

MISSION

To provide counseling services by integrating psychotherapeutic techniques with biblical principles

Why SO MUCH PAIN? *By Chaplain Roberta Holley*

He was my sweet, sweet nephew. I loved him so much. My sister-in-law's son, Mathew, was a gentle spirit, lost boy, hurt and confused by his father's rejection and the picture that he received from the world of who a black male was in America. He and I had a very loving and tender bond. When he was 5 years old, I explained who Jesus was and what he did for us, and Mathew prayed to receive Christ. After that brief attempts to familiarize him with the faith were cut short by circumstances. Mathew grew to develop this tough exterior, and persona, with football, boxing, smoking, tattoos and gold teeth. I got a chance to speak to him again about the Lord Jesus when he was 30 years old, and again he prayed to receive Christ, just to make sure his commitment was real and true. We started having Bible study together for a short time but then he got distracted. I was determined to make this struggling nephew a joyful and secure man of God. God had other plans.

When Mathew was 33, on one December morning, he went to his mother, with whom he had a stormy and even violent relationship, he hugged her and said, "Goodbye". He left the house and never returned. The following June the police called asking about his tattoos and wanting to come over. The officer had a folder, which read, Unidentified Floater. My sweet Mathew had been found in March floating for months in the waters of the Brooklyn Navy Yard. His body was unidentified until that June meeting where his tattoos assisted us in identifying him.

My heart sank and my dreams were dashed in an instant. The police suggested suicide and I had a hard time accepting that. I had several questions for God but the main one was: Why didn't you tell me? You know I would have done anything.
The Holy Spirit's still quiet voice said, "Do I need your help?"

Then it hit me like a ton of bricks and stopped me in my tracks. I said, **YOU MEAN, YOU DID THIS?** That reality changed everything. Now I needed to deal with this deep piercing pain with respect. I searched the word of God and this is where my Lord took me:

Romans 8:28 – And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

Romans 8:29 – For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Reading through Romans 8, these passages opened my understanding:

¹⁸ *For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

¹⁹ *For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.*

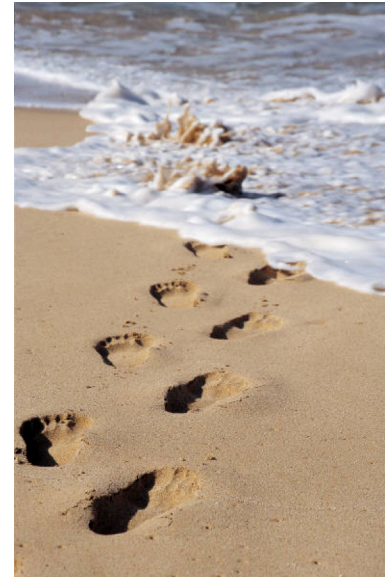
²⁰ *For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope.*

²¹ *Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.*

²² *For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. KJV*

In summary – We experience the vanity of this life, so that we can focus on appropriate hope for our God and heavenly home with deep and heartfelt passion.

This life is not my story – it's God's story. (Galatians 2:20) He will tell it as He wills it.



Still unsettled – God gave me a song. Here's a portion of it:

BE STILL MY SOUL

"Be still my soul, the Lord is on thy side.

Bear patiently the cross of grief or pain.

Leave to thy God to order and provide.

In every change He faithful will remain

Be still my soul, thy best thy heavenly friend

Through thorny ways leads to a joyful end. ...

berta

D. Ellen Van Etten, Executive Director
Carlos Katekaru, Financial Advisor

PCC Board Members

Abraham Koo
Derek Holley
Marlene Chisholm
Marcia Skeete
Sheila Mathew

Counseling Staff

Carlos Agosto
D. Ellen Van Etten
Francisco Peguero
Sarah Han

Be Still My Soul

On Saturday, December 7, 2019, the Pastoral Counseling Center of Flushing hosted a timely event entitled: *“What’s so happy about the holidays? A Journey through grief”* at Chinese Evangel Mission Church of Queens in Bayside, NY. The keynote speaker was Roberta Holley, a sister in the Lord who works as a chaplain at a local hospital, specializing in palliative care. This event was sandwiched between two major holidays, Thanksgiving and Christmas. The seminar ministered to many who had recently experienced the loss of a loved one at a time of year when we are accustomed to sharing love and good tidings. The bereaved are left feeling a huge void. They wonder how they will make it through this time when so many around them are light-hearted and joyful, expecting everyone else to feel the same.

Ellen Van Etten, director of PCCF, began the seminar by leading those in attendance with some encouraging songs. It was followed with prayer by Michael Herbert, pastor of the English congregation of the host church. You could hear a pin drop as Roberta shared with the audience of nearly 40 to 45 people how her nephew had disappeared, gone missing and then eventually was found dead. For many it was something very difficult to hear.

It’s hard to understand why God, who is love, allows us to go through these kinds of painful moments in our lives. But God, in His infinite wisdom, helped the grieving family go through anxieties, peace, closure, and love all wrapped in one. He answered the family’s prayer by locating the missing loved one.

In closing, Roberta shared with us the hymn, entitled “Be Still My Soul”. The third verse says,

*“Be still, my soul: when dearest friends depart,
And all is darkened in the veil of tears,
Then shalt thou better know His love, His heart,
Who comes to soothe thy sorrow and thy fears.
Be still, my soul: thy Jesus can repay
From His own fullness all He takes away.”*
How comforting the words...

Marcia Skeete also shared with the audience during the seminar. She is a PCCF board member, Registered Nurse, and Clinical Nurse Specialist in Psychiatry & Mental Health. She educated us by teaching us signs and symptoms of what a person in grief goes through. There are basically five stages: from shock, to finding good listeners. It was quite informative. The seminar ended with a fruitful Q & A. This was one seminar I won’t soon forget! ☺

Written by Anli Koo

When Tragedy Strikes Home

Dr. H. Norman Wright, author and counselor in marriage and trauma, has experienced his own share of trauma in his life. He lost his wife as well as both his children. Following are some points from a recent interview on Focus on the Family dealing with how trauma affects families.

Trauma is a wounding. Traumatology is the study of trauma caused by either violence or accidents. When someone has experienced trauma it is helpful to share the story with others, not just rehearsing it to themselves. It helps the healing process to begin.

Trauma affects the brain, dividing the right side from the left. At that point we don’t believe there’s hope for recovery. We can’t think clearly or function well, and we don’t know what to do. Allow the person to take some deep breaths and verbally share what the experience was like. Verbalizing about what has happened helps the brain to reconnect. They may tell their story many times, which is very therapeutic, but can be challenging for the one working with the grief-stricken. Better yet, let the person write out their experience, as that uses more energy. Telling or writing the experience many times helps to bring the brain back from an emotional and cognitive shattering which is like an emotional concussion. It is best for them to share with those they feel comfortable with, avoiding those who they don’t want around them.

Wright says if the trauma victim does not ask “Why God?” or “Where were You, God?” he will bring up the question. Job asked that question sixteen times. He went from having heard about God to a much deeper and personal relationship with Him (Job 42:5, 6). “Why?” is a cry of protest and can turn into a question of “What can I learn from this?” to “How can I grow through this?” and finally “How can God be glorified through this?” Wright says, “No tragedy is ever wasted in God’s economy. He will use it.” What is experienced can be used to help someone else in their tragic experience and may be used to turn them to thinking differently and letting God in in a new way.

In working with the grieving, it is helpful to let them know you see their hurt and pain. Encourage them to make a list of things they can do everyday to help someone else. In this way they can feel they are not wasting this experience but contributing in some way, and they are moving from negative to positive thinking.

Some other suggestions included: be honest if you don’t know what to say. Listen and reflect. Take a dish of food and offer some resource books that might help them work through what they are experiencing (ask first). Help the hurting one to move to a new dream or hope, suggesting they pray for a new dream, perhaps learning to do something different and using it as a ministry.

Generous contributions have blessed the ministry in various ways. PCC continues to depend upon your prayer and support. If you would like to sponsor a session, or a client, Contact us at (718) 463-4613. Thank you.