

**D**agnosis

**E**mpathy

**M**eaning

**E**nterprise

**N**ous

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**I**nitiative

**A**wareness

**“... by love**

**serve one**

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**Notes to help those caring for brethren and sisters  
suffering from some form of Dementia.**

**Brian Woodall**

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

*"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ".*

During my time as a Manager of a Christadelphian Care Home, I decided that one day (God Willing) when time allowed, my thoughts would be put down in writing. My experiences culled from face to face encounters with sufferers, from reading and on formal training are intended to help those of our brethren and sisters suffering from dementia. This information, and hopefully helpful advice, can be shared with others, especially brethren and sisters in the process of painfully coming to terms with a loved one bowed down with this affliction

The writer, not being a medical man, is well aware that "a little knowledge is dangerous". However, one of the important lessons that have come across to me is that the focus must be placed upon the person suffering with dementia and not on the disease itself. It must be recognised that the sufferer is not being deliberately difficult and awkward but that behaviour is part of the affliction. People suffering with some forms of Dementia are not faking symptoms, and are not just being stubborn. There should be a warm understanding approach in the helping 'scene'.

At the outset there has to be a clinical diagnosis by a qualified person, to determine that the person is really suffering from some form of dementia. Following on from that investigation, the sufferer needs meaningful empathy, being treated as an individual who still has feelings. It should be recalled that the Lord Jesus Christ gave his life for the sufferer, just as much as for the carer.

The main thrust of my work was carried out in a Residential Home setting, so much of my experiences and advice will obviously stem from a multiple occupancy environment. Nevertheless, the need for an individual approach is stressed and so much of what is discussed in these notes is also relevant to the domestic home setting.

Bible passages will be sprinkled liberally throughout the text. Good practice as far as a Christadelphian is concerned is based on Divine concepts, using the Scriptures as a working manual. This in no way denies the importance of using the advancing knowledge and skills gleaned from those working in the field of dementia. Medical