

# Guild News

A half-yearly update for members of the Guild of St Raphael

May 2012



## COMPLEMENTARY THERAPIES & CHRISTIANITY

### An introductory overview

Before we start discussing anything that might be regarded as contentious in some Christian circles, it seems wise to establish the basic principles against which we are going to view our topic. For me, these basic principles are to be found in the Bible and in our Christian creeds.

*Nicene Creed: We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.*

*Genesis 1, 31: God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good.*

*Luke 10, 30, 33, 34: A Samaritan... came near him [a traveller who had fallen into the hands of robbers and been left for dead]; and when he saw him he was moved with pity. He went to him, and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them.*

*John 9, 5 – 7: [Jesus said] 'I am the light of the world'. When he had said this he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the [blind] man's eyes,*

*saying to him, 'Go and wash in the pool of Siloam' (which means sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see.*

*James 5, 14: Are any of you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord.*

These few quotations remind us that God is the creator of all, and that various physical techniques have been used as adjuncts to prayer in order to aid the body's healing processes. In our own culture, since the formation of the NHS in particular, many physical and psychological techniques have been developed to aid healing, and the priority given to prayer in healing has tended to decrease. This has paralleled the development of what is referred to as the biomedical model of health and healing, in which the biological basis of disease, that is amenable to scientific exploration, has become accepted as the norm.

This establishment of a norm has involved the setting of limits to what is regarded as normal, to the exclusion of other treatment modalities that have come to be labelled as complementary or alternative. It seems to me that the treatments that are counted as normal are those that were prevalent in medically-related circles at the time of the formation of the NHS. So physiotherapy and occupational therapy were included whereas herbal medicine, homeopathy and a wide range of other therapeutic approaches were not. These divisions have largely become consolidated because of the powerful vested interests, of the medical profession and the pharmaceutical industry, in the *status quo*.

Influenced by these major participants, the government has adopted a 'creed' of endorsing only 'evidence-based medicine', even though the evidence of effectiveness is very weak for a wide range of therapeutic approaches that are used within the NHS. It is now very difficult to introduce any novel therapy to the NHS portfolio because the required evidence of effectiveness can be produced only in a very limited range of circumstances, requiring randomised controlled trials that are readily applicable to medicines but difficult or impossible to apply to treatments that require a therapist's interaction with a patient, and individualised treatment plans. This difficulty applies to occupational therapy, physiotherapy and nursing care as well as to other holistic therapies.

#### What are complementary and alternative therapies?

This brings us to the question of the definition of complementary and alternative therapies, and there are two distinct definitions of each of

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## AND IN CHRISM

### Complementary Therapies and Christianity

This edition of *Chrism* aims to explore our understanding of complementary and alternative therapies and examine the extent to which selected examples are compatible with Christianity. First the Revd Dr John Spring, from Australia, addresses a very important theological question. If we truly believe in one God, 'maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen' (Nicene Creed in Common Worship) why are so many Christians highly suspicious of alternative or complementary therapies? Following this, Leslie Maynerd, a Guild Council Member and Aromatherapist and then the editor's yoga teacher describe their therapies and make clear how they are compatible with Christianity.

#### ALSO

**From CSTH: FREEING OUR THEOLOGICAL IMAGINATION: An exploration of some of the metaphors we inhabit, that constrain or liberate our experience of church;** Revd Canon Dr Liz Smith, Chair of Leeds Methodist District.  
**Summary of Centre Activities by its Director, Revd Dr Jan Berry**

The next issue, due out in November 2012, will be on the theme: **Christian Healing and Mental Health**. For non-subscribers, extra copies of *Chrism*, price £3.50, can be obtained from the *Guild Office*.

#### Guild of St Raphael Presidents

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# AN INTRODUCTION TO OUR NEW SUB-WARDEN

## Revd Rodney Middleton



I've been asked by our Editor to write a few biographical words - so here goes! Birth, growing up and school all took place in Liverpool - though as a family we moved when I was 11 to Kirkby, on the outskirts of Liverpool. It was here that my involvement in Church started; first as a choir boy (you only needed a pulse to get into our Church Choir!); then as a Server. It was also here that my vocation to the priesthood was fostered.

Eventually I was to read theology at St Andrews University, and then went on to train for the Priesthood at St Stephen's House, Oxford. I was ordained Deacon in Liverpool Cathedral in July 1982, and Priested the following year.

My involvement in the healing ministry started on the first day after my ordination as Deacon. The parish I was serving in had the Chaplaincy to a large 1000-bed general hospital. With a staff of 4 in our parish we were all allocated our own wards for visiting each week, to be followed up early on Wednesday mornings with a 'Communion Round'. I was amazed (after my initial trepidation!) at how readily patients opened up to a dog collar; sharing their fears and their faith. It was also quite an eye-opener how eagerly people wanted to show you their operation scars!

When I moved to my first parish after my curacy I was again to have responsibility as a hospital Chaplain: this time to a brand new hospital in Southport. I also, for a while, had the

Chaplaincy of the local maternity hospital. When a new hospice was built in my parish, adjacent to the hospital, I became Chaplain there. This was to become a very special place - like all hospices. And my time there was one of the most challenging - and fulfilling - of my ministry.

I had heard of the Guild of St Raphael through my Sub-Warden, predecessor Fr Paul Nener; but it was only when I moved to my present parish in Haydock (as Fr Paul's successor) that my real involvement began. St James the Great, Haydock, already had a branch of the Guild when Fr Paul became its Vicar in 1983. Under his particular gifts the branch thrived and developed into the largest in the country. This was the branch I 'inherited', and we now have over 60 members. I became a member of the Guild Council in 1996 and was appointed Sub-Warden in 2010.

I see the strength of the Guild in its branches. A well-run branch can be a powerhouse of prayer for the mission and witness of a parish: I know it is in mine. And I appreciate the powerful, prayerful support that I know each branch member gives every day to furthering Christ's mission to bring healing and wholeness to our broken world.

May Christ the Healer strengthen the Guild of St Raphael, and all its members, in all it strives to do in his name.

I hope to see you at the Guild Festival in Liverpool in October!

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these terms that are in general usage. **Complementary** can mean that a therapy can be used in conjunction with what are labelled as conventional therapies. **Complementary** can also refer to those therapies that are based on the same biomedical diagnostic framework as conventional therapies. **Alternative** can mean that a therapy is used as an alternative to conventional treatments. **Alternative** is also used to refer to therapies that are based on a different diagnostic or conceptual framework from conventional therapies. Interestingly, a number of what might be described as holistic therapies, such as aromatherapy and yoga embrace the biomedical model but include a further (spiritual, but not necessarily religious) dimension in their understanding of health and healing.

### Yoga

Yoga is one of the complementary therapies about which I am best informed, having practised it for some 40 years. I have found it to be almost entirely compatible with my Christian faith, my only reservations being about some (rarely-used) chants that invoke the names of Hindu deities. The compatibility of yoga with Christianity is often doubted and that is why I invited my current teacher, Carol Tresadern, to write about it for the current issue of *Chrism*.

The word Yoga is derived from the Sanskrit root *yuj*, meaning to bind, attach or yoke; and union or communion. It is best described as 'the yoking of all the powers of body, mind and soul to God' (quoted by BKS Iyengar in 'Light on Yoga, Mandala, 1976). Yoga is a philosophy of healthy living and is not a religion. The God referred to in Yoga practice (most

commonly as the Supreme Universal Spirit) is, in my opinion, not incompatible with the Christian concept of God.

The philosophy of yoga embraces both biomedical and subtle energy understandings of health and healing. It is important to recognise that the subtle energy of the chakra system is not like the energy of conventional physics. It has more in common with the non-local 'influence' of quantum physics and can be regarded as a form of 'spiritual' energy involved in healing.

### Placebo Effects

It would not be appropriate to discuss complementary therapies without some reference to the well-known placebo effect - commonly assumed by doctors and others to be the mechanism by which any non-medical intervention works to help people to feel 'better'. The word 'placebo' means 'I please' in Latin; and in randomised controlled trials of medicines this placebo effect (the benefit a person gains from taking part in a clinical trial while given an inactive pseudo-treatment) has been found to confer substantial benefit on about 30% of trial participants. The magnitude of the effect can be influenced by the 'attitude' of the doctor or other practitioner giving hope to the recipient. It can also be influenced by the colour of tablets and the mode of treatment - injections given by enthusiastic, doctors in white coats are best. Undoubtedly, this placebo effect contributes to the effectiveness of both complementary and alternative therapies. □

*Professor Helen L Leathard  
Editor of Chrism and Guild News*

# News from the Guild Council

## Revd ROBIN PETTITT

***Our Honorary Secretary & Treasurer is now also a Council Member***



Born in 1950, I spent most of my early years in Cambridge. When I left school I worked for a time in the Planning Department of the former Cambridgeshire and Isle of Ely County Council, eventually leaving to take a degree in Town and Country Planning at Newcastle. I had been involved in church music from the age of eight but during my time in Newcastle I started to attend St. John's, Grainger Street. Having sat in the choir stalls for so many years it felt a bit strange to be sitting in the pews - but it was to be an important experience.

I was already feeling that I wasn't meant to be a Town Planner after all! This feeling crystallised during a retreat at Alnmouth after my graduation in 1977; but knowing that this vocation was in its infancy I carried on seeking work in Local Government. I got a job in Canterbury, where I had the privilege of being a Server at the Cathedral, although also being involved at All Saints Church and its then enormous Sunday School.

In due course I trained for the Ordained Ministry at St. Stephen's House in Oxford. A summer placement on Tower Hill, Kirby in the Diocese of Liverpool led to the offer of a position in that Diocese and so I was ordained Deacon in

Liverpool Cathedral in July 1983 and Priest in 1984 and served as Curate in the Parish of St. Elphin, Warrington.

In 1987 I moved to the Parish of the Ascension, Torrisholme, in Morecambe, with particular responsibility for the Westgate area of the parish. There were hopes of building a new church and already a small but dedicated congregation worshipping in the lounge of a sheltered housing unit. The project went ahead and for almost eighteen months hardly a day went by when I was not on site monitoring progress as St. Martin's Church Centre took shape.

In 1993 I moved to the Parish of Christ Church, Charnock Richard, near Chorley, an appointment linked to a diocesan post. There too I was involved in a building project, this time as Chairman of the Frances Darlington Almshouse Trust. We were able to fully modernise our small group of Almshouses and restore the Almshouse Chapel, which had long been disused.

I took early retirement from stipendiary ministry in 2001 and I moved to Haydock and the Church of St. James the Great. Retirement certainly does not mean idleness! I am fully involved in the ministry (and administration) at St. James' and, like many retired clergy, often called upon to help out in parishes where there is a vacancy; and it is of course through sharing in the life of the Guild of St. Raphael at St. James' (not to mention the fact that the Vicar is the Sub-Warden!) that I have now become more deeply involved as Secretary and Treasurer.

## DAVID MARTLEW

***Our new Webscribe and Council Member introduces himself***



Born and bred in St Helens, my formative years included service as a choir boy. One day during Mattins I was innocently carving my initials on the 17th century Flemish pew when the lady behind me smote me about the pate with a very large hymn book. When the stars cleared I found myself contemplating a rather good stained glass window by Hardman of Birmingham. After this, a career in glass was inevitable. Graduating as a chemist, I rapidly became a glass technologist and worked for Pilkington for over forty years. As a Reader in the church I often made use of the stained glass windows in sermons and encouraged the Reader candidates I trained to do the same. Having now retired from remunerative work, I find myself busier than ever, both as a Reader in Haydock and as a glass technologist engaged with the history of glass and its conservation.

### ***Website Update***

*Since taking over responsibility of the Guild's website, David has done a great deal to update and refresh it. In future Guild News will appear on the website about a month after the print copy is circulated to members, and *Chrim* will be posted there after about six months, when the new print edition is published. Do take a look at [www.guildofstaphael.org.uk](http://www.guildofstaphael.org.uk)*

## CANON PAUL NENER

***Our Roving Ambassador, will be speaking at two events at which all will be welcome***

On Saturday 26th May (10.00 am - 2.30pm) he will be conducting at HEALING DAY at Goldthorpe Parish Church, organised by FIF & The Society of SS Wilfred & Hilda. Further information from: [spd@pip-jims.freemove.co.uk](mailto:spd@pip-jims.freemove.co.uk).

On Saturday 20th October (10.00am - 4.00pm) he will be conducting a HEALING DAY organised by the Guild of St Raphael branch at St Chad's Sunderland. 'Bring a packed lunch'. Further information from: [Jeremy.chadd@stchad.co.uk](mailto:Jeremy.chadd@stchad.co.uk).

### **CHRISTIAN HEALING ENABLING GROUP (CHEG)**

This is a working group of representatives of healing organisations that operate nationally within the UK, alphabetically:

- Acorn ([www.acornchristian.org](http://www.acornchristian.org))
- Burrswold ([www.burrswold.org.uk](http://www.burrswold.org.uk))
- Guild of Health ([www.gohealth.org.uk](http://www.gohealth.org.uk))
- Guild of St Raphael ([guildofstaphael.org.uk](http://guildofstaphael.org.uk))
- Centre for the Study of Theology & Health ([www.holyroodhouse.org.uk](http://www.holyroodhouse.org.uk))
- Order of St Luke the Physician ([clicool@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:clicool@hotmail.co.uk))
- Parish Nursing ([www.parishnursing.org.uk](http://www.parishnursing.org.uk))

We meet twice each year for mutual support and to coordinate our activities: to avoid clashes between our conferences and healing days. Some members share in publications or organising major events, and we have agreed to publicise each others' activities to our members through our websites and/or journals. Please use the websites detailed above and see the Guild website for up to date information.



# Keeping you in the Picture

## GUILD FESTIVAL ARRANGEMENTS

**10.30 'DO YOU WANT TO BE HEALED?'**

*A talk on good practice in Guild Branches  
By Revd Canon Paul Nener*

**11.15 REFRESHMENT BREAK**

**11.35 AGM**

**12.00 FESTIVAL EUCHARIST**

**PRESIDENT: Bishop of Blackburn, Warden of the Guild**

**1.30p.m. LUNCH**

*Please bring a packed lunch and stay for a chat with  
Council Members. Drinks will be provided.*

## GUILD FESTIVAL 2012

**SATURDAY 27th OCTOBER**

**LIVERPOOL CATHEDRAL LADY CHAPEL**

**10.30 a.m. - 3.00 p.m.**

*An expanded programme this year  
will include: Talk, AGM,  
Festival Eucharist  
with Ministry of Healing*

*Full details in adjacent panel*

Some members have commented on the high cost of lunches being provided at Guild Festivals, so this year we are trying something different.

**Please let us know what you think about bringing packed lunches.**

### The Guild Prayer

**H**eavenly Father,  
*whose Son Jesus Christ healed the sick  
and restored them to wholeness of life  
bless, we pray,  
the Guild of St Raphael  
and all its members  
in the celebration of this truth  
within your Holy Church,  
through the same Christ  
our Lord.*

### The Guild Council

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### PRAYER REQUESTS

If you have a prayer request, and do not have access to the internet, you can now send it by ordinary mail. The address is:



*Sister Mary Cuthbert,  
Community of the Holy Cross,  
Holy Cross Convent,  
Highfields, Nottingham Road  
Costock, Loughborough,  
Leicestershire, LE12 6XE.*

Prayer support will be given initially for one month, but people are invited to keep in touch and in particular to let the sisters know if the situation changes in any way.

And of course, if you *are* on the internet, you can use that service by writing directly to:  
[smc.bewerley@btconnect.com](mailto:smc.bewerley@btconnect.com)  
or via the *Guild* website

### GUILD WEBSITE

For information about the *Guild*, news and other items, and a wide selection of articles on subjects connected with the ministry of healing, log on to:-

[www.guildofstraphael.org.uk](http://www.guildofstraphael.org.uk)

Feedback in the form of comments, news, and items of interest will always be welcome at:

[david.martlew@gmail.com](mailto:david.martlew@gmail.com)

Items of news from our branches are particularly welcome.

### GUILD OFFICE

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