

# Bright Tomorrows

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

## GRACE & TRUTH FOR THE AFFLICTED

Once upon a time, "walking down the street, Jesus saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked, [Teacher], who sinned: this man or his parents, causing him to be born blind?" Jesus offered a three-fold corrective response: (1) "You're asking the wrong question." (2) "You're looking for someone to blame." (3) "There is no such cause-effect here." Jesus instructed them, "look instead for what God can do." Then he "spit in the dust, made a clay paste with the saliva, rubbed the paste on the blind man's eyes, and said, Go, wash at the Pool of Siloam. The man went and washed—and saw." (*Source: John 9:1-7, The Message Bible*)

It is in listening and learning how to ask right questions that we come to appreciate fresh and new ways to let God do what God can do—including by human instrumentation. Even as Jesus mixed clay with the trace elements in his saliva to create an anointed healing eye salve, so it is that our listening and asking of better questions is leading to advances in medicine and other therapeutic treatment protocols for helping persons with mental health challenges. A willingness to learn from enlightened understanding can and should be embraced as part and parcel of the healing ministry of the church. (*See: John 14:12; Ephesians 1:17-18*)

Jesus' example teaches that we need to be careful not to shame by blaming those who are already suffering pain resulting from their experiences with brokenness. Further, Jesus models the importance of not making cause-effect leaps in logic. While theologically speaking brokenness and disease can be traced to "the fall," it is critical that we not assume all manifest brokenness is the consequence of personal sin or lack of faith.

In religion and medical treatment alike, law (policy and protocol) is critical. There are consequences for choices made. Of necessity there needs to be parameters, guidelines and guard rails. It is important to know what works and what doesn't work. It is important to know what will and will not promote wellness and what will and will not promote illness. Jesus was not anti-law. (*See: Matthew 5:17*) Nevertheless, in terms of method priority, it is clear that for him law was always made to serve grace and truth. (*See: John 1:17*) In religion and medical treatment, if we are not motivated by grace and truth, we will likely leap to ministry and treatment assumptions presumptuously based upon surface observations. May grace and truth ever motivate us to compassionately respond to the expressed needs of those who are hurting.

*Author: Tim Reside, MA, MHC, is President of Bright Tomorrows.*

Bright Tomorrows is dedicated to reflecting the compassion of Jesus Christ by promoting mental health, helping those struggling with mental illness toward a healing-recovery lifestyle, and by assisting churches in their mission to better serve those with mental health concerns.



#### JEREMIAH 29:11

"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, 'plans for wholeness and not for evil, plans to give you hope and a future.'"



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## OCTOBER 28—A MEMORABLE DAY

Bright Tomorrows, together with CAPS (Christian Association for Psychological Studies) invited Dr. Matthew Stanford, a noted neuro-psychologist and researcher and one of the nation's most respected Christian authorities on mental illness, for a training session with local ministry leaders. Here are just a few expressions of gratitude.

"Thanks for providing this training. I simply wish that more pastors and churches would avail themselves of referral sources."

"Thanks—I am praying that more churches will begin to endorse the blending of psychology and theology in a way that assists parishioners with their mental health issues."

"Excellent presenter and training—great way to break the stigma of mental illness within faith communities."

"WOW! Thanks—I understand my family for the first time. Very useful for my ministry."

"Dr. Stanford's emphasis on prayer being a vital part of well-being was appreciated. I feel that it is a necessary component to feeling whole—the church can be a very important partner with the health care provider in helping the person manage their illness."

"I found it helpful how Dr. Stanford reinforced that mental illness is a physical change in the brain and that stating that someone's faith isn't strong enough or that they haven't prayed enough is harmful to the person."

"Very informative—Dr. Stanford spoke 'to' us—not 'down' to us!"

# Mission Update Report

**BT** offers two curriculum-based support groups from September-May. The faith-based and hope-affirming Christian materials used are clinically accurate. The **Bright Tomorrows Support Group** (BTSG), meeting on the 1st & 3rd Thursdays at 7PM, is designed for adults with a bipolar disorder or a depression diagnosis. The **Bright Tomorrows Family Group** (BTFG), meeting the 2nd & 4th Thursdays at 7PM, is a support group designed for the family and friend support givers of those with mental health concerns. (See our website for details.)

**BT** continues to offer to pastors, ministers, lay leaders and chaplains, FREE **Bi-Monthly Breakfast Seminars** led by qualified presenters discussing topics pertinent to church ministry.

**BT's** June Breakfast Seminar topic, ***"The Dangers of Pornography: How Couples are Affected,"*** was co-presented by Pastor and Certified Sex Addiction Specialist, Jim Grinnell (LMFT) as well as Certified Partner Trauma Specialist, Stacie Casler (LPC). Our presenters talked about the fact that pornography use is increasingly being associated with legal troubles, affairs, divorce, trauma, exploitation of women, a loss of couple intimacy, teen and childhood pathologies and even impotence. They discussed a study by Dr. Victor Cline, of the University of Utah, showing that the use of pornography usually escalates through four steps: Addiction, Escalation, Desensitization and Acting out Sexually.

**BT's** August Breakfast Seminar topic, ***"Resilience and Post Traumatic Growth,"*** was presented by David Wakefield, a psychologist in the Mind-Body Medicine Department at Cancer Treatment Center of Tulsa. Most are familiar with Post Traumatic Stress but in this presentation, Dr. Wakefield discussed that while indeed trauma, crisis and suffering can be terribly destructive, they also have the potential to transform us in positive ways. He talked about how resiliency helps us. Further, Dr. Wakefield illustrated this fact by presenting 25 stories about ordinary people who bounced back from difficult times and went on to be successful in life.

**BT's** October Breakfast Seminar topic, ***"How Can the Church Be a Resource for Individuals and Families Struggling with Mental Illness,"*** was presented by Dr. Matthew Stanford. In what was a special 3-hour training session, Dr. Stanford taught ministry leaders the basics for how to: **Recognize**—mental health disorders vs. emotional issues; **Respond**—to those with mental health difficulties and their families; **Refer**—by building an effective partnership with adequate professional care and intervention; and **Restore**—by building simple and supportive pastoral care and community support.

## Opportunities of Support



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

Please indicate on check whether you are making  
***a monthly pledge*** OR ***a one-time donation.***

Make checks payable to Bright Tomorrows.

***Donations are tax-deductible.***

To make one-time credit card donations or recurring monthly donations by way of a PayPal account, please visit [www.brighttomorrows.org](http://www.brighttomorrows.org) and click the "donate" button on the left side of the web page.





# WORDS MATTER

**“Death and life are in the power of the tongue ....”—Proverbs 18:21**

## Things NOT to say to a Bipolar:

**“I thought you were taking your medication.”**

Dealing with bipolar disorder cannot be reduced to taking pills. Confronting a chronic illness is an ongoing process. Education will help you better understand the challenges.

**“It doesn’t take much to set you off!”**

We with bipolar disorder are often more vulnerable and responsive to what happens around us. Your unintended careless statements can trigger reactions and escalate symptoms.

**“You’re lazy and don’t have a life anymore.”**

Recovery takes time and work, and the role you play is critical—help by using constructive dialogue that acknowledges progress. Over pushing someone who has bipolar disorder to get on with life might create stress, counteract recovery techniques, and worsen overall health.

**“We used to have high hopes for you.”** We are all human beings, not human “doings;” the more you

acknowledge our being, the more we can end up doing.

**“You seem a little overly enthusiastic.”** Remember that someone who has bipolar disorder is still entitled to a personality—it is cruel to strip a person of their personality merely because of their diagnosis.

## Things you CAN say to a Bipolar:

**“I love you, you’re not alone in this.”**

**“I’m sorry you’re in so much pain.”**

**“I’m always willing to listen.”**

**“This will pass, and we can ride it out together.”**

**“When all this is over, I’ll still be here.”**

**Attribution:** An edited extrapolation of an August 8, 2016 posting by Stephen Propst entitled “10 Things NOT to Say to Someone with Bipolar” in the bp MAGAZINE. Document Source: <http://www.bphope.com/the-big-payoff-of-well-chosen-words/>

## Contact Information & Resources

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**Website:** [www.brighttomorrows.org](http://www.brighttomorrows.org)

### CHURCH MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

**NAMI FaithNet:** [www.nami.org/namifaithnet](http://www.nami.org/namifaithnet)

**Pathways to Promise:** [www.pathways2promise.org](http://www.pathways2promise.org)

**Mental Health Ministries:** [www.mentalhealthministries.net](http://www.mentalhealthministries.net)

**Intl. Bipolar Foundation:** [www.internationalbipolarfoundation.org](http://www.internationalbipolarfoundation.org)

**Mental Health Grace Alliance:** [www.mentalhealthgracealliance.org](http://www.mentalhealthgracealliance.org)

### Bright Tomorrows Support Group (BTSG)

*(Adult Bipolar & Depression Support Group)*

**1st & 3rd Thursdays at 7 P.M.**

### Bright Tomorrows Family Group (BTFG)

*(Family & Friend Support Givers Group)*

**2nd & 4th Thursdays at 7 P.M.**

These 7:00 P.M. Thursday Evening Christian Support Group Meetings take place September thru May at Asbury United Methodist Church, 6767 South Mingo in Tulsa, OK. For meeting descriptions, a detailed map and complete driving directions, please visit our website.

To receive this free newsletter please e-mail us or visit our website. if you prefer postal delivery, please provide us with your mailing address.