



Faith in Older People

NEWSLETTER – Issue January 2011

This issue sponsored by

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Action of Churches Together in Scotland – enabling and resourcing churches in Scotland in their pilgrimage together
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Mission Statement

Faith in Older People

aims to celebrate the lives of older people and to support the spiritual care of older people and their families

Faith in Older People

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SC322915
Registered Charity
SC038225

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IS THERE A RETIREMENT AGE FROM SPIRITUALITY?

What can I change in life?

There is only one thing we can change – **the way we see things.**

Can we apply this truth to the ageing process?

We can change all kinds of things around us. We cannot abolish the ageing process; death is certain. What can we do?

We can see our ageing process differently.

We must face the facts of ageing: if we fail to do this, we miss the treasure that lies hidden in our fears.

Ageing brings diminishment. You can fill in the details for yourself!

Besides physical loss, there are the mental and emotional pains which can accompany loss of job, of status and of independence. Regret for past losses of close relatives, friends, for broken relationships, for injustices suffered, for the harm we have done, the good we have failed to do. There is also the pain we may suffer from 'nice' people, who put us firmly into the elderly category and treat us as helpless objects of their compassion!

Here is an imaginative exercise you can do to enable you to catch a glimpse of the treasure within you. Write the kind of obituary you would love to have after your death. Do not let reality limit you in the slightest.

Keep asking yourself **'What do I most long for in my life?'** That is the most valuable search you can undertake whatever your age. You have started on a journey of discovery. Yes, you have thousands of desires, but keep searching for the deepest. The process takes time, a lifetime. We shall never find a neat, clear answer. The answer is greater than anything we can think or imagine: the search is worth every moment. It is the diminishment we are suffering which is forcing us down to new and very painful depths of ourselves. We are becoming aware of our fragility, our feelings of helplessness and hopelessness. To acknowledge to ourselves the truth of this experience is the first step to discovering the treasure.

The poet Francis Thompson called God 'The Hound of Heaven', who pursued him down the arches of the years until God cornered him, then spoke: -

Halts by me that footfall:

Is my gloom, after all,

Shade of his hand outstretched caressingly?

'Ah fondest, blindest weakest,

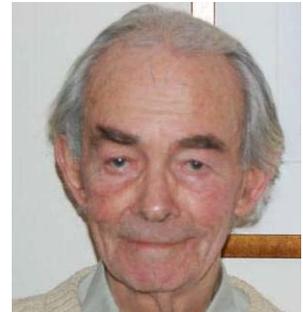
I am he whom thou seekest!'

Our pain of diminishment is the pain of desire, the desire to let God be the God of love and compassion to us and through us, and this God is nearer to us than we are to ourselves!

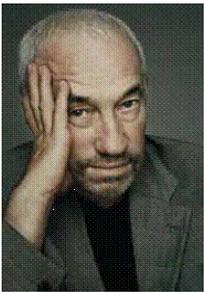
Gerard W. Hughes sj Edinburgh

Due to weather conditions not many people were able to attend Father Gerard's talk but we were able to film it – we have a limited number of DVD's available but could get more if response is great. Cost £5

Please contact info@fiop.org.uk if you would like a copy.



A COMING TO TERMS



On Monday, 9th August, as part of the 'Festival of Spirituality and Peace' held at St John's Church Edinburgh, an audience of around 150 heard a conversation between **Simon Callow** and **Malcolm Goldsmith** which no-one present will easily forget.

The subject was '**Living with Dementia: My Mother And I**', and Simon began by filling in the picture of his mother's life and personality predementia. He described her as displaying 'containable eccentricity' and being 'rather a quirky woman'. She had always had a very imperfect memory and wrote everything down.

She experienced 'a mental and physical collapse' at the age of 87, and it soon became clear that the combination of paranoia, malnutrition and dementia made finding a nursing home for her an imperative. Simon commented on 'the astounding difference between homes', but he managed to find one in Central London which proved to be near-ideal. It was small, modern, well-designed, run by an enlightened group of doctors, and progressive in its ethos. Music and art were a focus, there was a beautiful garden, and an emphasis on activity and humour. Simon commended the caring staff, many of whom were from ethnic minorities: every day was treated as special, and there were many celebrations held in a family atmosphere.

Despite all the social opportunities, however, his mother had, he believed, 'embarked upon a journey of re-evaluation internally'. Gone was the fanatical Catholicism of her earlier life; now she was 'thinking, trying to solve a dilemma'. Coming to terms with someone with the condition, he suggested, 'you transcend the individual relationship and embrace common humanity'. I was struck by the congruity of this process with FIOP's definition of spirituality as 'developing an understanding of what gives meaning to people's lives.' This was a thought-provoking morning for us all.

John Killick

LONDON DEMENTIA CONFERENCE

I attended the excellent International Dementia Conference "Coming of Age" at the end of October in London.

This was organised by Dementia Services Development Centre, Stirling and had an incredible wealth of speakers, activities and events to choose from.

Maureen O'Neill (FIOP) and Jenny Henderson (Alzheimers Scotland) gave a presentation on the joint **DVD 'Spirituality - have you found any yet'** in one of the workshops during this conference. It was well received and it gave us the opportunity to answer questions and to distribute the DVD to a wide audience.

I particularly enjoyed learning about the benefits of good design in care homes, be it the importance of the acoustic environment, the health benefits of real daylight and the importance of balconies and gardens, or the impact the overall design can have on people's ability to navigate round a building, to feel safe and yet included.

I was also impressed with the range of creative activities being explored to share with people with dementia, like Qigong, circle dancing and clowning. I was also encouraged by the sessions on supporting carers.

But for me, the highlight was the very last speaker (alas many had gone by then and missed him) **Professor Stephen Post**, from Stony Brook University USA. After two days of densely packed, often demanding technical or medical information, his talk was like a balm to the soul. He has spent many years researching, teaching, writing and speaking on the problem of the "dehumanization of healthcare" and the importance of compassionate care in "the art of healing and the experience of recovery", focusing on altruism, compassionate love, ethics and the care of people with dementia.

He has written many books e.g. "Why Good Things Happen to Good People" and there are lots of clips of him talking available on the internet. I urge you to look him up.

His talk for us was "**The enduring self in the deeply forgetful; an ethics of care when a cure remains elusive**" – it was inspiring.

Mary Moffett.

Contact the Elderly is a small UK-wide charity founded in 1965 whose aim is to relieve the acute loneliness of isolated older people living alone with limited support from family, friends and statutory services.

Mother Teresa once said
**"Feeling alone and unwanted
is the world's greatest disease."**

Each month on a Sunday afternoon, volunteer drivers take one or two older people to enjoy afternoon tea in a volunteer host's family home and see the guests safely home again.

Over the months and years, on-going support and friendships grow between older guests and volunteers, demonstrating valuable community involvement and providing a discreet monitoring of the older people's well-being.

We offer our free service to those who:

- are over 75
- live isolated and lonely lives with little or no contact with family and friends
- cannot get out except with some assistance
- live in their own accommodation, rather than care homes
- are mobile enough to get to a car and negotiate a few steps with a helping hand.

Our groups are unique:

- they take place once a month on a Sunday; when most services for older people are not available – a day traditionally remembered as the family day by the older generation, and now thought of by many of them as the loneliest day of the week
- they provide an intergenerational group activity to much older people – 50% of our guests are in their 80's and 25% are over 90 – a group frequently excluded from mainstream provision for older people
- groups are kept small so everyone can join in and feel part of an intimate group of friends – this is especially important to those with hearing loss or poor sight

"I'm on my own 24 hours a day. You see no one; hear no one, except for the milkman. It's no exaggeration - the Contact Gatherings are the one bright light in my life - it's fantastic. The volunteers are lovely personalities and you are welcomed into people's homes and we sometimes sit in a nice garden. You meet other elderly people; have a chat and a laugh with them. It's heaven." Chris, 89.

Contact the Elderly groups provide a low-intensity, early-intervention role in the range of community services supporting older people, complementing existing services and enabling isolated, older people to retain optimum independence and remain at home for as long as possible and participate in their communities once again. Our groups make a real difference, and are recognised as a model of good practice in meeting the needs of isolated, older people.

2011 is our 40th anniversary in Scotland and the need for our service is greater than ever – we currently have 62 groups (some of which have been running for almost 40 years) and **we welcome referrals of older people and enquiries from people who would like to join our groups as volunteer drivers, hosts or group co-ordinators.**

For more information and contact details for our Scotland Development Officers please see our website www.contact-the-elderly.org.uk or telephone our freephone number 0800 716543



The Debate

One of FiOP's aims is **"to promote and deepen understanding of the spiritual care needs of older people wherever they are situated"**

We know that many people find spiritual care difficult to define and through a range of events and materials we have tried to de-mystify the issue and to bring it alive for those who provide care - whether physical, emotional, mental or spiritual

In October last year we brought together **Professor Mary Marshall**, recently retired as the Director of the Dementia Services Development Centre in Stirling and the **Rev Malcolm Goldsmith**, the founder of FiOP to debate:

Is there a difference between good person-centred care and spiritual care?

The event was superbly moderated by **Professor Frank Clark**, Convenor of the Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care and held in the **Lifecare** Centre in Stockbridge, Edinburgh.

The event was very well attended with representatives from health and social care, academics, churches and individuals.



Prof Frank Clark, Prof Mary Marshall.
Rev. Malcolm Goldsmith.

Revd Malcolm Goldsmith.

In his introduction Malcolm Goldsmith clearly stated that it is not person-centred care versus spiritual care but that it is important to consider the crucial areas of overlap.

There are many definitions of spiritual and his favourite was Mel Kimble's (2001):

"The spiritual dimension is the energy within that strives for meaning and purpose. It is the unifying and integrating dimension of being that includes the experience of transcendence .. and the mystery that is at once overwhelming and fascinating, that renders my existence significant and meaningful in the here and now. It is also a mystery in that it is unmeasurable, unprovable and lacks universal definition."

But how, Malcolm argued, do we translate this view into everyday terms. We have to unpack some archetypal images; the stories and myths by which we live, the poetry which communicates beyond rationality; attitudes derived from youth which provide continuity and for some a sense of guidance through life acquired through a spiritual power.

He emphasised the fourteen spiritual needs of ageing identified by Koenig in 1994 and pointed out that at least 11 of them could be seen as identical with person-centred care and had a particular focus on the 'need for meaning, purpose and hope' in coming to terms with our lives.

Our spiritual needs encompass the need to be included; to be comforted; to be occupied, as it gives us a sense of urgency and sometimes a chance to give time and help to others. For Malcolm this included his need to be quiet, on his own, relating to nature because to be calm he needed to hear birdsong, feel wind and rain and smell soil and leaves. For others this might be music, art or expression of faith.

For Tom Kitwood all these elements needed to be fulfilled to achieve good person-centred care. It is vital that we maintain and reinforce identify and Malcolm held the view that faith and worship meets all these needs for some people. Again some people can transcend poor physical care and poor health but for most of us our body, mind and spirit are profoundly inter-related.

Malcolm gave several examples where the spiritual insights go beyond good person centred care. One was of a well known hymn 'O love that

will not let me go' with the verse that says " I trace the rainbow through the rain and feel the promise is not vain that morn shall tearless be" which takes up the biblical myth of the flood but which provides a powerful image to share with someone in deep distress and opens up a whole treasury of spiritual wisdom and experience.

He concluded by saying that he would always want to be treated in the context of good person-centred care but that he would not wish to be bereft of the stories and myths that had sustained and been of fundamental importance to him.

Professor Mary Marshall

The focus of her presentation was to talk about people with dementia and the importance of getting care right for them. If this happens then it is possible to ensure that care for everyone is right.

The definitions of 'person centred care' are those developed by Tom Kitwood who was a vicar turned psychology lecturer. He was enraged by the type of care given to people with dementia in the 1980's and 90's and he gave voice to a whole set of new approaches to the understanding and care of those with dementia.

Professor Marshall made two clear points:

1. Good person centred care is the same as spiritual care – people use different language.
2. There are dangers in suggesting that spiritual care is something different and special.

What Mary meant by good person-centred care was about maintaining and enhancing personhood and quoted Tom Kitwood's three approaches which she believed should be taken together. The term personhood, together with its synonyms and parallels can be found in three main types of discourse;

those of transcendence,
those of ethics and
those of social psychology.

"The functions of the term are different in these three contexts but there is a core of meaning that provides a basic conceptual unity.

Discourses of transcendence make their appeal to a very powerful sense held in almost every cultural setting, that being-in-itself is sacred and that life is to be revered. Theistic religions capture something of this in their doctrines of divine creation.

In Eastern traditions of Christianity, for example, there is the idea that each human being is an 'icon of God'. Some forms of Buddhism, and other non-theistic spiritual paths, believe in an essential, inner nature, always present, always perfect and waiting to be discovered through enlightenment.

Secular humanism makes no metaphysical assumptions about the essence of our nature, but still often asserts, on the basis of direct experience, that the 'ultimate is personal'.

In the main ethical discourses of western philosophy one primary theme has been the idea that each person has absolute value. We have an obligation to treat each other with deep respect and never as a means towards some other end." (Kitwood)

The principle of respect for persons it was argued by Kant and those who followed in his footsteps required no theological justification; it is the only assumption on which our life as social beings makes sense. The parallels to this kind of thinking is the doctrine of human rights and this has been used theoretically in many different contexts, including that of dementia (Kings Fund 1986).

Mary's contention was that if spirituality is considered to be additional and essential then it would undermine the confidence of those providing person centred care and that the potential of the language of spirituality being considered as superior could be divisive when the focus should be on meeting the needs of people with dementia effectively.

The speakers raised interesting and varied issues which stimulated many questions from the floor which was pleasing as it demonstrated that there is an active interest in the topic and much to be explored.

We would like to receive your views on whether you feel there is a difference between spiritual care and good person centred care and how you enable the spiritual care need of older people to be met.

Please email your response or question to: info@fiop.org.uk

Annual General Meeting



At our AGM we said goodbye to one of our Trustees, Lissa Smith, who was thanked for all her support and encouragement as she has been with us from the beginning.

We welcomed two new Trustees – Geoff Lachlan and Helen Thompson – a full introduction will be given to them in our next newsletter. Please contact the office for a copy of the Annual Report and Accounts or see our website www.faithinolderpeople.org.uk



We are sorry to report that Malcolm Goldsmith, for reasons to do with his health, has decided that he should step down from the Board of FiOP.

Malcolm is the founder, inspiration, and driving force behind FiOP which he set up after he was

Rector of St Cuthbert's Colinton (1994 – 2002). His focus is on celebrating the gifts of age and he combines his academic and practical experience grounded in theology to ensure we see people as individuals and not as symptoms of illness or decline. Malcolm has consistently contributed to the growing understanding of the importance of spiritual care through his books – 'In a Strange Land' and 'Hearing the Voice of People with Dementia', as well as through his presentations at international conferences and locally based training.

I have known Malcolm since he arrived in Edinburgh in 1992 and have worked closely with him ever since. The effect he has on us all is a measure of his personality and persuasive charisma.

All those associated with FiOP and its objectives owe Malcolm a debt of gratitude. We join in wishing him the best for the future.

*Christopher Davies
Chairperson, Faith in Older People*

Care Home Issues

Our action research project **Delivering Spiritual Care** showed that while the regulations of the Care Commission Scotland established that spiritual care should be an essential element of good care few care homes understood what this might mean in practice.

During the course of the last year we have therefore been exploring what spiritual care might look like. We have produced a series of short modules, lasting approximately 40 minutes and have shared these with small groups of staff in three care homes in the Edinburgh area. For example - how a good welcome can be understood as part of good spiritual practice and the spiritual uplift of music.

We have also used seasonal materials relating to Spring, Easter, Harvest, or Christmas.

The topic of Remembrance also proved fruitful and led on to an exploration of Death & Dying.

We are still evaluating the series and hope to make them more widely available soon.

*An overheard comment
by a Care Home Manager :*

"For the benefit of the residents I would be prepared to trade one care assistant for a Creative Activities Co-ordinator"

Coping with Dementia –
a practical DVD for carers

This DVD is produced by **NHS Health Scotland** and **Alzheimer Scotland** as part of the resources available for people with dementia or their carers and is aimed at those caring for someone in the middle to late stages of dementia.

The DVD will help to understand dementia and to learn from other carers' experiences. It also provides practical suggestions for caring.

Please contact NHS Health to obtain a copy of the DVD or the book which are produced in alternative languages and formats.
www.healthscotland.com

An overheard comment

"I like this new carer – she treats me like a human being"

Working with Churches

Worshipping with People with Dementia

On 9th November Sue Kirkbride from the United Reformed Church in Edinburgh together with Mary Moffett from FiOP, led a workshop on Worshipping with People with Dementia.

16 people came from a wide variety of Christian denominations and social care backgrounds.

We spent some time exploring some of the statistical and medical facts about dementia. This is always a popular subject in workshops as it helps us understand and empathise with the experience of dementia.

Much new work in the last five years has been done on understanding how relationships affect the wellbeing of people with dementia. The Church community and visitors and their attitudes have a vital role to play in embodying and sharing what is "best practice".

We also explored some of the theological ideas of Stanley Hauerwas & Jean Vanier. If we are truly to be "the body of Christ" in our churches and community then we need to realize both the importance and centrality of including everyone, whatever their brokenness and gifts.

Jean Vanier's recurring theme is that it is in the caring for, living with and being present to people who have disabilities, as equals, that we learn how to be fully human and more Christlike. People with dementia are just that, people who have the disability of dementia, and people who are every bit as much a part of the body of Christ as those who consider themselves "normal"!

Sue Kirkbride then shared some of her examples of worship that have worked well over a number of years.

She has found an emphasis on music and images has been fruitful, and emphasized that words,



photo: Candlemas snowdrops Mary Moffett 2.2.07

unless they are familiar or "off by heart", should be kept to a minimum.

Expecting to share the "good news" of the Gospel in wordy sermons or lengthy prayers is not appropriate.

Her creative approach and excellent examples were very encouraging.

A workshop along similar lines is planned for May in St Andrews offered through Pilgrim Care but please ask if you would like us to offer one in your area.
email: info@fiop.org.uk

FiOP is pleased to hear that the Scottish Episcopal Church has set up a "**Church for All Group**" – to look at disability issues within the church in partnership with the United Reformed and Methodist Churches in Scotland.

The remit will include such things as – accessibility in its broadest sense, theological issues, attitudes towards disability, use of language in liturgy, images of God and raising awareness of disability issues at all levels of church life.

ST ANDREW'S AREA COUNCIL PASTORAL VISITING

Saturday 5th March 2011

from 10 – 3.15pm

**St Mary's Episcopal Church
Newport on Tay**

Input from Rev Denise Herbert
Rev Isabella Dowlen
& Rev Paddy Allen

including
Visiting People with Dementia
of Varying Stages
NHS Fife Mental Health
Promotion team
talking about suicide.

Contact Rev Denise Herbert
Tel: 01382 541571
Email: dbh.herbert@btinternet.com

Petals of Prayer

A CD of prayers and reflections for people with dementia and those who support them.

Cost £10 + £2 p+p
Available from
The Sacred Heart Convent,
Goresbrook Road
Dagenham RM9 6XD

We celebrate ageing and faith

Developing an understanding of spiritual care of older people.

Encouraging people to celebrate growing older and

recognising and affirming their gifts and experience.

We offer support and training to pastoral carers and

ordained members on an ecumenical basis and amongst people of other faiths.

Supporting caregivers within health and long term care institutions to enhance the quality of life and wellbeing by ensuring the inclusion of spiritual care for older people

Faith in Older People

Director

Maureen O'Neill

Training Officer

Mary Moffett

Administrator

Jean Myers

We are very grateful for donations from congregations. Can you help?



Sat on Granny's Knee by Charlie O'Sullivan

I recently went to an Art Fair in Edinburgh and was totally entranced by this painting. Charlie has given us permission to use this, together with the little card that she put at the side of the painting and ... given the context of our work ... means the painting "speaks" even more:

Granny Riley was a very special lady and taught me so many things about life. Sat on her chair with her waistcoat on and always a shiny brooch, she would tell me simple stories of her life, the places she had been and the people she had known.

Having lived in Scotland all her life she had many stories to tell.

This story is about the first time she saw the Clyde whilst buying a fish supper with the wages from her first job in Glasgow.

She was adopted and always wondered who her real parents were – she often imagined them sailing down the river and off into the world without her, but by her watching they would return.

I loved my granny's knee.

The painting is reproduced with permission from the Artist - the printing does not do justice to the vibrancy of the original which is an acrylic on wood, sized 80cm x 80cm and is for sale at £3750 from the Steam Gallery at Beer. Copyright © 2003 Marine House at Beer.

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More info on Charlie, including a video and a pod cast, is available on their website: www.steamgallery.co.uk

Jean Myers