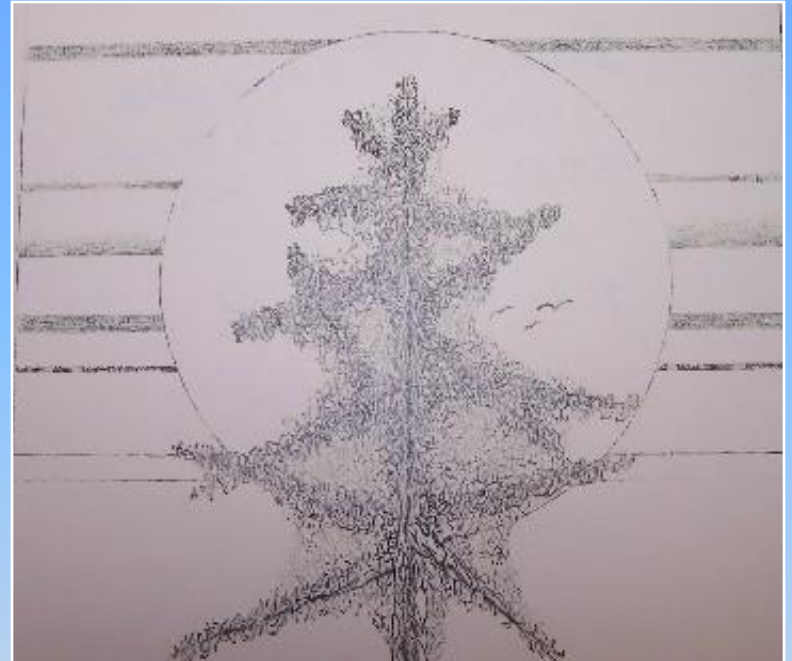


Spirituality and Mental Health Recovery: Insights from the Art and Words of Consumers of Mental Health Services



Edited by Edward R. Canda, Monika Eichler, and Vincent R. Starnino
University of Kansas School of Social Welfare

Copyright 2010 by E. R. Canda: materials may be used for nonprofit educational purposes if proper attribution is given

Production of this module partially supported by the Shumaker Family Foundation

This educational module is developed from materials presented at-

Spirituality and Mental Health Recovery: A Conference for Kansas Mental Health Service Providers and Consumers

- ▣ The conference goal was to bring together perspectives of nationally and locally reputed scholars, mental health professionals, clergy, and consumers of mental health services for understanding and promoting mental health recovery through spiritual and religious insights and resources.

Spirituality and Mental Health Recovery: A Conference for Kansas Mental Health Service Providers and Consumers

- ▣ Date & Place: October 28 & 29, 2004, Holiday Inn – Holidome, Lawrence, Kansas
- ▣ Hosted by the University of Kansas School of Social Welfare, with partial funding by the United Methodist Health Ministry Fund of Hutchinson, Kansas.

Spirituality and Mental Health Recovery: A Conference for Kansas Mental Health Service Providers and Consumers

Keynote Speakers

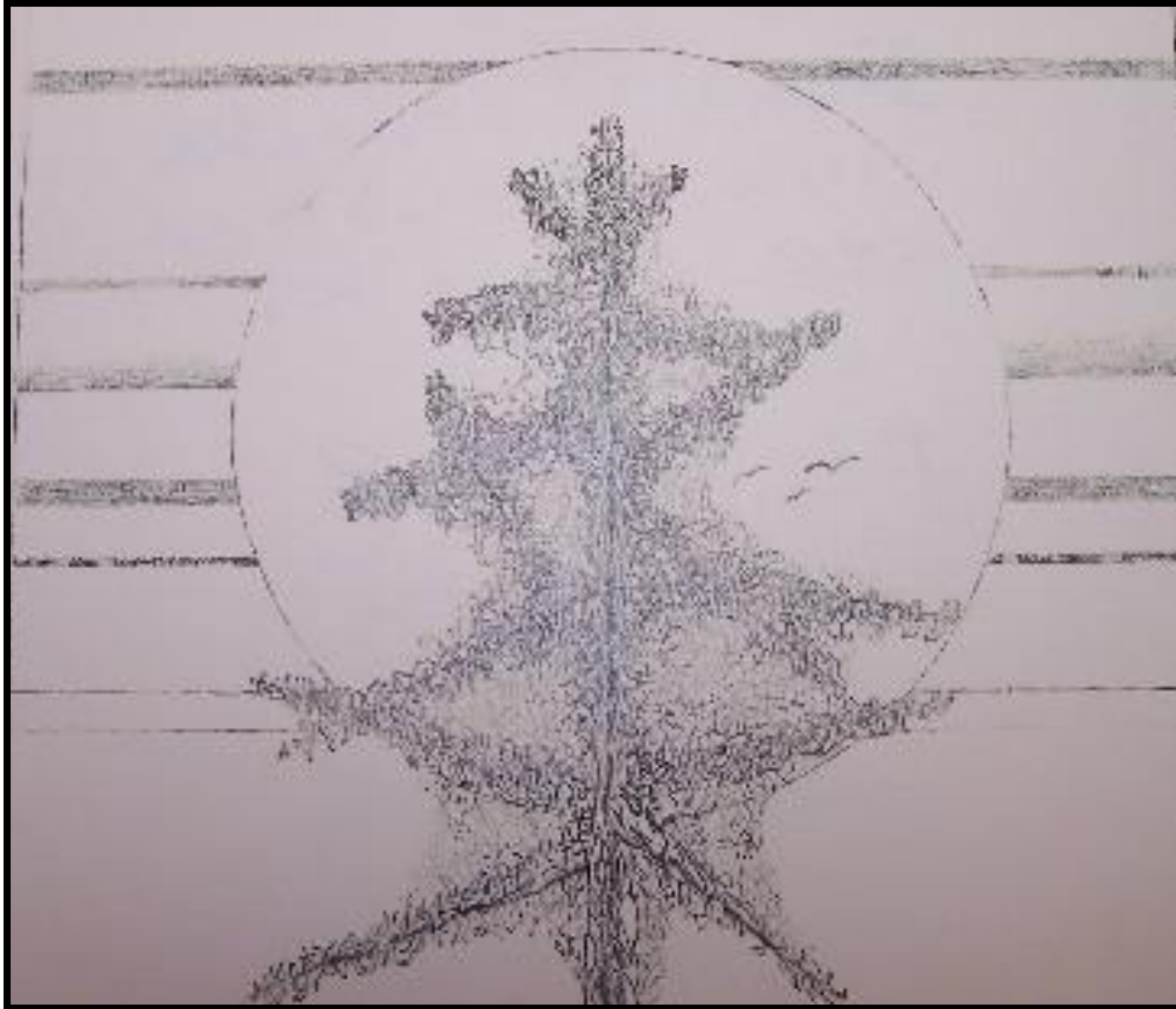
- ▣ Pat Deegan, Ph.D.: Spiritual journey of mental health recovery. University of Kansas; <http://www.patdeegan.com/>
- ▣ Edward R. Canda, Ph. D.: Spiritually sensitive mental health practice. University of Kansas; <http://www.socwel.ku.edu/canda>
- ▣ David Lukoff, Ph. D.: Intersections between spiritual crises and mental illness: Insights from transpersonal psychiatry. Saybrook University; <http://www.spiritualcompetency.com/>
- ▣ Priscilla Ridgway, Ph.D. Candidate (now Ph.D.): Hope, spirituality and recovery. Yale University School of Medicine.
- ▣ Plus, presentations, workshops, and panels by clergy, consumers, and mental health practitioners.

Art and Essay Show

- ❑ Local mental health service consumers were invited to submit brief essays and original artwork depicting the role of spirituality in their mental health recovery process
- ❑ All those who gave permission to use their work were included in a display of their work
- ❑ This presentation is based on quotes and images from their contributions, with their explicit written permission for use

- ▣ We have included these materials with little editing, in order to convey the insights of consumers in their own terms
- ▣ The spiritual perspectives included reflect the personal beliefs, symbolism, and experiences of the contributors and the cultural milieu of eastern Kansas
- ▣ A special thanks is given to Monika Eichler, who has played a key role in the project, including the production of this presentation
- ▣ Priscilla Ridgway and Edward Canda were also instrumental in developing this project and conference

Winning Art Entry



Youthful Spirit

Daniel Rollheiser

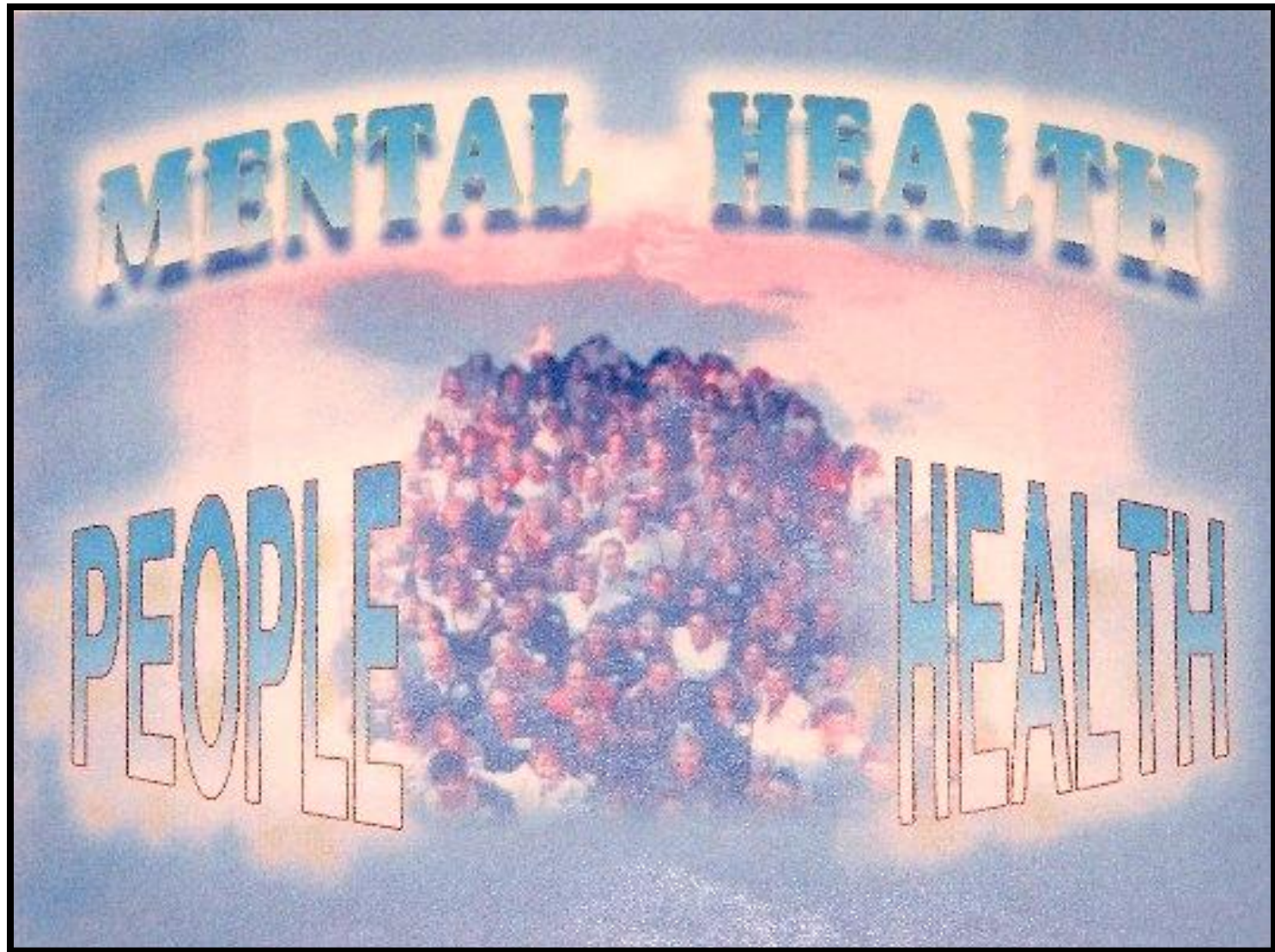
God keeps opening doors and I have the faith and strength to walk right on through....

Praying daily with my husband, I gain strength and wisdom. I ask God to give me guidance in everything I do. My Spirituality has helped me to respect others and to love myself more. It has brought me to the place where I actually trust people. It has opened up communication with new friends. I have let go of the past....

Sometimes I use my spirituality and meditation together instantaneously. If a thought comes to mind like 'I'm stupid', I change it to 'I'm a child of God' made in His image.

In closing I can truly say spirituality has kept me out of the hospital for two years. I use the practices of Zen and the love of Our Lord and savior Jesus Christ to improve and maintain my recovery.

Marcia Lynch – essay contest



Untitled

Jerri Foster



Keeping Our Pathway to Recovery Open

Jamie Embers

Imprinted on my mind that the Lord has hope and a future sustained my life while I started my recovery journey. There are key people that looked beyond my depression and saw something in me. They pushed me to open up and share my hopes and dreams.

I am now beginning to see the light at the end of my tunnel knowing that I am not alone in this journey of recovery, but that I do have hope and a future. There are different avenues that hope comes through - spiritual beliefs, mental health classes/activities, and a support system that includes my family, pastors, (friends), and mental health professionals.

My recovery journey has opened pathways for self-discoveries and opportunities to be of help to those around me. I am realizing recovery involves the development of new meaning and purpose in my life as I grow beyond the catastrophic effects of mental illness.

Nancy Burt Craddock - Essay Contest



Untitled



Let There Be Light

Kathy McNett



Let There Be Light:

The bottom hand is Jesus' hand taking away "the mask we hide behind" and shedding light into the darkness. Behind people's masks, there is a little child we don't want to show the world for fear (they) we are not good enough which is represented by the dirty-ness. The top hand is white and pure – however, he is wiping away the tear and is showing he is not afraid to be involved in our recovery.



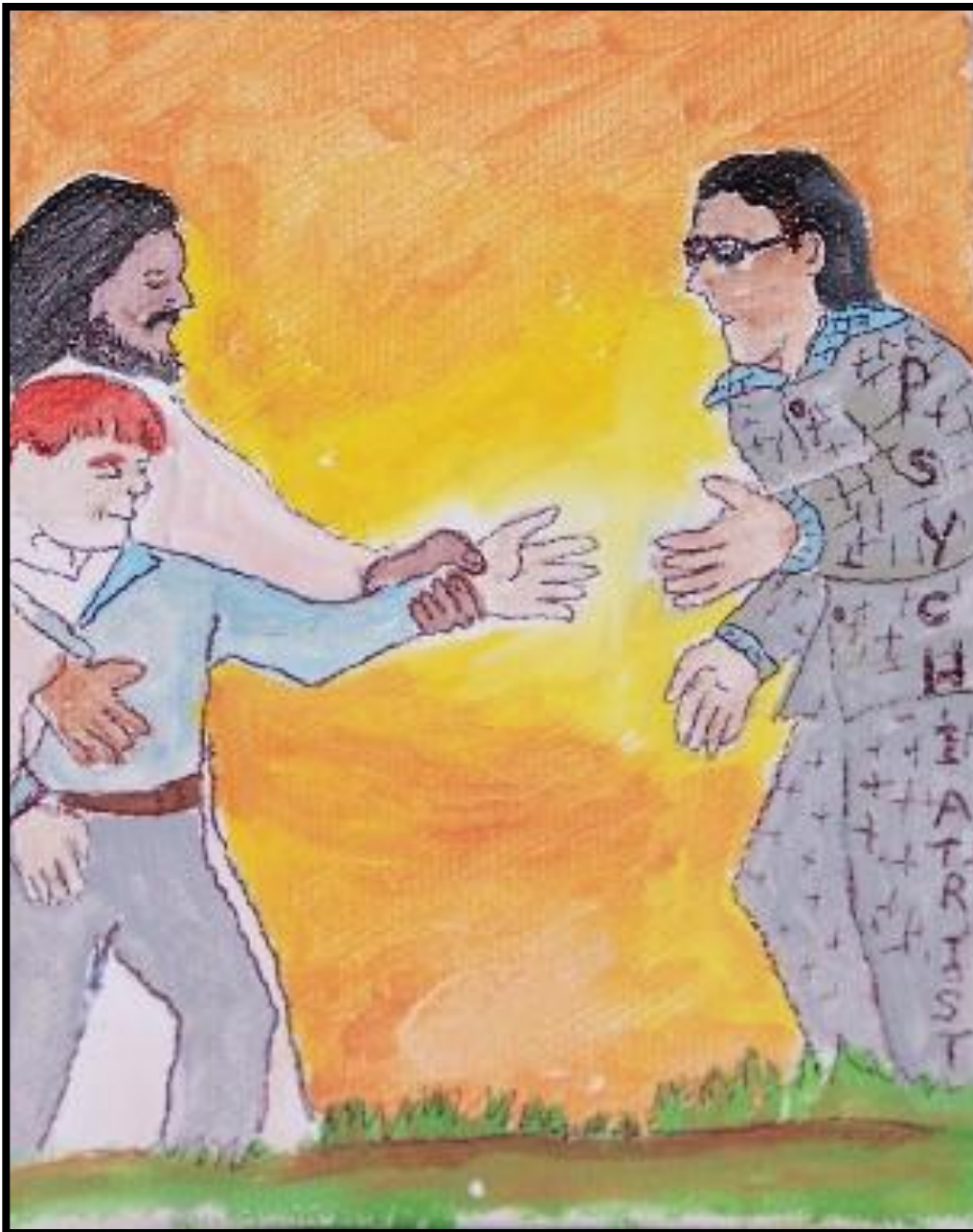
Untitled

I started to go to Wednesday night bible study. I started reading the bible more often. What I learned is all I wanted was I was hungry for God's love for me....

I remember learning bible verses. What I remember the most is that I wanted to learn more about God and what he could do to help me feel better instead of depressed. I started reading the bible everyday. I prayed every night before I went to sleep. I had a renewed interest in life. God touched my life in a way that no psychiatrist ever could...

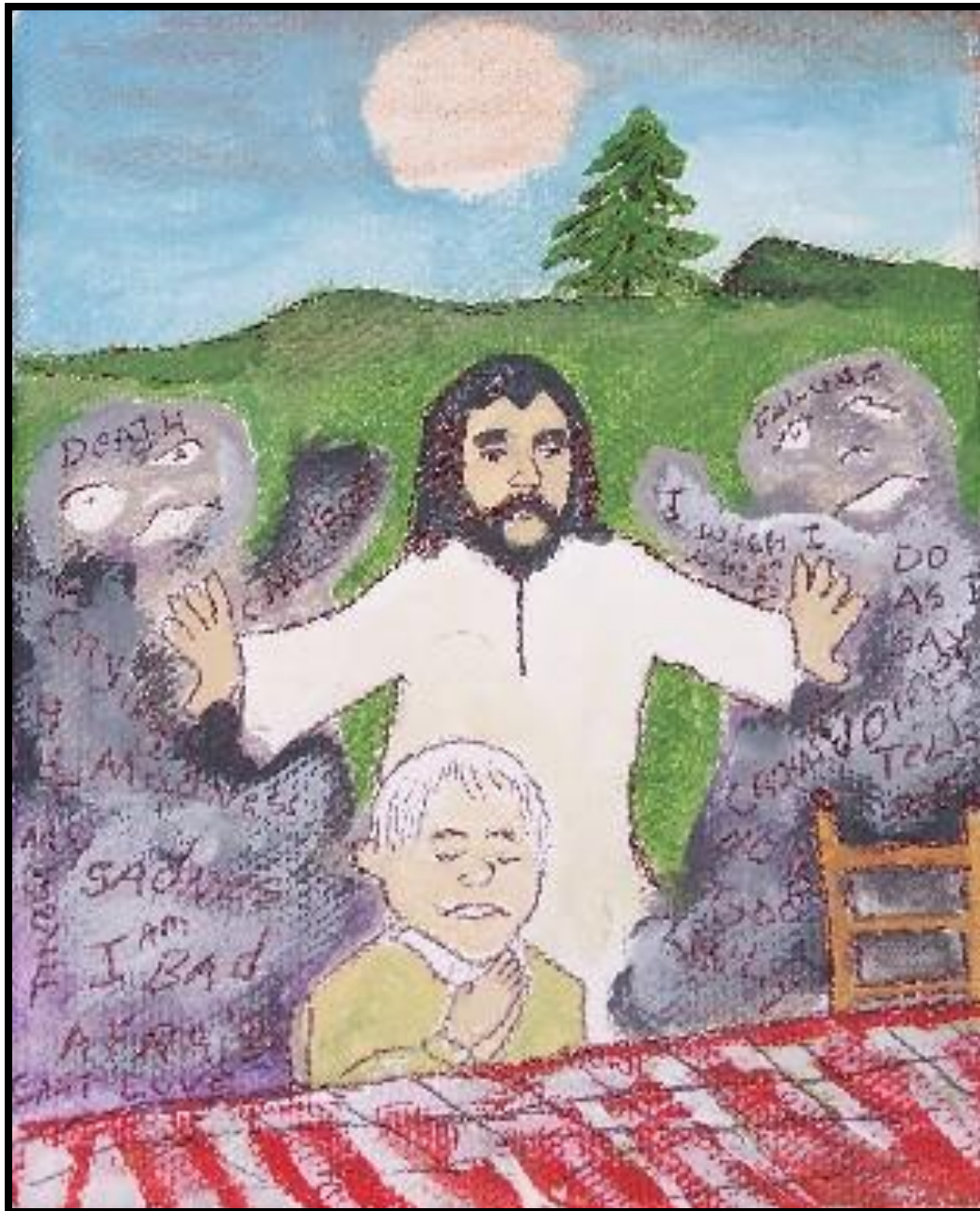
Ever since I have been going to church, I have been feeling God's love around me. I'm not as depressed as I used to be. I pray every night before I go to sleep. I feel more confident. I like myself. I believe in my heart that now that Jesus Christ, God, and I are one, my schizoaffective disorder and depression, will be easier to handle.

Dixie Moon - Essay Contest



Help is Just A Prayer Away

Steven Davenport



Untitled

Steven Davenport

A kindly social worker in the hospital, just before I left, told me I really needed to go to a 12 step program...Thank God, I went. I do not remember who was there. I do not remember even how big the crowd was, or exactly what was said. But, what I will never forget was the sense of homecoming and peace that washed over me in that meeting. And I was so very homesick, at the time. God was kind. I needed a 12 step meeting to come to Him. He helped me recognize I needed these meetings. And He took my problems into account. That is, He did NOT appear to me with a clap of thunder, with bolts of lightning, and command me in a stern voice to keep coming back to my 12 step meetings.

Barbara Bohm - essay contest



Untitled

Tina Whitton



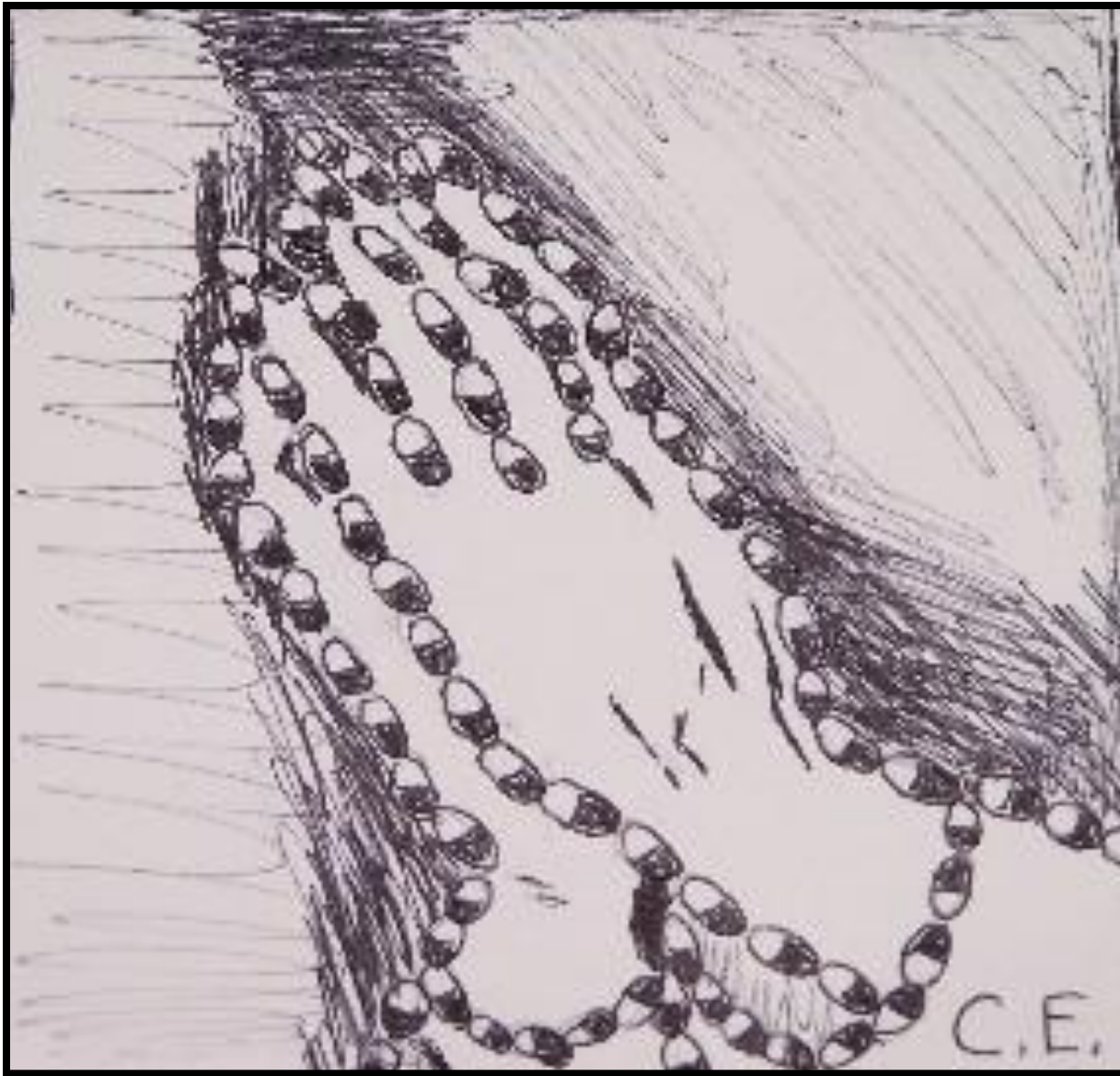
Church of Unity: A quaint primitive of a country church.

Betty Lou Bables

Spirituality has given me a sense of direction. Even in the dark intensity of despair and confusion, it offers a focal point of hope. It offers a sense of purpose to the understandings and mysteries of life. A sense of belonging and being part of the whole instead of a fragmented and isolated part thereof.

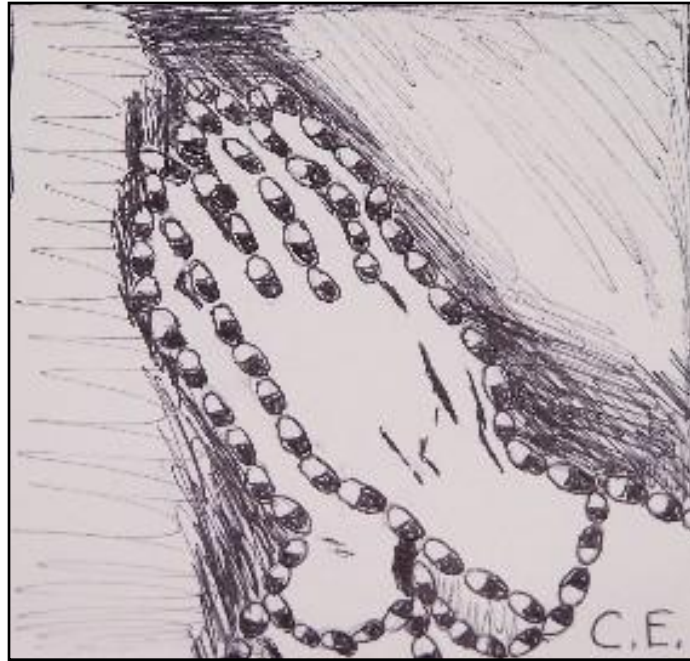
Life can often be filled with misery and hurt, but there can also be beauty and joy. Most of all there is hope. Hope that can power the motivation and yearning of a lost soul. A hope strong enough to break the barriers and help to overcome the limitations of mental illness. A hope not bound by physical laws, but omniscient, eternal, and infinite.

Jeffrey Holland – Essay Contest



Faithfulness

Connie English



Faithfulness

There should be faithfulness of taking medicine and prayer; Prayer is the best medicine.

Without taking my medicine I would be spiritually bankrupt. I need to pray continually.

I know over those years I had God and many Guardian Angels looking over me....I feel the hospital staff, my psychologists, my psychiatrist, social workers, etc. have all been guided by God and higher powers. I know my strength over the years has come from God. The many times I've thought about taking my life, God gave me the strength to go on....

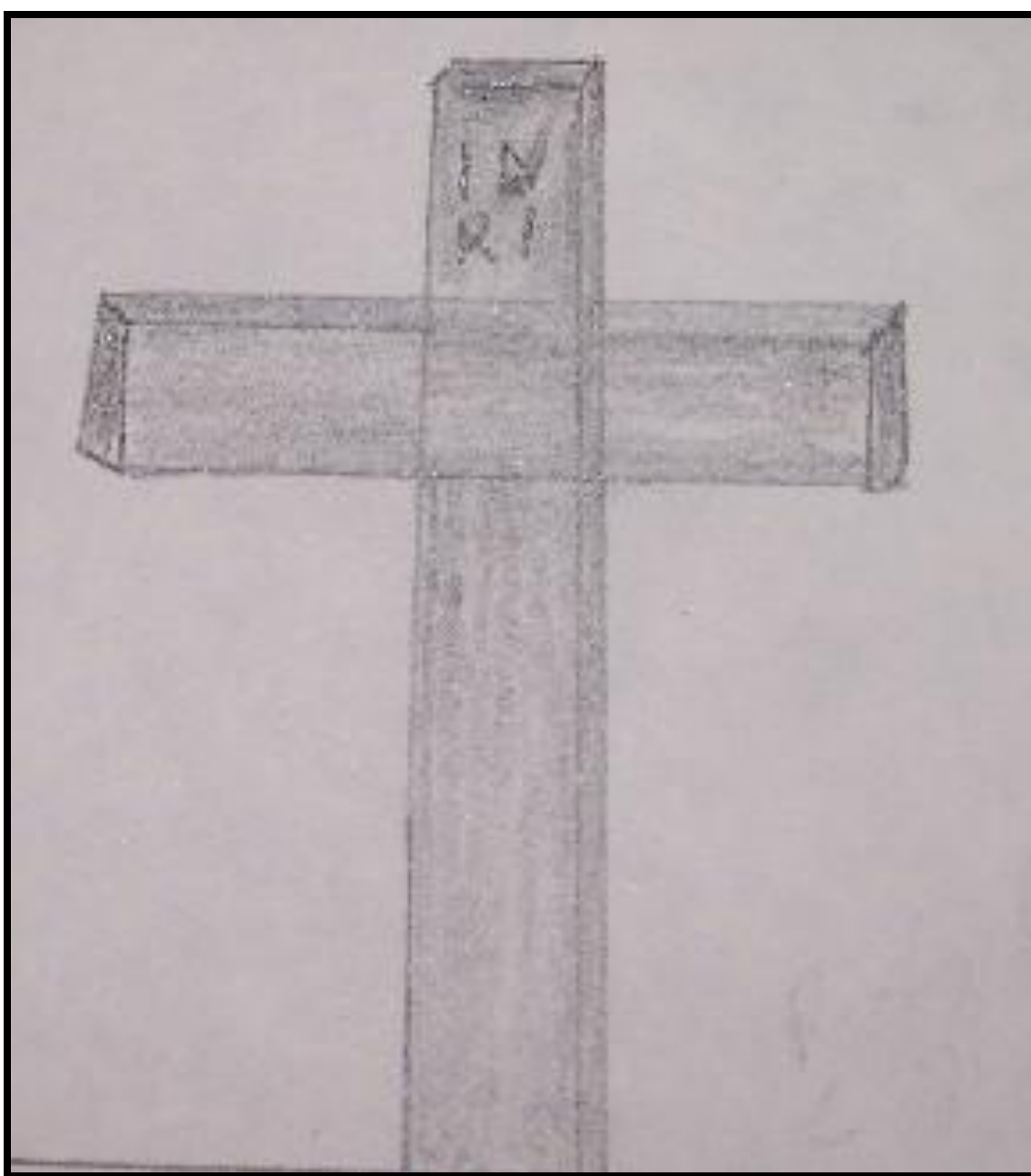
One of my friends I've met in the last few years gave me a rosary. I pray with it and I light candles like my mother used to do. This gives me strength to deal with my illness. I've also started to go to church in the last few years.

Chris Miller – Essay Contest



Free Your Spirit: Graphic design of peace dove and hands of different races.

Ella Devosha



Christ's Cross

Richard Mertel

I see Love throughout creation. This is the Love that lifts me up, and carries me through good days and bad days. When I hear the laughter of my children and the words spoken to me by friends, it reminds me that GOD is here, and GOD is Love. As we are said to be made in GODS image, we are also body, Spirit and mind. All creation rests in the Mind of GOD, as the ideal of it, and known by it...

I believe I am one with GOD. This thought alone, and knowing all of GOD's attributes, bring healing into my life, and will continue to do so.

Gene R. deVaux – Essay Contest



Thankfulness, Power & Strength

Cynthia Pokrywka



Thankfulness, Power & Strength

It represents the power of God which is the sun, star and flower which is beauty which we should be thankful for which is thankfulness showing the strength of God which we should apply to ourselves.

I started going to the Mennonite Churches and this changed my life around once and for all. Through the peace and dedication of helping others that the “Thirdway” offers, I have been able to reach an inner peace that I had been searching for since I was a young child. I have written many peace poems and newsletters and even sent some to the President and Congress in the hopes that someday we might end all war and strife in the world and have a world of peace and harmony.

Toni Faustman – essay contest



Forever Promises in Mind, Body and Spirit

Shelby Yeddis



Description: One woman; one man with hearts representing hope. The mind and spirit are enlightened by the eternal flame representing continual success for recovery through mental health; ongoing medical research and the mental health professionals that never give up; essentially they are the “eternal flame” that lights up our lives and gives us hope in our mind, body and spirituality.



My Mind is Here

Sandra Vukas



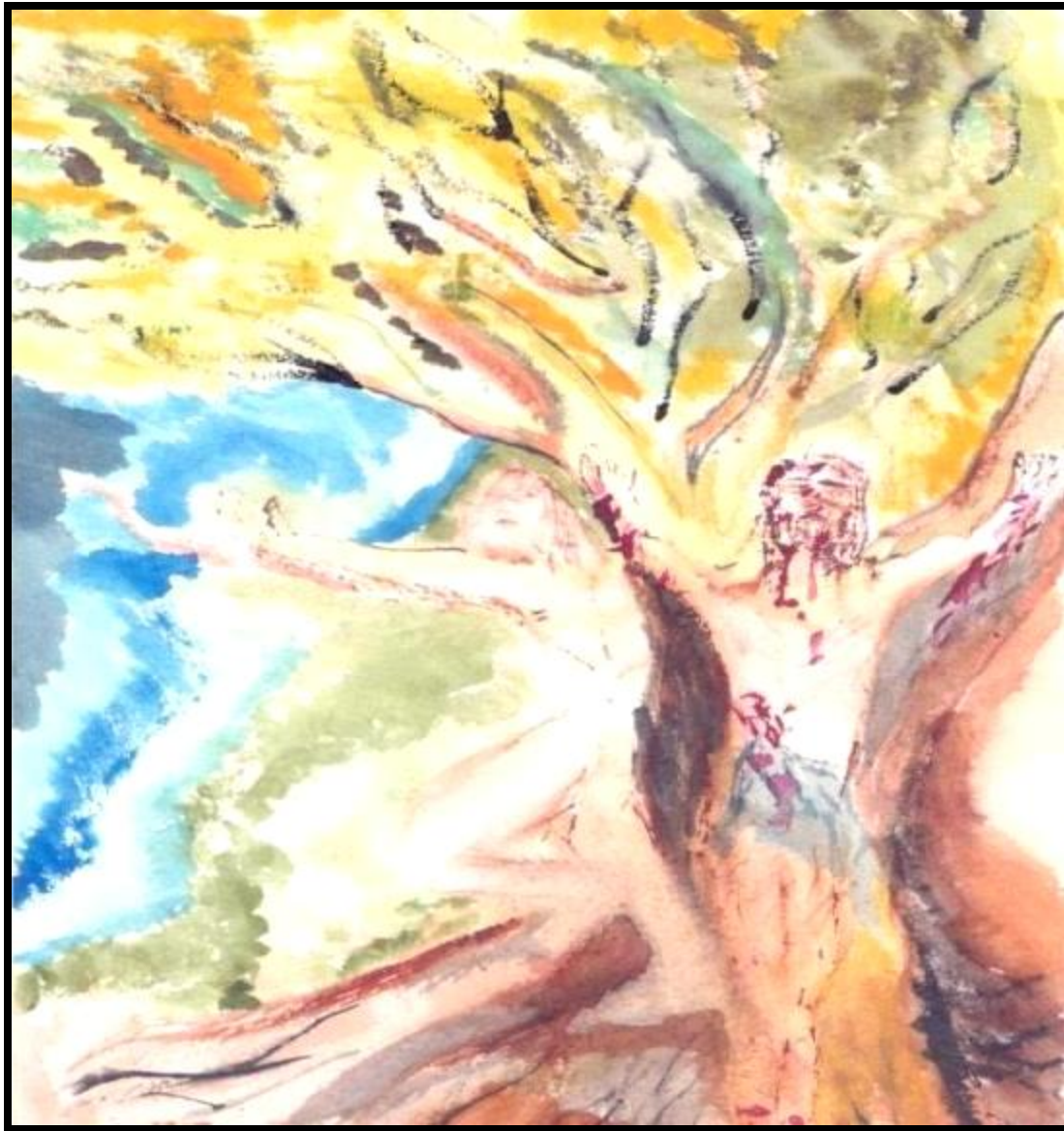
Peace of Mind

Sandra Vukas



**“Grow with your Mind”
A Tree of Life and a River ever Changing**

Sharon Pope



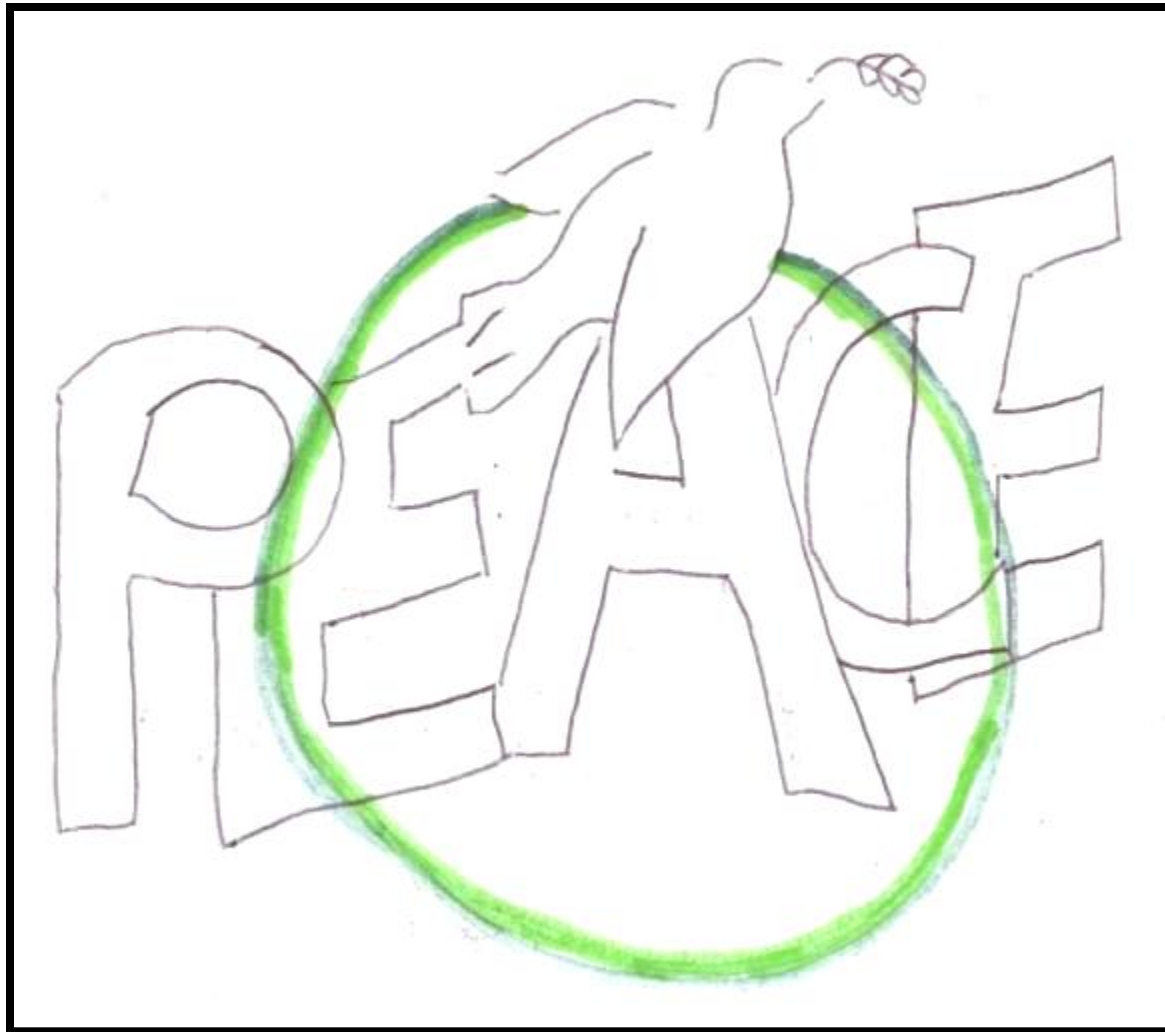
Return to the Tree

Mike Cullen



Return to the Tree

A surreal experience of being separated from the tree of life and then finding unity through the creator



Peace of Mind and Spirituality

Sally Lee Beers



Peace of Mind and Spirituality

I believe spirituality, good meds, fitness, diet, and supports lead to peace of mind, patience, long suffering, good self-esteem, faith, hope, and love



Community Spirit

Ray Pierce

Questions for Reflection

- Based on the above essays and artwork, please answer the following questions:
 1. What types of spiritual beliefs, practices, and symbols are portrayed?
 2. How are different understandings of the sacred represented?
 3. How is nature represented?

Questions for Reflection (Cont'd)

4. How is hope portrayed? Why is having hope important?
5. What are ways that people gain strength from their spirituality?
6. What are some examples of positive thinking stemming from spirituality?
7. What impact does spirituality have on how people view themselves?

Questions for Reflection (Cont'd)

7. What attitudes are portrayed regarding standard mental health treatments and to what extent do people perceive these as compatible with their spirituality?
8. In what ways are relationships and community connections represented?
9. Overall, what are the ways in which spirituality is linked to recovery?

Using Art/Essays/Symbols

- Sometimes people find it easier to express spiritual beliefs and ideas through symbolism and art forms. Reasons include:
 - 1) Artwork and symbolism can convey rich and deep meaning not easily expressed in everyday words
 - 2) Artistic modes of communication may be a special strength for some people
 - 3) Some people may feel 'safer' expressing themselves through symbols

Using Art/Essays/Symbols (Cont'd)

- The use of visual art, essays, poetry, and symbols can be valuable for addressing spirituality in practice with mental health service users. Asking consumers to describe the meaning of their artwork/essay/symbol can be a great way to begin conversation on the topic.

Considering Cultural Context

- A primary goal of this project has been to discover and share expressions of ‘spirituality and recovery’ of consumers of mental health services in the eastern Kansas region. The forms of spirituality represented in this presentation reflect the cultural milieu of those who entered the contest. A future project could compare essays and artwork of consumers located in different geographical regions.

Recommended Readings on Spirituality and Recovery

- Deegan, P. (2006) *Recovery journal: Spiritual lessons in recovery*. Retrieved from website <http://www.patdeegan.com/blog/archives/000011.php> on 07/08/2009)
- Fallot, R. D. (2001). Spirituality and religion in psychiatric rehabilitation and recovery from mental illness. *International review of psychiatry*. 13: 110-116.
- Fallot, R. D. (2007). Spirituality and religion in recovery: Some current issues. *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal*, 30(4), 261-270.
- Leibrich, J. (2002) Making space: spirituality and mental health. *Mental Health, Religion and Culture*. 5(2): 143-162.
- Starnino, V. R. (2008). Best practices for helping clients with a serious mental illness utilize spirituality as a recovery tool. In C. G. Petr (Ed.), *Multidimensional evidence-based practice: synthesizing knowledge, research, and values* (pp. 179-203). London: Routledge.
- Sullivan, P. (2009). Spirituality: A road to mental health or mental illness. *Journal of Religion and Spirituality in Social Work: Social Thought*. 28(1), 84-98

Additional Resources

- For numerous other references and resources related to spirituality in social work and mental health practice, see

Dr. Canda's homepage and the

Spiritual Diversity and Social Work Resource Center
via

www.socwel.ku.edu/canda

