

Community Building in Britain Newsletter

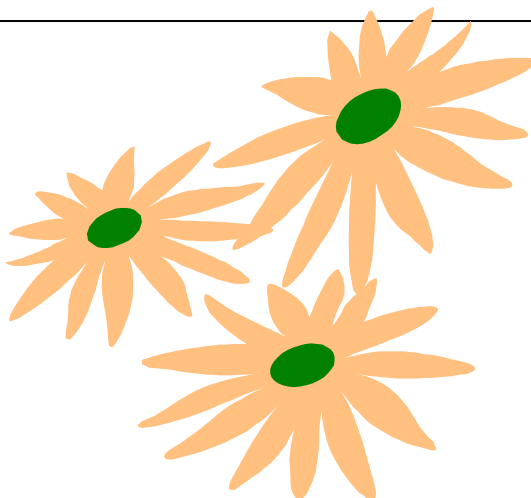
Number 77

December 2000 / January 2001

The newsletter is issued by a growing network of people in Britain who are committed to developing community building beyond that originally described in Dr. M. Scott Peck's book, 'The Different Drum', and as further developed by the Foundation for Community Encouragement in the USA (FCE).

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Editorial

Allow me to introduce myself – Harper Child, possibly the last obvious choice anyone would make to be the newsletter’s new editor, but hopefully an adequate one.

Peter, Ruth, and really everyone I’ve been in contact with so far has been very encouraging and supportive. (much appreciated...)

I won’t get anywhere without the acceptance and support of all of you, however, so I’d like to thank everyone who has, and does, contribute, and ask those who haven’t yet (or for a while) to remember that the newsletter belongs to its readership, and to send the kind of things you want to see published.

Hmmm

(at this point everyone will realise they’ve never seen my name in print here before, and ask where my own contributions have been.) Very astute of you! Trouble is, I was having a crisis of confidence. Nothing to do with genuine humility, unfortunately, but a kind of misplaced pride that feared misinterpretation. Now of course, I am exposed to be misinterpreted (or perhaps worse, ignored!) on a grand scale and I shall just have to live with it.

I have four children, Eleanor (9), Rowan (7), Tristan (3) and Felix (1) and life beyond them is only made possible by my extremely supportive husband, Leslie. I graduated from college in 1999 with a degree in music with women’s studies, and have spent the time since working as a community musician – this largely involves group creative music making with people who feel disabled with regard to music, or are described as such with regard to society.

One can learn a lot about ‘just being’ with people in their own music, without the need for correcting, teaching and value judgements. Apart from listening skills, the music itself occurs naturally, eventually.

The term ‘community’ as a job description is being used in a different way here, but most of you will be familiar with the idea that it takes courage to not try and teach or direct to get a result. It still dismays me how often I will veer into just that when it feels as if ‘it isn’t happening’, or when someone with a different set of expectations is observing. Without obvious results, it’s sometimes hard to keep faith with the process.

Meaningful communication

I also write for the LifeRites magazine, and the gentle acceptance and encouragement of that organisation’s creators, Cheryl and Iain Menzies-Runciman, did much to enable me to commit my thoughts to print and publication.

While participating on a course they run, I experienced community in a way I’d imagined since reading *A Different Drum* nearly 10 years ago. A lonely place inside me was healed, and it increased my commitment to deliberate community building (in the sense of open, meaningful communication). I’ve always had a loathing of ‘small talk’, I find it exhausts me, and I’d often opted out of socialising at all.

Roller coaster

Life really isn’t linear though, and I’ve not progressed in any kind of steady fashion since then. I’ve rather ricocheted through a jumble of attitudes and priorities, even identities (deciding ‘who I really am’) and visions of the future ideal. I suspect this is an inevitable part of childbirth, and it is a particular aim of mine to reach at-home parents. They are among the least likely to feel able to afford the time and energy necessary to attend a CB event, but due to their possible isolation and shaky sense of identity, are most likely to appreciate it!

(Continued on next page)

Community Building in Britain events

There are no events with published dates yet. Keep your eye on this spot in future editions, or check the web page.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Contact</u>	<u>Fee</u>	<u>Notes</u>

Note: - **CBE** stands for “Community Building Experience”, which provides an opportunity to build community in a large group over two days. In a “Community Building Workshop”, or **CBW**, a third day is added so that not only can participants experience the building of community but they can also learn about the process.

Other events are being arranged so keep your eye on the newsletter or web-site.

Editorial (continued)

Please send your thoughts.

I will do my best to bring out the newsletter at regular intervals, and in this I am assisted by Peter, who is still doing most of the real work. Please send your articles, letters and any random thoughts to the address below. Don't make my mistake of assuming no one would be interested in what I had to say, sometimes the most innocuous remark can spark off a debate. Give us your truth! If something isn't your own original work, if you give me the source I can try to obtain the necessary permission to reprint. What

would readers think about a subject or point of view being identified for discussion in the subsequent newsletter?

Looking forward to hearing from you.

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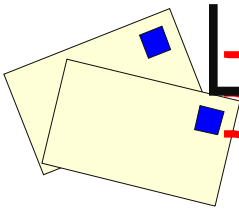
Inclusive futures

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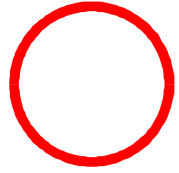
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Harper Child



LETTERS



Permaculture

Greetings

In his letter to the last newsletter, Mike Roth said that he first heard about CB through Permaculture News, and that he likes to think others might discover permaculture through the CBiB newsletter. So it seems appropriate, having just met Mike at my first CBiB workshop at Othona Community in Dorset, that I should publicise my own community, Keveral Farm, near Looe, in Cornwall, and some of the things that we have to offer.

We are an organic farm co-operative with about 14 adults and a few kids (although we are a fairly stable group, it's still impossible to keep track on numbers!). Our main activity is supplying veggie boxes to local households, but we also run courses and have a camping area. We integrate permaculture ideas into many aspects of our life and work.

Our course programme for 2001 includes a two day Introduction to Permaculture and a two week Permaculture Design course, as well as craft workshops such as Natural Dyeing and Felt Making. We also have a Community Living week, involving work, information, sharing and having fun!

Our camping area is nicely sheltered and secluded amongst our orchard, and is open from May to September. We are just 15 minutes walk through the woods to the sea and the local village (Seaton), and well away from any traffic. And it will stop raining one day.

Please contact us for further info. And thanks and praise to everyone who was at Othona, and to Othona, for a memorable few days.

*Oak
Keveral Farm,
St.Martin-by-Looe,
Cornwall, PL13 1PA
tel. 01503 250135*

Thank you

Yesterday at five thirty we said our farewells after a weekend of tears and laughter – anger and reconciliation, friction and meeting, sadness and joy and oh the blissful healing Silences. And so of we went out into Drummond Street to the exotic fragrances of food from distant places.

I travelled part of the way with one attendant, sharing some of our thoughts and plans – we said bye-bye at Victoria, each to one's destination. Will I ever see her again I wondered. So here we are back to what some will call routine – others the circus? vanity fair? the desert etc etc.

But is it not possible to sacrifice the here and now? Let go of talk on religion, philosophy, fancy talk about God – beautiful as they may be to the senses. Let go of God. Especially the “my God” – make sacred this moment whatever it brings. Bow to the supreme teacher Reality. She who has always been with me. Watchful, silent and faithful unto the end when I shall exhale my final “Aaaaaaah” and hopefully there be an “Aha” with one last smile of gratitude.

What does this new day bring? I look out of my bedroom window. Rosy clouds are turning to golden and silver rays appear. I have been taught to call that Sunrise. But my heart like a wide-eyed child asks “What's that?” It's a miracle Sweetheart. A miracle which men and women with pen, brush, chisel and musical notes seek to imitate. Alas in vain. Beautiful never the less.

I bring my forehead as close as I can to the centre of our mother Earth and say the most wonderful prayer I know: "Thank you".

A participant

Worst reading

Dear Peter

I would be really pleased if you could stop sending me the newsletter.

I don't feel a need to read about a man happy to shit himself in public or a woman happy to scream "I wish you dead".

I think the newsletter should rebaptise itself "The Sun" and why not go into porn and publish a naked woman in the middle pages?

No, seriously, I value myself much higher than that and this is the worst reading I've had in the past few months and I usually try to avoid receiving junk mail. (I would very much appreciate if you didn't publish my address or telephone number).

However, it was nice to meet you in Muswell Hill and I wish you the best. Here is a text that I do find inspiring, which I share with you.

Regards,

Françoise Mandavy

From Nelson Mandela's inaugural address as president of South Africa, 1994

"Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, "Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous?" Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small doesn't serve the world. There's nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we're liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others."

From the editor:-

I find this inspiring too. It encapsulates a breath-taking insight into the human condition, of the awareness of the layers upon layers that make up human reality. It almost hurts to read it alongside such a one-dimensional letter... but if it opens a dialogue it can't be a bad thing - if other people feel uncomfortable with the content of contributions, it's as communicative to say so as it is to say "I know just what you mean." It doesn't have to be critical of the writers themselves.

(Interestingly, I notice that by saying 'our deepest fear...we...etc' Mandela runs contrary to one of the most important principles of community building, by generalising the experience. How do the readers of this newsletter respond to that?)

Harper.

New address

for Suzy Adderley

111 Shardeloes Road

London SE14 6RU

Tel: 0208 691 4090

A letter to fellow participants

Hello All!

I have not really felt in this world that there is or would be a place in which I could be. Not all of me. Parts of me, Yes. But not all. Hence what I turn up as is a mixture of reaction to desperation of, longing for, "To Be". To explore this beauty/ Tragedy/ Loveliness and Ugliness etc etc, and call me and call you. Is it possible I ask myself. I have been shaken up this weekend. A lot of all sorts coming up. Passing through. Going on in me. What does it mean? What shall I do. If anything. Well I will see.... Right and wrong is going by the way. I want to send you all this letter and that scares me. Because I am not clear why I want to send it. Maybe its an attachment to

you all. Probably as usual it will be a bit more complex than just one reason. The Buddhist concept of inter-connectedness of all phenomena comes to mind. It seems it has become a "task" for me to make a contact with everyone though. And so I am. My dream is that I would like not to perceive society as being "out there" and me as being "in here", i.e. separate. I want to be inside out and out-side in. Is that odd I ask myself. And so ultimately to make contact with everyone means "Every One". But I'll start small who knows how many lives it will take to accomplish my yearning – I'll start where I am. So to be or not to be – is that really a question?

Moira

Sex love and relationship

Sarah Wood and George Giangrande will be hosting this event at Braziers Park, Oxon, on March 16-18, 2001.

This weekend will be an opportunity to explore our views, understanding, and feelings, about sex, love, and relationship (often fraught and difficult areas) as part of a CB circle.

Sarah and I will also be inviting participation in non-verbal, 'energetic' communication, using gentle, non-invasive exercises.

It is only by proceeding from where we are now that real understanding and growth can take place. Sex, as the manifestation of love physically through our bodies, is like many things, a journey. We hope this workshop can help us on our journeys.

The only requirement for this workshop is to have done a CB event.

The cost is £95 for full room and board and £50 non resident or camping.

Sarah and George live in the Braziers Park community and are trained in Tantra.

For more information or to book ring 01491 682106, e-mail Sarah_George@compuserve.com, or write to Braziers Park, Ipsden, Oxon, OX10 6AN. Braziers Park is located between Oxford & Reading, 55 minutes by train from London Paddington.

Poem

*A community experienced
for a while
My heart was opened
And I let you in.
Was I caught unawares
by your revelations?
Why am I experiencing joy
and not the burden
of your grief?
Somehow, I tasted you.*

*My friends, you have touched me
with your self-compassion.
May I join you in this gentle task
of acknowledging my own
human frailty.*

*I am a believer in Life.
I have lain with you beside green
pastures,
and have washed in the still waters
of the Eternal.
My gift to you, is to
provide testimony of our
altered consciousness -
that this is real -
when your doubts re-enter.*

Jonathan Sterling
Flat 1, 30 Benthall Road, London N16 7BX
email: trail.blazer@tesco.net

Poem

*When hearts were opened
and human frailty showed itself
we tasted the waters of that common source
Consciousness changed.
Life showed its dynamism
I try to grasp the sand that slips
through my fingers ...
and by trying to hold it,
do I lose it?
That was created
can it be recreated
when relations has been hardened
by 1000 and 1000 of years of
relentless karma, in a frozen state
of feelings, thoughts and will ..?
But you provide testimony of
the altered consciousness
and the doubts reshape
in a Maybe! ... Maybe*

Lutgart Naudts

“Something to believe in”

“Something to believe in” is the title of a song by Mike and the Mechanics that was playing on my stereo last Monday when I sat to write my journal. It seemed to fit my experience of the CBE that had just happened at the Meeting Place.

As I sit to write this I’m overwhelmed by feelings of joy and grief – I’m unable to proceed – I’ll return to my feelings at the end of my next article entitled “The workshop team”.

The Workshop Team

This article is based on my own personal development work in recent years, that has been intensifying.

It is informed by my involvement in the sponsoring of four workshops at St Vincent’s in the mid-Nineties and our recent CBE at the Meeting Place - the latter workshop has helped me to crystallise where I am.

I now know that I would not be able to sponsor another workshop within the terms of the existing contract offered by CBiB.

The article that follows contains the key elements of what I need to be a sponsor in future. I am writing to up my own consciousness and to communicate with those who many feel a connection with what I am putting out. I will focus on the sponsoring group, facilitator integration, surveys and other matters. The title of this article will be evident, I hope, by the time you have read through it.

1 The Sponsoring Group

I want to work with a minimum of five persons who are fully committed to the task in hand, and committed to holding on to the process in achieving the task.

Five plus is my magic number because I want to share the task - it was great to share with Colin and Una recently, but I want to spread it further. If I take on more than I’m comfortable with I inwardly resent it – that’s not community – with more people

resources around I’m freer to share more equitably.

And I feel that five plus can take care of the process better than can a lesser number.

2 Integrating the facilitators

I want to know the facilitator who is going to take responsibility for our event from the moment I/we commit to a date/place and I want that person to be part of our team.

I want relationship with that person through personal contact rather than bits of paper: I want to know what is important to that person and I want that person to know what is important to me. I want to be part of a team with that person that decides all the fundamental issues relating to the workshop: number and status of chosen facilitators, for example.

3 Surveys

As the last workshop approached I found myself with a fundamental resistance to organisational surveys: I realised that the core of my being was saying “no”.

What would work for me would be a simple post workshop survey which would invite participants reaction on what they liked, what they disliked and what they would have liked – I would want to put my energy into communicating with participants how important their feedback is to me – yes, I would personalise it, and yes I would only want such a survey on the understanding that the feedback would be studied by “the team” immediately after the workshop in the supportive environment of our group – it is the commitment to learn from it in the moment that would energise me to do it.

My model

It is my sense that the “success” of a workshop is directly proportional to the level of integrity/consciousness achieved among the sponsors.

Facilitators already know that it is the relationship that is achieved among themselves as a facilitating group that

determines the effectiveness of their work. And I'm increasingly conscious that there is a need for considerably more relationship within the entire workshop team.

Put another way, I want to see facilitators as part of the same "Monastery" as sponsors – a monastery that attracts participants and nurtures their yearning for community.

Postscript

Do I want to turn the world upside down? – no.

In our existing sponsoring group we grow in our appreciation of our need for relationship. I am, myself, open to a learning process – increasingly it feels more important for me to have relationship in what I do rather achieving "my own agenda" – I'm open to trade compromise for real

agreement – and I don't want to suggest, for one moment, that it will be easy.

What I know for certain is: when I stretch myself to achieve authenticity in relation to another it is always more than worth the effort.

The Scott Peck model of achieving community relationship through Emptiness remains intact. The recent London CBE managed by Erica, Chrissie and Jonathan achieved 10/10 in my personal rating – it was an enormously satisfying experience for me and that is one thing I'm not wanting to change. Sitting in that circle of 37 persons for an entire Sunday afternoon where serious peace had broken out does indeed give me "something to believe in".

Tom Deevy
020 8444 9764

Interested in an alternative lifestyle?

Co-housing?

Mid Devon group will be exploring the practical, ecological and spiritual aspects of this life choice with a view to a long term co-housing project

Join us on
Sunday March 11th
From 11am to 4pm
Children welcome

We will be using Scott Peck's model of community building as a basis

Please bring food and drink to share

Further details
01363 - 775502/777934

Ron Cuthbertson

Do You Feel Loved By Me?

A review of this book by Philip Rogers, from Roger Green

This is an excellent book. It's about loving relationships. It aims to help you be more of who you truly are, who you truly can be. If you cannot wholeheartedly say to yourself "I deserve a loving relationship" and it is actually happening in your life, this book will help you to bring it about.

Love

We put great emphasis on the words involved with love and particularly the words "I love you". Often though, the words are a lie, or said out of habit or duty. They can be arrogant - or claim ownership-or said in expectation of something in return like "I love you too".

But "Do you feel loved by me?" is a respectful question that demonstrates a positive interest, and can help engender a feeling of love between two people. It has much more of the quality of love. It's more open, like standing with your arms out. It's waiting for an answer rather than making a statement. You are asking about the other person and their experience. When you love someone isn't it more important that they are experiencing being loved rather you feeling that you love them?

Reaching

One of the qualities of love is a sense of expanding outwards and overflowing, where our boundaries are not so fixed, where we are reachable, more permeable; where we are more able to connect and to relate to each other. But is this reaching the other person? You can find this out by asking "Do you feel loved by me?".

What's important is that you don't need to wait until you feel like that in order to ask. You don't need to feel this wonderful feeling of expansive love to ask the question "Do you feel loved by me?" Nor does the other person, but in answering the question, they can talk about how they feel loved, and they can relate to their experience of being loved, and they can share it with you. This can be very

helpful, because then you are talking honestly with each other and not relying on assumptions and mindreading.

Asking the question is not necessarily easy, but we need to know and not make assumptions. If we are unwilling to ask or answer the question, fear is affecting the relationship, and what is more important - fear or love ?

Fear

If we want a loving relationship with somebody to move forward, we need to pay attention to our fear. It's important to keep in mind in our relationships that it is the fear of intimacy, fear of closeness that mostly interferes with love, and that our fear needs to be respected.

If we are willing to take the risk and ask this question, then we reach "How is it working between us?" This is a wonderful communication to share - what it is, how it is, that we are loving. Even if the answer is "No, I don't feel loved by you", then this answer may move us in the direction of love, because this is the beginning of truth; and where truth grows, love can flower.

This respect for truth is demonstrating an intention to care for someone actively, and in a way that is respectful of their individuality. We can then base our relationship on this clearly demonstrated intention to be loving. Not in some perfect way, but in a way that is openly inviting the other to help us to love them. When you have a conscious intention to love like this you are more open to being actually loving, rather than being stuck in a fantasy of love that can often be going on just in your own head.

Support

"Do you feel loved by me ?" is an intimate question to ask, and should only be asked very respectfully. You can't force someone to answer a question like that. Asked in the right spirit, it encourages us to support each other in

creating a loving relationship, and we do need to give our love support.

Twelve exercises in the book are recommended as ways to grow in love with your partner. Giving and receiving love; clean listening; emotional honesty; positive expression of anger; going within; a truth exercise; synchronicity remembered; affirmations as invocations; core beliefs;

tyranny of the imagination; freedom and commitment; sex and pleasure. Audiotapes are available to support these exercises, obtainable from the same place as the book (cost £5.99 + pp.):-

Living Well
PO Box 980,
Oxford OX2 OYB
Tel 07050 074875

~~—History—~~

Crusader for community spirit

This interview from the 18th April 1993 Observer is reprinted from issue 59 of the newsletter, January 1998. It is a reminder that Scott Peck put 'learning' high on his list of priorities.

'LIFE is difficult,' M. Scott Peck famously begins his best-selling book *The Road Less Travelled*. Once we understand and accept this, he adds, then life is no longer difficult.'

M. Scott Peck doesn't look like a guru. He appears as a poker-faced man in a grey pinstriped suit who smokes and doesn't like having his photograph taken. But *The Road Less Travelled* has made him a hero of the New Age.

In it Dr Peck writes about human love, psychology and growth, and his discernment of the grace of God in these things. In the 15 years and six million worldwide sales since its publication in 1978, it has brought him money and fame and a reverence bordering on idolatry.

No Messiah

This makes his own life more difficult. I spend a good deal of energy saying to people, I do not want to be your damn Messiah. I want to teach you to be your own Messiah. Plus we don't need any new Messiah, as we've hardly learnt to come to terms with the first,' he says,

dry and impatient like the patrician East Coast Wasp he was born.

Peck's father was an eminent New York lawyer. Peck (now 56) graduated from Harvard *magna cum laude* and became a top psychiatrist and neurologist in the US army with the rank of lieutenant-colonel. These

things show. But *The Road Less Travelled* changed his life, as it has changed many others.

Its fans' demands on his time led him to leave his psychiatric practice to write, lecture and give workshops. *The Road Less Travelled* touched so many people so deeply that they still speak to him about it as 'The Book'. But Peck has written six more successful books since

then.

We meet in the conservatory of the Green Park Hotel. His schedule is tight. He is in London for one day to publicise his latest book, *A World Waiting to be Born*, subtitled *The Search for Civility*. (Rider Books)

Civility

Dr Peck has been searching for civility for the last 10 years. This isn't what you think.

'Politeness isn't going to get you anywhere except to very dull dinner parties', says M Scott Peck. Janet Watts meets the psychiatrist who has become a subversive evangelist.

'Politeness isn't going to get you anywhere, except to very dull dinner parties, he growls behind the Green Park Hotel's potted plants. 'Cocktail parties bore the shit out of me. Lily and I haven't been to one for 20 years.' (Lily is his Chinese wife.)

This is what Peck's civility seeks to subvert. 'For a long time we have been politely manipulating each other and stabbing each other in the back,' he says. 'All manner of sin and evil can be politely committed in our organisations. There are people in business and government who kill each other politely every day.'

Politeness

So we have politeness without civility, and organisations with no spirit of community. Particularly not where we might hope to find it: in our homes, families, schools, neighbourhoods, offices, churches, professions.

Nothing is more important

Yet, 'In and through community lies the salvation of the world,' Peck wrote in his book, *The Different Drum*. 'Nothing is more important.'

He helped to found the Foundation for Community Encouragement (FCE) in Connecticut in 1984, and has for a decade worked to help people build real communities out of the 'pseudo-communities' which are their polite substitute. And which are what we have.

The first workshop

It began with the first workshop he agreed to hold at George Washington University in 1981: on spiritual growth. The 60 attendees were clergymen, psychiatrists, psychologists, psychotherapists and nurses from Washington DC. I was terribly nervous. I didn't know how to run a workshop.'

But he did. He was not a Christian at this time but he had attended a Quaker school. So he sat his people in a circle. He gave each one a copy of an anthropologist's article about the education of healers among the Fijians and the Kung of the Kalahari desert. He allowed them

30 minutes to read it, and 15 minutes to think about it in silence. Then he promised to lead a discussion.

He didn't. What happened was *'they talked'*. Not about the spiritual journey, but of their envy of the integration of these primitive healers into their society. 'What emerged was the loneliness. Somehow I had the grace to shut up. As they talked they went deeper and got some surcease from the loneliness. At the end of the day everybody was hugging and saying "God, this is the best hundred dollars I ever spent!'

A miracle

This may sound alarming. 'Community-building started as a miracle that day.'

Scott Peck shocked and impressed readers of *The Road Less Travelled* with the way he connected psychiatry with spirituality. 'I've been accused of courage over that.' He denies it.

'All I did was write what other people were thinking, but felt they shouldn't be thinking: and maybe they were crazy to be thinking. What I found as a psychiatrist and psychotherapist was that people had real spiritual questions for their lives. To address them was necessary for their healing.'

Spiritual lives

In the same way, religion comes into his community-building work: 'And what we find is not discomfort, but that people are relieved that they can talk about their spiritual lives.' Any resistance 'is not resistance to God, but to the painful hard work of changing an organisation. It's not an easy fix to do things differently.'

But it works. The biggest take-up of FCE's services has come not from churches, as they expected, but from big business, which they didn't.

Dr Peck offered his services to his local church free, on condition that 10 people showed up. 'I got the minister and his wife and one parishioner.' That community had no overwhelming imperative to transform itself. A business organisation in trouble does.

Community-building improves cost-effectiveness. But who'd choose to get into something where people might cry, or talk about God?

'To make money'

Later in his April day in London, I watch Dr Peck talk at St. James's Church, Piccadilly. A colourful audience of almost 1,000 people has squeezed even into the organ gallery. Peck stands before a sea of beads, beards, caps, scarves, nuns' habits and hopeful faces: the only man present in a short-back-and-sides and a suit and tie. His fans listen in eager silence nonetheless.

It isn't a sermon. 'When I lecture, my purpose is almost always to make money. It's not to convert people, because I don't know how to. If I had a couple of million more dollars, I'd stop speaking entirely,' he tells me. 'And play golf.'

The money is not all for himself, of course. In nine years he has donated a million dollars to FCE and 'got used to' fundraising. It's an interesting discipline. As soon as I became relatively wealthy, I became a beggar. You wouldn't like to make a donation, would you?'

Bad news, Good news

He is not an easy man. He does not bring an easy message. 'All my life, I wondered what I was going to do when I grew up,' he tells the people in St James's. A few years ago, I realised I was never going to grow up.' Happy laughter in the aisles. Then he adds: 'An

evangelist is the last thing on God's Earth I ever thought I would become.' We can hear the annoyance in his voice. For this is what he is.

'I bring you good news,' he says. But I'm the kind of evangelist who gives you the bad news first.' He quotes 'a typical New Age question. "Dr Peck, where is it at?" Then his answer. 'Where it's at, I say, is through a lifetime of heartbreaking service. And that really turns them on.'

Learning

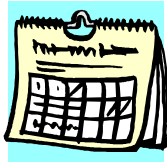
The St James's audience laughs, but shifts uneasily. Is their hero a cynic at heart? Peck continues. 'The message of the media and, I am sad to say, also the Church is that the point of life is to be happy. Fulfilled. Comfortable. If we're not, we feel there must be something wrong with us.' A pause: 'One of the things I am here to tell you,' says Scott Peck to his rapt attenders, 'is that this is a dreadful lie.'

Now for the truth. 'Do you want to know what the meaning of life is? We are here to learn. I defy you to construct an environment more ideal for learning than this life. And we

cannot lose, once we realise that everything that happens to us has been designed to teach us holiness. Now what better news could there be than that?' His congregation breathes again.

*with thanks to the Observer
for permission to reprint*

'Do you want to know
what the meaning of
life is? We are here
to learn



CBiB calendar

<u>Date</u>	<u>HG</u>	<u>FTG</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Event/comment</u>
16/3/01	HG		Douai	
27/4/01		FTG	Poor Clares	
*15/6/01	HG		Douai	
14/9/01		FTG	Douai	
*5/10/01				CBE/CBW?
12/10/01	HG		Douai	
*2/11/01				CBW
*30/11/01	HG		Douai	
*17/1/02		FTG	Stanbrook Abbey	
*15/3/02	HG		Douai	
*26/4/02		FTG		
*14/6/02	HG		Douai	
*13/9/02		FTG		
*11/10/02	HG		Douai	
*29/11/02	HG		Douai	

Note that the additions and changes since the last issue are marked with * (No joint meeting, HG on 15/6 rather than 22/6, dates for 30/11/1 and 2002, two events).

For information or queries about dates or activities in the calendar contact Anthony Kirke, 125 Greenham Road, Newbury, Berkshire RG14 7JE Tel:01635 47377.

Local ongoing Community Building groups

Some groups are open to anyone interested in experiencing Community Building, some are open to you only if you have already attended a CB event, some are open all the time to new members, some may not be open to newcomers just now... Check with the local contact person.

Brighton: Meets on the second Saturday of the month. Contact Tracy on 01243 775745

Leamington Spa: First Wednesday of each month, 8pm. New members welcome. Prior attendance at a CB event is not necessary. Contact Debbie or Armando on 01926 337 409

Sheffield: Meets monthly. Contact Alison 0114 263 0177

Other groups exist but are not currently publicised. If you are interested in joining, or forming, a group please feel free to contact Peter Cooper (address below) for information and help.



General enquiries

*about Community Building in Britain, or events: Tel **07071 880858** (premium rate), write to 52 Sole Farm Avenue, Bookham, Leatherhead KT23 3DE email to PeterCBiB@aol.com, or see the Web page: <http://members.aol.com/petercbib>*

Newsletter contributions

*Please send items for inclusion in the next issue to the editor Harper Child, 40 Meadow Road, Worthing, West Sussex, BN11 2SG by **31/12/00** (Tel: 01903 202704, e-mail: harper@child98.freereserve.co.uk).*

For convenience of personal contact, the address and telephone number of letter-writers will normally be published, unless other instructions are given. Contributions of any sort (articles, pictures, poems, letters etc.), and of any length, are welcome from all involved in any way with the CBiB network. While every effort will be made to reproduce items in full, please realise that the editor may have to shorten or alter them for publication.

Subscriptions and mailings

Subscription rate [UK] to March 2001: (Apr-Jun) £10; (Jul-Sep) £7.50; (Oct-Dec) £5; (Jan-Mar) £2.50. Please send cheques (payable to "Community Building in Britain") and any address changes to: Peter Cooper, 52 Sole Farm Avenue, Bookham, Leatherhead KT23 3DE Tel: 07974 961301 (PeterCBiB@aol.com)