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Theologising Women

WAND celebrated International's Women's Day, March 8, 2006 with a one-day conference under the theme "**Theologising Women**" held at Codrington College. It was in recognition of all women of faith who have been involved in challenging a socially conservative church and theology in the interest of a theology which embraces women's issues and issues of social justice.

The conference which was jointly sponsored and hosted by WAND and Codrington College heard papers on *womanist theology*, *feminist theology*, *spirituality as liberation* and *women in theological discourse*. In her welcome, Judith Soares indicated that the thrust towards liberating theology in the interest of women (and other socially disadvantaged groups) was not new. In Latin American feminist theologians have been assiduous in their attempts to root out injustice as they challenge oppression and discrimination of all forms. She said, however, that in the English Speaking Caribbean, womanist, feminist and liberation theologians continue to participate in the debate on liberation theory, ideology and practice. The Conference therefore was seeking to advance ideologies on theology or theologies of liberation which would liberate theology and locate women at the centre of theological discourse and action.

Among the presenters were Reverend Marjorie Lewis, Lecturer, United Theological College, Jamaica (*Woman Theology in the Caribbean*), Sister Theresa Lowe-Ching, St. Michael's Theological College, Jamaica (*Women Doing Theology: Towards a Transformation Vision & Practice*),

Theology arises out of the Church's consciousness of its mission in bringing the gospel in symbiotic relationship with the people amongst whom and the society in which it finds itself and must with integrity interpret the word of God in the situation. (Dr. H. Boothe)

Reverend Vivette Jennings Lecturer, Codrington College (*Women's Spirituality: A liberating Experience*) and Nicole Hustler, Graduate Student Codrington College, Barbados (*Theologising Women*). Several issues were highlighted from these presentations: the way women were perceived in the bible, the issue of race in perceiving God, the importance of history in our adaptation of certain forms of religion and the Caribbean church as it now exists. It was concluded that the church should seek to change the unjust structures of society that seek to the socially disadvantaged people. A new concept 'Nannyish T'eology' was also introduced. Nannyish T'eology is a liberation theology in the historical and cultural traditions of the Jamaican people. The Reverend Dr. Canon Noel T. Titus in his closing session entitled *Theologising Women : A response* stated that there was need to ponder the issue of feminism and feminist spirituality of which the Holy Spirit must be a part.

The Conference was attended by over 50 persons including students of the College and adherents of other religious denominations including women organizations. ?



Participants in discussion during break at Conference

Women of Faith Lecture Series

WAND, in conjunction with Codrington College sponsored a Lecture Series entitled *Women of Faith Speak*. The aim and objective of these lectures were to discuss some of the prevailing challenges encountered by our women, the youth and families. Issues covered over the two month period were:

- *Marriage and Divorce in Contemporary Society* – Apostle Destine Codagon, Love & Faith Outreach Ministries (January 12, 2006)
- *Celebrating Personhood in the 21st Century* - Mrs. Mary Beckles, Holy Seed Ministry (February 23, 2006)
- *Women of Faith in Leadership Positions: Ethical Dilemma on Mission Opportunity* – Dr. Kathleen Gordon, Deputy Director, Information & Technology Management Services, CDB
- *Bereavement: What It Does For Us?* - Rev. Marlene Britton-Walfall, Bethel Methodist Church

The Lectures which were interactive were held every fortnight and attracted over 70 participants. The series culminated in the *Theologising Women* conference held March 8, 2006. ?

Children Must Play Literacy Workshop

WAND's outreach continued with the hosting of a play and literacy workshop for pre-school teachers in the La Pointe Community, St. Lucia in February, 2006. Facilitator for the workshop was Cecelia Batson. This workshop exposed pre-school teachers to the idea that since play is related to literacy acquisition, it can be used to promote literacy in the classroom.

The following four objectives identified in play experiences were explored:

- Problem solving
- Acquiring new understandings
- Coping with situations requiring sharing and cooperation
- Developing language and literacy

Pre-school teachers were made aware that young children observe literacy in their environments - road signs, labels on bottles and boxes in the kitchen and then create their own writing represented by scribbles and drawings. This interaction of young children and environmental print is the basic foundation for literacy learning. The teachers were encouraged to capitalise on the play and literacy connection in the class room, by setting up an environment full of literacy materials and allowing enough time (20-30 minutes) for children to fully develop socio-dramatic themes while playing. It was also emphasised that make believe play is an check

It was also emphasised that make believe play is an important way that children acquire literacy skills and learn to make sense of what is happening in their environments. For example, when children are depicting what happens in a doctor's office they check names in the appointment book, answer the telephone, write receipts and communicate with each other. ?

From the Reference Library...

Beginning February 2006, the Reference Library acquired a full time Librarian which will aid in moving the library towards its goals. At present, the library's Caribbean collection is being validated to be published in a catalogue both online and as a hard copy.

The Library on behalf of WAND, also produced on request from the SCS Directorate a preliminary bibliographic listing on *Differences in Academic Success between Males and Females* with a focus on the Caribbean literature available.

Assistance and referral services were also provided to students and other researchers recording over 20 in-house visitors in the last three months. Most of the queries were

related to gender and psychology, domestic violence, women and drugs (substance abuse), immigration, social development and stalking. ?

Women ministers should study the Scriptures from a woman's point of view, remembering that the writers of the Bible were men who naturally wrote with male insights of the patriarchal societies of their time. Refusal by women to do so is to be setting limits to the power of God to reveal Himself anew in these times. (Carmen Husan)

WAND

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