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The INNER Life

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FALL 2005

IN WITH THE NEW, JOY OR DREAD?



Annette Vaughn

“After three funerals, a broken relationship and some major family issues, I decided that I didn’t like last year at all. I’m ready for something new, to start fresh. I’m ready to do away with the old and usher in the new.” Uttered by a client seen after New Year’s day, these words speak to a phenomenon most of us feel

at some point in our life. We believe that if we can just remove the painful areas of our life and bring in something new or different our life will magically be better or happier. Many in our culture look with excitement and joy towards the New Year’s festivities. Others look upon them with dread and dismay. The turn of the old year into the new tends to be one of celebration while providing opportunity for reassessment of one’s life and for change. The question emerges whether this celebration can be genuine if one simply forgets about the past and what one wants to leave behind and ignores the impact these issues play in one’s life.

I have found this to be personally true as I reflect over this past year. I am a recent transplant to Tennessee having moved here after my marriage in April. In August, I affiliated with PCCT and began working out of the Franklin office. In a very short period of time, I had become a new wife and “stepmonster” to a loving and precocious 9 year old boy, moved six hours away from my family, friends, and support network, started developing a professional identity in a new place, and began writing a dissertation. In other words, I was in the process of starting over. This new life was one for which I had dreamed ever since a child and feared would never come. Many hopes and dreams came true when I met and then married the man I am convinced God brought into my life. I looked forward to beginning our life together with excitement and joy while also

realizing that all the changes would be stressful as well. With my training, I approached challenges with a realistic understanding that these changes while longed for would also create anxiety; this allowed me to engage each challenge with a sense of humor.

My biggest fear was that I would one day get a phone call that a member of my family (one of my parents) had fallen ill and I would be unable to get back “home” in time. That fear came true for me yesterday, only it wasn’t one of my parents who was in trouble. My 45 year old brother was experiencing cardiac arrest. He literally was brought back to life by the quick actions of his co-workers and colleagues. Their battle to save his life brought my brother through a face to face encounter with death. I experienced a myriad of emotions at being told to wait and not get on the road until they knew more, until he was more stable. I was aware of my fear for his life, my anger at realizing they had not given me all the pertinent information in the beginning, my deep regret and grief that I could not be present with my family to offer my love and support in person. During all the barrage of feelings, I was also acutely aware that while I had lost something in the immediacy of being available with family in this crisis, I had gained a companion who was available to walk with me and to support me whatever came.

“When in the midst of a difficult time, I think it is an inevitable human reaction to want to minimize the negative and “get on” with the new.

When in the midst of a difficult time, I think it is an inevitable human reaction to want to minimize the negative and “get on” with the new. Life, however, rarely allows such a clear cut response. Our challenge as people of faith is not simply to do away with the old and to ring in the new, but to allow both the old and the new to be transformed by the presence of God. In this way, the old continues within the new and this brings richer meaning to the whole of our lives. The old is not simply left behind but is transformed by the new opportunities God presents in our lives. Thus, we live life in the spirit of a God who makes all things new transforming both the past and present into God’s future.



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“ ANY PORT IN A STORM ”



Tom Knowles-Bagwell, DMin.
Executive Director

Sigmund Freud once wrote a letter to Carl Jung in which he said, “Psycho-analysis is the cure through love.” That claim may come as a surprise to those of us who have been saturated with the common stereotypes of the psychoanalyst as emotionally detached and clinically sterile in relation to patients. But Freud’s claim appears to suggest his intuitive grasp of what later empirical research on psychotherapy would conclude; that it is the quality of the relationship between the therapist and the patient, not the technical expertise of the therapist, that has the greatest impact on the effectiveness of the treatment. That is one of the reasons we teach our students in training that it is the relationship that heals.

But the kind of loving relationships that facilitate healing in people’s lives are not created *ex nihilo*. Nor can they be sustained in a social vacuum. No, these special relationships – like the special people who create and use them in the service of healing – spring forth from and are sustained through larger communities of loving care. Because of this we at PCCT are entering into a partnership with the Baptist Healing Trust (BHT) to explore the ways in which the structures and dynamics of our organizational life embody the principles of radical loving care so prized within our faith tradition. During the next twelve months our leadership team, clinical and support staff and Board of Directors will be engaged in regular conversation and exploration about the ways in which radical loving care can pervade the ethos of our organizational life, from our clinical practices to our personnel policies and even the way we conduct our staff and Board meetings.

Central to this process will be our newly appointed leadership team. Joining me in this effort will be The Reverend Chris O’Rear, Clinical Services Director; The Reverend Doctor Gilbert Roth, Business Resource Center Director; Ms. Chrissa Walsh, Director of Finance and Development; and The Reverend Doctor Bruce Vaughn, Director of Education and Training. We will be meeting monthly with leaders from The Baptist Healing Trust to explore the direction for the future of PCCT. In addition to these monthly meetings, two all-day retreats for all clinical and support staff are planned as well as two all-day retreats including all staff and the Board of Directors. Through their

partnership, the Baptist Healing Trust is providing not only consultative leadership and facilities, but also financial support to PCCT that will allow us time away from our clinical practices to engage in this process.

It is not yet clear where this process will lead us. But it is clear to me that this partnership is rooted in the guiding vision that gave birth to both PCCT and BHT. This is a vision of making manifest the healing power of God’s radical loving care in the world as an extension of the ministry of our faith communities. “The wind blows where it wills. We hear the sound of it, but we know not where it comes from, nor where it is going.” Our prayer is that the wind of God’s Spirit will infuse this partnership and guide our collective process to more loving and effective ministry in our world.

NEW EDUCATION AND TRAINING DIRECTOR



Bruce Rogers-Vaughn, DMin.
Education & Training Director

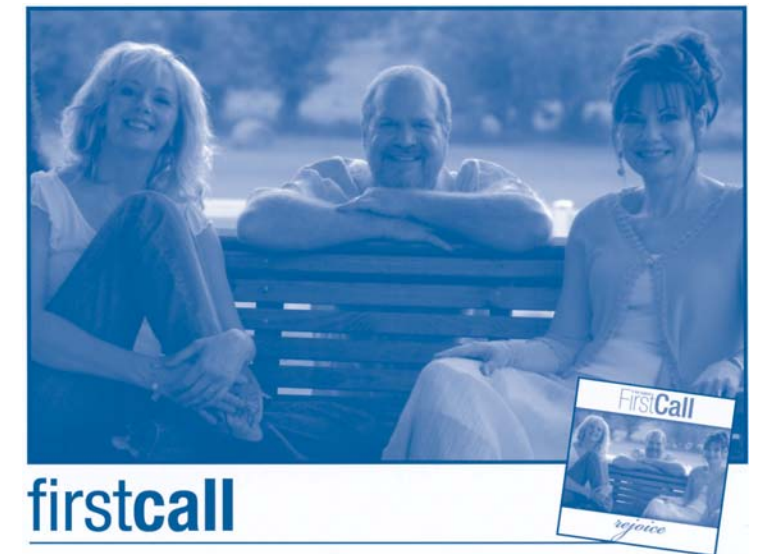
The Reverend Doctor Bruce Rogers-Vaughn joined Pastoral Counseling Centers of Tennessee (PCCT) as the new Education and Training Director on January 2, 2006. Bruce was employed by PCCT from 1988-1998 and served as Clinical Services Director from 1996-1998. He returns to PCCT from The Turning Leaf Pastoral Counseling Service in Brentwood where he has served as Director since January of 1999. We are grateful to have Bruce affiliated once again with Pastoral Counseling Centers of Tennessee.

Development Doings



Chrissa Walsh
Development Director

The Pastoral Counseling Centers of Tennessee is pleased to host, *First Call*, in concert, February 3, 2005. First Baptist Church downtown, 108 Seventh Avenue South, Nashville, Tennessee, is graciously providing their sanctuary and parking in partnership with us to raise money for programs of PCCT. Members of the Nashville Predators will also be on hand to sign autographs and lend their support to this great evening of song, fellowship and community.



Tickets are on sale now and may be purchased by calling 615-383-2115 x 27 or by downloading the order form on the website: www.PastoralCounselingCtrs.org and clicking on the link titled: **First Call and PCCT**. Tickets are \$15 in advance and \$20 at the door. Students with a high school or college ID may purchase tickets for \$10 in advance and \$15 at the door.

The original members of *First Call*, a contemporary Christian recording group, will be performing a reunion concert (their first as the ORIGINAL FIRST CALL in 10 years!) at 7:30 p.m. and will be debuting songs from their new release *Rejoice* to be released Spring 2006. *First Call* has received 11 nominations for Dove Award, received three Dove Awards, and 5 Grammys. This event is to raise funds for suicide prevention programs and substance abuse education for high school and college students. Almost everyone has been touched by suicide of loved one or known someone who has entertained suicidal thoughts. Suicide has become the 2nd leading cause of death in 18-24 year olds in the last few years. This is a great opportunity to “get the word out” in the Nashville Community about the Pastoral Counseling Centers of Tennessee and the programs we provide.

CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

February

- 3 First Call in Concert
7:30 pm., First Baptist Church
108 7th Ave. S., Nashville, TN
For tickets, call 615-383-2115 or
or by website: www.PastoralCounselingCtrs.org
click on link “First Call and PCCT” on homepage.

- 16 Board of Directors Meeting, Details TBA.