

# Bright Tomorrows

*Reflecting the Compassion of Jesus Christ to Those with Mental Health Concerns*

## **A DECADE OF BRIGHT TOMORROWS NEWSLETTERS!**

For ten years Bright Tomorrows has been publishing newsletters in order to provide articles of inspiration and information to those who follow our work and ministry. In this issue we celebrate this decade by re-presenting some articles from the past. These include three articles by three separate BT board members.

### **“Shake It Into the Fire”**

**By Jim Grinnell**

On the island of Malta, as the Apostle Paul was gathering wood for a fire that the natives had built for him, a snake came out of the wood and fastened itself to Paul's hand. The Scriptures say: “When the natives saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, ‘No doubt this man is a murderer! Though he has escaped from the sea, justice has not allowed him to live.’”

For the person with a mental illness, their disease is like that snake of Malta, fastening itself upon them as they attempt to do the normal act of living. And we are too often like those natives, misinterpreting and stigmatizing an unpleasant reality of life. In our case, the unpleasant reality of life is this: the human brain is an organ of the body that can get sick, just like any other organ of the body!

Oral Roberts, while president of Oral Roberts University, once preached a stirring message based on this passage, saying there are some things we just need to aggressively “shake [it] into the fire.” In the arena of mental health, the real enemy is not the snake (the

disease), but the stigma attached to the one who has been bitten! That person is often quickly labeled “crazy,” “demonized,” “irresponsible,” “manipulative,” a “drug abuser,” “without faith,” or “in sin.”

One of the foremost objectives of BT is to de-stigmatize mental illness – to “shake it into the fire!” Many people want to deny the unpleasant reality of mental illness, thinking that mental illness amounts to cowardice in facing the rigors of life. Consider, however, how much courage it takes to accept that one has a mental illness: it means facing those stigmas, trusting others for an intense level of support, facing a medication regimen for probably the rest of your life, and dealing with a loss of control at times. Together let's “shake the stigma of mental illness into the fire!”

JIM GRINNELL is the Vice-President of Bright Tomorrows. Jim is a pastor and Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist. He attended ORU where he obtained a Master of Divinity degree and later OSU where he also obtained a Master of Science degree in Family Relations. He is a past member of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, and current board member of the Christian Association for Psychological Studies. Jim also is certified as a sex therapist with the American Board of Christian Sex Therapists.

Bright Tomorrows is committed to equipping churches to better serve those with mental health concerns. Our daily mission is to reflect the compassion of Jesus Christ by assisting those struggling with mental illness and promoting mental health.

### JEREMIAH 29:11

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

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# "Who Sinned?"

by Tim Reside

One day Jesus encountered a man who had been blind from birth. His disciples asked: ***“Teacher, who sinned, this man or his parents that he was born blind?”***

Choices do have consequences—our choices and those of others. For many Christians disease, death and dying are understood to be the consequence of the disobedient choice of Adam and Eve. Modern science itself informs us that there are predisposing factors at work that are rooted in the blurred genealogy of ancestral choices. The disciples were quite sure of themselves when they asked their question. Nonetheless they were guilty of a leap in logic. Jesus recognized and challenged their presumption. He saw through their veiled judgmentalism—a judgmentalism that tends to add to pain and suffering.

The disciple’s religious perspective told them that this man’s broken condition was proof positive that he was being judged for sin. This leap in logic has been around in varied forms for millennia. It remains with us to this day. Throughout history such maladies as blindness, deafness, leprosy, crippled and/or missing limbs, epilepsy, mental illness, and even goiters have resulted in people being judged as being guilty of having necessarily brought it upon themselves. Too often broken people in need of help, hope, and healing have suffered the added pain of feeling stigmatized, marginalized and even ostracized by family, society and the church.

I am so grateful for the answer given by Jesus of Nazareth to his disciples: ***“Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God’s works might be revealed in him.” — John 9:1-3***

Was Jesus suggesting that the blind man and his parents had lived lives free of sin, moral failure and/or foolish choices? I don’t think so. Was Jesus saying that God pre-planned that this man be born blind in order that God could do a miracle and get credit? I don’t think so. What I believe Jesus came to say was that human brokenness, its suffering and pain, present those who follow the compassionate way of Christ with opportunities to glorify God by bringing help, hope and non-judgmental healing to those in need. Listening in order to learn and to understand promotes compassion. Compassion stirred always results in help, hope and non-judgmental healing—never condemnation.

It is worth noting that when Jesus cured, he healed the soul, and whenever he healed the soul, he cured. Without question physical cure is a wonderful thing, but it does not guarantee inner life healing. Ultimately physical cure is swallowed up by death and dying. It is the soul touched by healing that alone survives death and dying. We may not always be able to cure but we can always be ready to minister soul-healing help and hope that gives vision for future.

**TIM RESIDE is the President of Bright Tomorrows.** Tim is an ordained minister who has spent over forty years in church-related pastoral work and ministry. He holds a Master of Arts degree in Practical Theology having completed 108 credit hours of study, inclusive of 36 hours at the doctoral level. Tim is a mental health consumer who has been successfully coping with and overcoming bipolar illness since 1979.

# MISSION UPDATE REPORT

BT offers two different types of support groups. They meet each month and are facilitated by Tim and Nancy Reside. They both take place at Asbury United Methodist Church in Tulsa at 6767 South Mingo in Tulsa across from Union High School. The meetings take place in Room 2821 on the second floor of the main building (there is an elevator). Please enter through the main south covered walk entrance. This entrance is next to the "Faith Zone" children's entrance.

• **A Monthly Christian Support Group for Depression and Bipolar Care Givers & Care Recipients** (adults only) takes place on the **1st Thursday (7-8:30 p.m.)**. We meet together for mutual support and encouragement. Together we glean information that helps us learn how to cope successfully with the major crisis and/or challenges in our lives as care givers. This, in turn, helps our loved ones as they work toward recovery. Click on our website for more detailed information.

• **A Christian Depression and Bipolar Support Group Meeting**

(adults only) takes place on the **2nd, 3rd, & 4th Thursdays (7:00-8:15 p.m.)** for adult men and women who: (1) have been diagnosed with a unipolar disorder (major depressive disorder) or a bipolar disorder (manic-depressive disorder); (2) have a current medical, clinical and/or therapeutic care connection; and (3) are current with their medications. We meet together for mutual support and together we glean information and inspiration that helps us better manage our mental health disorders within the context of our faith. Participants are also welcome to be a part of the Care Giver & Care Recipient meeting described above. There are no 5th Thursday night meetings. Click on our website for more detailed information.

BT continues to offer bi-monthly **Breakfast Seminars (7:30-9:00 a.m.)** for professional and/or lay ministers and ministry leaders at no charge. Mental health related topics pertinent to church ministry and pastoral care concerns are presented and discussed with qualified presenters. For more information email or check our website.

BT's June 21st breakfast seminar **"A Little Good News about Bad News"** was presented by Tulsa Police & Fire Chaplain, Pastor Dave Dunson. Pastor Dunson is a knowledgeable presenter who knows how to effectively intersperse humor even when dealing with sobering issues. This presentation was offered in recognition of the fact that ministers are often called upon to serve church members and non-church members during times of crisis. One of the minister's weightier duties is delivering "bad news" to family members whose loved ones have died as a result of homicide, suicide, fire or traffic fatality or unexpected death by natural causes. As a pastor and a man with 20 years of unique chaplain experience, Dave was able to offer significant and practical insight. For example, he discussed the mental health importance for the minister who delivers bad news to prioritize their own "self-care."

BT's August 24th breakfast seminar was presented by Bright Tomorrows Board Trustee, Tim Peterson. The session was entitled **"Seven Ways Inadequate**

**Sleep Negatively Impacts Health.**" Tim is a Licensed Marital and Family Therapist and a Licensed Professional Counselor. Citing Psalm 127:2, which reads, "...He [God] gives his beloved sleep," Tim discussed the fact that both congregational members and ministers alike can experience sleep related difficulties. He specifically discussed known existing links to such health challenges as depression, obesity, reduced cognitive abilities and work performance, decreased immune function and cardiovascular disease. He offered data demonstrating the pervasiveness of the problem and talked about some reasons why it seems to be getting worse. Tim helped attendees to assess whether or not they were getting adequate rest and shared ways for improving sleep.

## BT TOP TWO NEEDS:

1. BT PRAYER PARTNERS!
2. BT SUPPORT PARTNERS!

*Thank You...  
For Caring  
& Sharing!*

## My Statement of Support

(Please Check Boxes That Represent Your Support Intention)

**Tim & Nancy Reside Work and Ministry Support**

I am making a **one-time donation** of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I am making a **monthly pledge** of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Donation toward the initial \$2,500 cost for publishing Tim & Nancy's book, "From Insanity to Serenity."**

(\$1,250 has been donated to date.)

I am making a contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Notify me when the project is published.

Make checks payable to  
Bright Tomorrows  
with memo notation.



**Please send this statement along with  
your contribution to:**

**Bright Tomorrows  
5630 South Boston Avenue  
Tulsa, OK 74105-7725**

*Donations are tax-deductible. Envelope provided.*

**Total Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

# Ten Tips For Beating The Holiday Blues

by Tim Peterson

**1. Keep expectations manageable.** Don't try to make this holiday season "the best ever." Set realistic goals for yourself. Prioritize the most important activities, and pace yourself. Remember that the holidays don't automatically dispel reasons for feeling sad or lonely, so it's okay for you to have these feelings.

**2. Let go of the past.** Don't make yourself miserable by thinking everything has to be just like the "good old days." As life brings changes, each holiday season is different and should be enjoyed in its own way.

**3. Avoid relationship conflicts.** Make a commitment to set aside unresolved issues. "If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with all men." Now is probably not the best time for problem solving anyway. Try to accept family and friends as they are, even if they don't meet your expectations.

**4. Enjoy holiday activities that are free.** Drive around to look at holiday decorations. Go window-shopping without buying anything. Be sure to check out the Christmas pageants put on by local churches and schools.

**5. Don't overindulge.** Excessive eating and drinking will only make you more depressed. Maintain a consistent sleep schedule, a balanced diet, and regular exercise.

**6. Enjoy time with supportive people who care about you.** If you're married, spend time at home with your spouse and children. If you're single, enjoy the company

of family and friends. If you're alone, reach out to make new friends or contact an old friend with whom you've lost touch.

**7. Make time for yourself.** Don't spend all your time providing activities for family and friends. Whether it's taking a long walk or reading a good book, do something you enjoy.

**8. Build your own family traditions.** Along with making nice memories, family traditions enrich family identity and closeness, which helps reduce stress. There are dozens of fun and inexpensive ways to celebrate the season. So don't be afraid to try something new.

**9. Serve others without expecting a reward.** Bringing joy or comfort to others gets the focus off yourself and has a way of lifting your spirit.

**10. Remember the Reason for the Season.** Taking time to reflect on the meaning or purpose for the holiday is the best way to prioritize your time and transform your holiday into a joyous celebration of hope.

**TIM PETERSON** is a **Bright Tomorrows Board Trustee**. Tim has his master's degree in Counseling Psychology from Northeastern State University and completed a two-year post graduate program in Marriage & Family Therapy through the Karl Menninger School of Psychiatry and Mental Health Sciences. Tim is a Licensed Marital and Family Therapist and a Licensed Professional Counselor. He currently works at Laureate Clinic where he specializes in the treatment of anxiety and depression in addition to marital counseling.

Bright  Tomorrows

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to Those with Mental Health Concerns*

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**Christian Depression and  
Bipolar Support Group Meetings  
For Care Givers & Those in Recovery**  
**Thursday Evenings at 7:00 P.M.**

These events take place at Asbury United Methodist Church at 6767 South Mingo in Tulsa, OK across from Union High School. Meetings are held in Room 2821 on the second floor of the main building (there is an elevator). Please enter through the main south covered walk entrance. This entrance is next to the "Faith Zone" children's entrance. For meeting descriptions visit our web site.

For a detailed map and complete driving directions please visit our website.

**To receive this free newsletter please e-mail us or visit our website. We can also send this to you via e-mail when you provide us with your e-mail address.**