WAND Notes
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Women, Spirituality and Healing

From a Christian perspective, I believe many of us would agree with the overall definition of health as outlined by WHO, but would immediately consider the significance of spirituality as a component of "well-being", a component which is not specifically stated in any formal definition of health by the medical community. Healing was one of the foundation ministries of Jesus' life….In Chapter 5 of the Gospel of Mark (verses 25-34), we are told of a woman who had been haemorrhaging for 12 years and who was healed of her condition after touching the garment of Jesus. This is a condition that would be familiar to many of us: one of the commonest causes for haemorrhage in women is fibroids of the uterus or womb, and it is a disease that is particularly common among black women. In my practice in Pathology, uterine fibroids are one of the most common specimens that we receive following gynaecologic surgery. The story in the gospel goes on to recount that Jesus sought to find out who had touched his garment, and when the woman finally come forward and "told the whole truth", he declared that she should go in peace for her faith had made her well. As with many of the other accounts of healing in the gospels, the power of the Lord to heal is immediately evident, but there is also the clear indication that we have a responsibility to claim this healing through our faith – our spirituality. There is also the added responsibility as shown in this particular story that we have a responsibility to testify about the source of our life and healing – to tell the whole truth, to tell the good news. It is in this context that we are truly healed.

Excerpt taken from the paper "Women, Spirituality and Healing: An Introduction" written by medical practitioner, Suzanne Shirley, which was presented at the WAND-Hillcrest Retreat Centre of the Anglican Diocese of Jamaica conference, "Theologising Women: Women, Spirituality and Healing" held on March 18, 2011 in Jamaica.

From a spiritual and Christian perspective, what does this healing look like? Well, our Lord tells us in the story we have just looked at that the woman, healed, can go in peace. I would like to suggest that the peace conferred in this context was that of "shalom". According to Strong's Concordance 7965, "Shalom" means completeness, wholeness, peace, welfare, safety, soundness, tranquility, prosperity, perfectness, fullness, rest, harmony, the absence of agitation or discord. Even in the setting of serious illness or incurable disease, someone who has achieved a state such as this can surely be considered to have been healed. It is in the context of faith and spirituality, in the complete surrender of our journeys to the Lord, that we can reach this place.

Season's Greeting

From the Staff of the Women and Development Unit

Defining Primary Health Care

In 1978, The Declaration of Primary Health Care at Alma Ata was created as a means to urge countries to embrace an ambitious vision of "Health for All." This was based on the principles of health as a basic human right, equity, and social justice, and health as a socio-economic issue, efficiency and effectiveness, prevention and health promotion.

Christ's mandate fits seamlessly into this health…plan with us as women taking charge of our wellness, more so our spiritual wellness. It is obvious that we recognise our responsibility in maintaining health and wellness, preventing disease and protecting the health of our population and the world at large. This holistic approach will improve the health status of all countries and that of women and children. For women are called to be the nurturers of God's most precious creation, and they form a large population of health care providers. Hence, the importance of educating our women in a holistic way as to be informed providers and moreso not to neglect their spiritual care.

Excerpt taken from the paper "Women Taking Charge of their Wellness" by Sister Melvorn Stewart which was presented at the WAND-Hillcrest Retreat Centre of the Anglican Diocese of Jamaica conference, "Theologising Women: Women, Spirituality and Healing" held on March 18, 2011 in Jamaica. Sister Melvorn Stewart is a nursing sister and Anglican Chaplain at the Cornwall Regional Hospital, Montego Bay, Jamaica.

Honouring Nettleford

An upcoming Special Issue of *Caribbean Quarterly* will carry a collection of presentations that were delivered at the symposium held in Jamaica in April 2010 to celebrate the life, work and legacy of the late Professor Rex Nettleford. Co-edited by guest editors, Marva Phillips and Judith Soares, the publication, records some aspects of Nettleford's contribution to historical and contemporary socio-political and cultural analyses of the need to embrace social justice in a country and region still bounded by the legacy of colonialism and

Honouring Nettleford Cont'd

the dictates of plantation rule.

In the case of women, the article, "Forever Indebted to Rex: Women 'Crafting a New Story of Human Experience'", authored by Cecelia Batson-Rollock, Judith Soares and Marva Phillips, notes that:

> *Those who will forever be indebted to Rex are those many women whose lives have been touched through the extra-mural reach of the Women and Development Unit and the Trade Union Education Institute.*

Happy Retirement Adrian! Welcome Deborah!

WAND wishes Dr. Adrian Fraser a happy retirement. Dr. Fraser, Resident Tutor at the St. Vincent and the Grenadines UWI School of Continuing Studies for many many years and recently Site Coordinator for the UWI Open Campus is to be commended for a job well done.

As Dr. Fraser demits office, WAND welcomes Ms. Deborah Dalrymple who is no stranger to the Unit. In the 1990s, WAND collaborated with Ms. Dalrymple and Marion House on aspects of the facility's programme activity.

Walk good Adrian! Walk in Deborah!

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