, offers Churches resources, information and help with the next step to making a difference in our communities.

'As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead'
James 2.26.

This is a very challenging verse, which follows on from some examples of Socially Responsible People such as Abraham and Rahab. Both of them were praised because of what they did, rather than what they believed.

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How secure are we?

Our Security as individuals is influenced very much by our early life experiences of attachment.

Secure attached adults were raised in a consistent, reliable and caring way. They learned early that the world is a safe, accessible place where they are worthy of love and support. Others are viewed as dependable and supportive. They are compassionate and responsive to others, flexible thinkers and able to explore options and ask for advice. They are accepting of differences and trusting in love.

Attachment injuries can occur when needs for comfort; closeness and security are not adequately met. Varying degrees of attachment traumas influence the following attachment styles.

Avoidant Adults can experience primary caregivers as un-nurturing, dismissive or critical. They are uncomfortable with closeness and intimacy, being emotionally distant and uncomfortable in expressing needs or asking for help. Often they do not recall much of their childhood experiences. They are good in a crisis because of their ability to react with intellect, setting feelings aside. They can be cool, controlled, ambitious and successful. They avoid conflict and tend to be passive-aggressive and can be sarcastic. They don't want to rely on anyone, fearing dependency or a perception of being weak.

Ambivalent Adults may have had parents who alternated between warmth and availability and coldness and rejection for no apparent reason. Ambivalent adults are bossy and controlling and do not like rules and authority. They are impatient, critical and argumentative. They tend to often sabotage getting what they want. They also can be creative, exciting, adventurous and charming.

Disorganised Adults, as children, had histories of neglect, severe loss or abuse. Their parents were probably unresponsive, inconsistent or punitive, or were unable to protect them. They learned to view others as unavailable, rejecting and threatening. They are afraid of genuine closeness and see themselves as unworthy of love and support. Disorganised adults show antisocial behaviour or may lack empathy. They can be self-protective or controlling, find it difficult to always be responsible for their actions, and find it hard to keep rules. Their experience of severe early life trauma makes them much more vulnerable to a variety of emotional, social, mental health and moral problems. They are at high risk for alcohol and drug abuse.

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Attachment Styles in Relationships

Attachment styles learned in our early years can be changed.

When provided with appropriate positive emotional experiences, whereby more 'secure' attachment styles can be learned. These modifications can redefine relationships in many significant ways. Learning to create a healthier relationship provides an arena to heal old wounds and to establish a meaningful bond for the future.

How attachment styles may be expressed

Secure Adults have the ability to connect and feel close, and also to honour their own and their partner's need for separateness. They are responsive and empathic to their partner's feelings and can easily forgive. They have appropriate boundaries and are confident, trusting and loving mates.

Avoidant Adults become physically and emotionally distant in relationships, preferring detachment rather than connection, because of a very strong unconscious fear of dependency, which they believe, will lead to rejection. They are unresponsive and intolerant to the needs and feelings of others. They can be rigid and lack spontaneity,

often angry, controlling and critical. They need considerable reassurance and praise, but do not ask for it. Avoidant adults dislike disclosing feelings or being intimate, but they can be a responsible partner if not too many emotional demands are made of them.



Ambivalent Adults are up and down in relationships. One moment they might be available and the next rejecting. They tend to have arguments but rarely get resolution on issues. They are over-close in relationships. Their needs are always changing, yet they expect their partners to know what their needs are and to meet them. They tend to want to control in a critical, demanding and volatile manner, yet rely on their partners to keep the family going. A tendency to be quick to blame others, they have tantrums when they do not get their way. They fight hard and play hard and are never dull, keeping their mates off guard with an unpredictable and charming nature. Ambivalent people

need a grounded partner to keep them in balance.

Disorganised Adults have chaotic relationships. They do not find love and affection easily and can be unresponsive or insensitive to their partner's needs. Abuse and neglect is common in their families of origin. They have a great need for safe and secure relationships, yet lack the trust in their partners to help create it.

The consequences of insecure attachment

The more extreme our insecure attachment experience is as a child, the more likely it is to give rise to physical and mental health problems, delinquency, addictions and destructive behaviour. Relationship difficulties, crime, debt, addictions can all be a consequence. Up to 40-50% of the population suffer from some form of insecure attachment.

Insecure attachment issues are equally found in Christian populations. Insecure attachment problems can be recovered from. Sound accepting, loving relationships, where there is honesty, good boundaries can go a long way to providing a healing environment for recovery.

Mike Fisher

- **Books - Attachment Theory for Social Work Practice** by David Howe

The Search for a Secure Base
by Jeremy Holmes

- **Video - An Introduction to Attachment Theory**

Obtainable from Sir Richard Bowlby, Boundary House, Wyldes Close London, NW11 7JB. No charge but send a blank VHS in a SAE with sufficient postage

Social Responsibility in Wiltshire is about equipping churches in the County to put their faith into action, and so give it that lively, dynamic quality that demonstrates to everyone watching that Christians are indeed a force to be reckoned with. Action can be in any sphere of influence, in any workplace setting, in any community, in any encounter. As a Social Responsibility Officer, I am always on the lookout for opportunities for Christians to **'make a difference'**. I am often called upon to represent the churches on all kinds of 'secular' committees. It is often there that I uncover the openings, where faith can enter and an individual or a church can, in some local and practical way, **'proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, or release the oppressed and proclaim the year of the Lord's favour'**.

(Luke 4-18/19)



The oppressed may be the victims of domestic violence who have struggled for many years to redeem an abusive relationship, or they may be children in a playground suffering racial abuse from the classroom bully. The victim may, at the other end of the spectrum, be God's creation that is day by day being stamped on by careless pollution and the systematic destruction of flora and fauna.

The Bible states **'The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed'**. (Romans 8.19) Not only creation waits, but also all victims everywhere. They wait for us to spring into action and bring justice and peace.



Social Responsibility in Wiltshire works to identify many possible avenues and openings in the communities around our churches, in the institutions of the County bodies and in partnerships around Community Safety or Social Exclusion. In every place where Christians are, we are to:

- **Open our eyes and look at situations with the eye of faith.**
- **Use our given gifts and callings.**
- **Encourage and support each other.**
- **Listen to each other carefully in our discussions**
- **Bear each other prayerfully to the God who delights to resource our action in His name.**

The starting point for action is often a steady persistent voice that repeatedly calls us to be compassionate and step out in faith to touch another's pain. I will remember a Catholic friend of mine who heard a voice every night

saying 'Feed the hungry'. Eventually, in desperation she went into her kitchen, made some soup and filled a flask. Full of trepidation, she got into her car and drove down to where she knew homeless people congregated on a cold night and she simply gave them the soup.

Out of that clear action, came a drop-in centre for the homeless and a team of volunteers who were inspired by her simple act of obedience.

Whatever you or your church is being called to do, as Social Responsibility Officer for Wiltshire I can be a resource to those stumbling and unsteady first steps on the road to faith in action. I can come and lead discussion groups, send you information, or help you think through, as a Christian community, what is your next step.

Email me if you can and, together with God's help, the 'children of God' will be revealed to a world longing to see actual evidence of the love of God for them. They see it in you and me, in what we do and what we say.



Kathleen Ben Rabha
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Or contact Rev Tony Attwood, Social Responsibility Officer for Swindon. Tel: 01793 522741

God At Work in the Great Western Hospital!



Hospital Chaplains comprise one of the smallest departments in the Great Western Hospital, yet we symbolise the profoundest aspects of humanity – that life is much more than flesh and blood alone. Every service that the hospital in Swindon provides seeks to be concerned with the person. The Chaplaincy underlines that truth, and is wholly concerned with that personal aspect of life. We are here to extend to all those who come within the hospital, the hospitality which can refresh life.

One of the most inspiring stories in the New Testament is that of Jesus and his mother going to a wedding where the wine gives out. For many people, the visit to the hospital is about life 'giving out'. The role of the Chaplain is to care for, and encourage, the person we are with to rediscover the richness of their life and its significance. This may be about helping a person to find that place of peace in the face of illness or death. It is, I believe, a pastoral opportunity to reach out to, meet with, and walk with those for whom the deepest of life's questions are of profoundest importance. At the start of life, in its prime, and finally at its close, these people who visit G.W.H. are feeling vulnerable and are so aware of the earthiness of existence. Like those who were first called the "Capelle" – caring for the precious relics of the saints, as Chaplains we seek to value all people and in the midst of life's frailty offer protective care.

Steve Henderson - Hospital Chaplain, Great Western Hospital.

Living with Bereavement

"Living with Bereavement" sounds rather morbid – leaving us feeling that someone must have died.

Our first thoughts are of death, but even this varies from the expected, through prolonged or terminal illness, to the unexpected, which may be peaceful or traumatic.

Perhaps it would be good to look at the wider picture, not only of someone dying, but also of loss in many other ways. Bereavement can also be through loss of relationship, such as separation, divorce, abuse, an accident leading to permanent incapacity, or ill health, both mental and physical.

Much grief is for the loss of what had existed, but bereavement can also be for what never happened, such as marriage and children. With the loss of a child, through miscarriage or termination, the expected date of the birth can bring pain. Grief for a lost future also occurs with a stillbirth, cot

death, or an abnormality.

Loss, or change of job or status is another bereavement. Lifelong disability or losing a body part are losses of "what might have been".

There are recognised stages in the grieving process. Initially there is shock, numbness and denial. "This is not really happening"... Then anxiety, blame, guilt, and anger - anger at the deceased, who has left us, or at those involved in their care, or God, who allowed it. Christians might feel they should not express anger, but facing it is important, as depression could follow. The time to reach acceptance varies considerably. Then comes the point of moving on with life as it is now and beginning to look forward to the future.

How can bereaved people be helped? It may be by having a friend to talk to, a shoulder to cry on, a pet for company, or their faith in God. Anniversaries particularly can be difficult – birthdays, wedding, the day the person died, and the date of the funeral. A particular day or time in the week may be difficult, when the news of the death was received. For some, Sundays and going to church are the hardest times, as they feel the aloneness in the Church family.

Weekends, Easter, Christmas and Bank Holidays can seem interminable if there is no contact with others. Many feel the year after a bereavement will be the worst, facing everything for the first time, but the second year can be just as hard and painful.

As everyone is different, so is every bereavement. We cannot say "I know how you feel"; we do not, even though we may have been through a similar experience. The reality for a Christian, is that there is still pain, grief and loss even though there is also hope.

Bereavement is not something one "gets over", but something one comes to terms with.



Voluntary Hospice Chaplain

Ros Wheble

When trauma is an obstacle in our lives

Grace Hempstock looks at using creative tools to work with unresolved and painful issues.

One of the ways in which people respond to traumatic experiences, which are too painful to bear, is to push them down. This can happen easily in relation to issues like sudden loss or bereavement, where adults often stay strong for the sake of others, responding by just getting on with things and keeping their feelings at a safe distance. Whilst this may be reasonably effective, bringing some semblance of normality, it can lead to a stockpile of unresolved emotional issues - even after many years!

This is equally true for adults who, as children, have experienced overwhelming trauma or abuse and have coped within that isolating place, in the best way they could. This may be because there was either no-one they felt safe enough to tell about their experience - or because they tried to speak out and, sadly, were not really heard.

It is not uncommon for such unresolved trauma to intrude,

through personal reactions to "here and now" situations - which may replicate the original loss or trauma in some form or another. At such times, **what has been pushed down may refuse to stay down any longer!** A loss in the "here and now" may trigger the unresolved issues, producing a response which can feel both alarming and overwhelming.



When people begin to work with such unresolved feelings, there can be a very real fear that what they thought was over and done with, might now once again threaten to overwhelm them and be just too much to cope with. Fear may be experienced that says, **"If I start to cry, I'll never be able to stop"**, or **"If I allow myself to really feel the anger that is inside, I don't know what I might do"**.

Working creatively can often be a very effective way of getting in touch

with the feelings which threaten, without actually being overwhelmed in the process. **Effective tools in working creatively** include the use of dolls, soft toys, stones, or shells - to symbolise different aspects of self, to look at the relationship between self and others, to view dynamics within the family, or to connect with unresolved issues following someone's death. Artwork, creative writing or journaling can provide enormously helpful ways of giving expression to what has previously been pushed down. Simply squeezing playdough - moulding it into shape - can become a means of expressing anger or of taking back some control. Working creatively enables a shift from left brain activity (head stuff- and the spoken word) to right brain activity (at heart/feelings level). When we engage creatively, it is almost impossible to stay emotionally detached from what we feel. However, this can be done gently, one step at a time! **Our feelings are valid - including anger at God!! To experience what we feel is part of being real!! To deny what we feel is deny our own reality!**

By allowing such feelings (however awesome and painful) to be experienced, faced, validated and processed, we can embrace 'who we are'. What has previously been unresolved can come to a place of resolution and a new wholeness and **freedom to be 'who we are' can be experienced!**

New Training Manager



We welcome Avril Fray who has been known to us since 1994 when she trained on the first Willows counselling course. Avril has a Diploma in counselling and is a Willow's Counsellor and Supervisor. We look forward to her being part of the team.

Willow's Display Boards



Would you consider displaying our Willows boards in your Church? We would deliver, set them up and collect them for periods of 2-4 weeks. Or, alternatively, you may like us to come and talk about the work of Willows Counselling Service. Please call Gilly Price or Mike Fisher at Willows.

Introduction to Pastoral Counselling

Level 1 Training: Cost: £160

Fulfills the criteria for ACC Level 1 Course in Christian Counselling (CTi/NOCN Introduction to Counselling Units)

12 Thursday evenings (7.00 pm - 10.00 pm)
11 September 2003 until 4 December 2003 (excluding 30 October) Plus one Saturday - 13 September
Venue: Swindon.

The Course will have an Integrative Christian approach to counselling and will address the following topics:

- The Helping Relationship - defining the role.
- Made in God's image - Brokenness and Wholeness.
- Being there as the Helper.
- Listening 'skills' and listening 'practice'.
- Egan - "The Skilled Helper" (an overview).
- Theoretical models of counselling (an overview).
- Awareness of "Self" in the Role of Helper.
- Increasing our Understanding of Ourselves.
- Facing and staying with 'pain'.
- Using creative tools in the helping process.
- Sensitive Issues and "Good Practice".
- Integrating personal faith with Counselling.
- Life Transitions and 'Endings' - and "Where do we go from here"?

This Course is intended as preparation for those who may wish to pursue Level 2 training (and higher) and also for those involved in pastoral work who wish to develop basic listening skills and self awareness, in order to be more effective as helpers.

Saturday Topic Workshop Programme

Venue: Harnhill (Jointly organised with Harnhill Centre of Christian Healing, to equip the church in Pastoral Care, Counselling, Healing and Prayer Ministry)

Cost: £15 each

- 7 June 2003 Working with those Traumatized by Disaster
Nicky Gale and Mike Fisher
- 12 July 2003 Working with Dissociation
Mike Fisher
- 15 Nov 2003 Working with Conflict and Anger Resolution
David Walker

Booking Forms for the above workshops are available by contacting Avril Fray, Training Manager at Willows (01793 706646) or from Harnhill Centre of Christian Healing (01285 850519) Booking forms for Saturday workshops should be returned to Harnhill.

One Year Certificate Course in Integrative Christian Counselling

Level 2 Training: Cost £835

ACC Level 2 (CTi/NOCN Advanced Certificate in Counselling Skills)

Thursdays: daytime course
4 Sept 2003 - 15 July 2004
9.30 am - 2.30 pm, and including some Saturdays.
Entrance criteria - Successful completion of a Level 1 Training Course

Course Programme will include:

- Developing Advanced Counselling Skills.
- Skills Practice and Gilmore Groups.
- Developing a working knowledge of Egan's 3 Stage Model.
- Exploring the Counselling Relationship.
- Increasing Self Awareness.
- Continued Personal Development.
- The interface between Christian Counselling and Secular Psychology.
- Practical aspects of Counselling.
- Responsibilities and opportunities within Supervision.
- Theoretical Models of Counselling and their place within an Integrative Christian approach.
- Attachment, and early life trauma.
- Life Stages and Transitions.
- Mental Health Issues.
- Sexuality and Identity Issues.
- Sexual Abuse Awareness.
- Loss and Bereavement Issues.
- Working with 'difference'.
- Integrating Faith and Practice.
- Ethical issues and "Good Practice".

For Application forms and/or further information regarding Willows Training Courses, contact Avril Fray, Training Manager at Willows.

Advance Notice

Two Year Diploma Course in Integrative Christian Counselling

Level 3 Training: Cost £1,240

ACC Level 3 (CTi/NOCN Advanced Diploma in Counselling)

Thursdays: Day-time Course - April 2005
9.30 am - 3.30 pm (Term time) plus some Saturdays
Entrance criteria - Successful completion of a Level 2 Training Course and a minimum of 50 hours Supervised Counselling practice. (Further details later)

The Willows
COUNSELLING SERVICE



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