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A MAGAZINE ABOUT CARIBBEAN WOMEN

No. 25 May 1989

WOMAN SPEAK!

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LIFE/SPIRIT &
RELIGIOUS PRACTICE



WOMAN SPEAK!

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COVER: Detail, ink drawing by Danuta Radzik, Guyana. The Amerindian mood evokes a spirit quality of landscape characteristic of Guyanese art.

The culture of the pre-colonial Caribbean occupies only a tiny space in the conscious imagination of the modern Caribbean. While the Amerindian peoples resisted genocide as best they could, today, the material remains of their civilisations are reduced to objects of anthropological curiosity. However, their fateful "discovery" by Europe and their response to it (for example, the Amerindian alliance with Africans and the struggle of Maroonage) set the stage for violence and resistance, the shape of things to come.

No. 25 May 1989

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This issue is for Cornelia Frettlöh with love and thanks.



Stela A at Copan drawn by Frederick Catherwood 1839, shows the complexity of Maya writing and ritual significance of this monument. (*Maya Treasures of Ancient Civilisation*)

The experience of woman has always been a struggle against the psychic reproduction of domination – internal self-domination – as well as a struggle against external social domination.

(*Patricia J. Mills Woman, Nature and Psyche Yale U. Press 1987*)

I will urge all women to focus on spirituality rather than religion because all religions practised in the west are male-dominated; and men, who are in power, have one aim only: to preserve that power. Women can liberate themselves by going back to the Bible, developing their own sense of spirituality and hopefully one day recognising that male-dominated religions are not for us.

(*Linda Edwards-Romain freelance journalist addressing the WAND 10th Anniversary Consultation, Nov. 1988*)

THE CHURCH OF ST. PAUL: WITHIN YOU AND WITHOUT YOU

I find great difficulty with going to church, to the orthodox church. We don't have a Christian church at all, we have a Pauline church. If you were to sit down every Sunday and list the number of sermons the parson speaks or reads from the bible, that he takes from the four gospels as against the letters to the Corinthians and letters to the Ephesians, you'll find that most sermons are preached on Paul's doctrine and not on Jesus'. Jesus' doctrine is very simple and direct. Paul confused the whole issue. He came along and talked hell, damnation and all kinds of dreadful things to try and control people because that is how a structured organisation behaves. You have to put in rules and regulations and make people toe the line. You can't give people freedom. All Jesus was saying was "I have come that you may have life and have it more abundantly." I have come to tell you that how you seek about yourself is how it's going to be for you. But if you seek first your spiritual dimension all this becomes yours because you're in control.

*Nancy St. John
Minister Religious Science Institute*



Detail from Crucifixion, Albert Artwell.

"The Sunday after the riot at St. Peter, the priest told the people in the church that any of them that cause that kind of trouble must not come to him to beg for them. The people the planters said was behind the whole thing got properly dealt with."

Samuel Smith recalling the aftermath of the 1918 cane workers strike in Antigua. To Shoot Hard Labour: The Life And Times of Samuel Smith, an Antiguan working man 1877-1982. K.B. Smith and F.C. Smith.



Photo. Ancient Egypt Time Life Books

Comic-strip art was popular in the New Kingdom of Egypt. This papyrus, intended as a humorous commentary on the break-down in the old social order shows natural enemies stepping out of their accustomed roles: left to right, a lion plays draughts with a gazelle, wolves watch over goats, and a cat tends a flock of geese. In the nation's declining years, art, once reserved mainly for religious purposes, came to be used also as an instrument of social protest. (Time Life Books)

EDITORIAL

"She felt the Saviour as a physical presence in her life, nearer and more helpful than her husband.."
Isabel Allende, *Of Love and Shadows*.

Ask and be amazed at how many women are in the habit of talking to God. Not just the kneeling down at the bedside, not just the prostration in the mosque, but the daily thanking, pleading, bargaining that women conduct in the most private negotiations of all.

At WAND's 10th Anniversary regional consultation last November, women were strong on the subject of the Christian fundamentalist missionary movement out of the USA, generally perceived by a whole side of the women's movement to be part of a new imperial expansion. "We're sitting ducks for the onslaught of the electronic media." But there's worse news. However amateurish their productions, they are reaching people's distress. However derided by Caribbean intellectuals "the God-botherers" are making effective use of the electronic mouthpiece. It is they who are claiming the global communications revolution for the Caribbean.

We talk about 'cultural penetration', an image which tells us something about how we see our 'culture'. A virgin being ravaged? This Caribbean culture we talk about isn't a pure and beautiful object waiting to be claimed by her proper bridegroom, the Caribbean people. We're talking about a process of being in the world, and our culture has often embraced an 'alien' God.

Race, class and gender, we all know this thing: part of being Caribbean is experiencing alienation profoundly and at the most personal, interior level. We're likely candidates for the personal solution offered by travelling salvation shows. In this Great Big Life, it's not just reggae music that is calling us in from the cold.

The 15th Century European invasion meant genocide for the peoples native to this region. This and subsequent events engendered the psychic trauma of homelessness so deeply expressed in the Caribbean temperament. It were as though we awakened one day to find ourselves installed in someone else's house, the owners murdered. Strange, yes. Tragic, yes, but also absurd. The emotional range of our response to the question 'Who the hell are we?' is astounding for just a few million people. Ours is Marcus Garvey's cry of dignity. (Here we are a serious people). Ours is the self directed laughter of Peter Minchel's 'Carnival is Colour'. (Here we are irreverent.)

"the question/would a God/bother?" Claire Harris

When the editorial team was researching this issue, we were struck by the number of people who made a distinction between "spiritual realization" and religion, and so we have tried to draw attention to some of the tensions in this experience. There is the role of religion in the organization of Caribbean society. Here we ask the questions, whose religion and what was the source of its power for control, for resistance? What is women's role in maintaining the social system and its religious ideologies? What is the connection between spirituality and its political use? These were questions being asked at the consultation and we have tried to illustrate them here.

Then there is another dimension, more difficult to record on paper. For girls and women, what is "the strength inherited/the weakness taught"? (Merle Collins). How is it that women will take the same Koran, Bible, Vedas they learn silence from in the morning and use it to rebel against their domestication in the afternoon? What is the female relation to divinity? Where in the name of God did woman get the notion of freedom?

The planning and production of "Life/Spirit & Religious Practice" has maintained the wider participation of staff stimulated when we did issue #24 ("Plugging in the kettle") Together with chapter and verse from the WAND 10th Anniversary Consultation we had enthusiasm, ideas, follow-up interviews, submissions, research and soul searching.

Woman Speak! thanks Joyce Tate, Ruth Punnett, Carolle Grant, Abbyssinian and Pauline Melville who unknowingly contributed to this issue. Our very best wishes to Norma Shorey Bryan who's joined the staff of CIDA and Joyce Harris now elsewhere in the UWI in the Faculty of Arts and General Science. God bless!

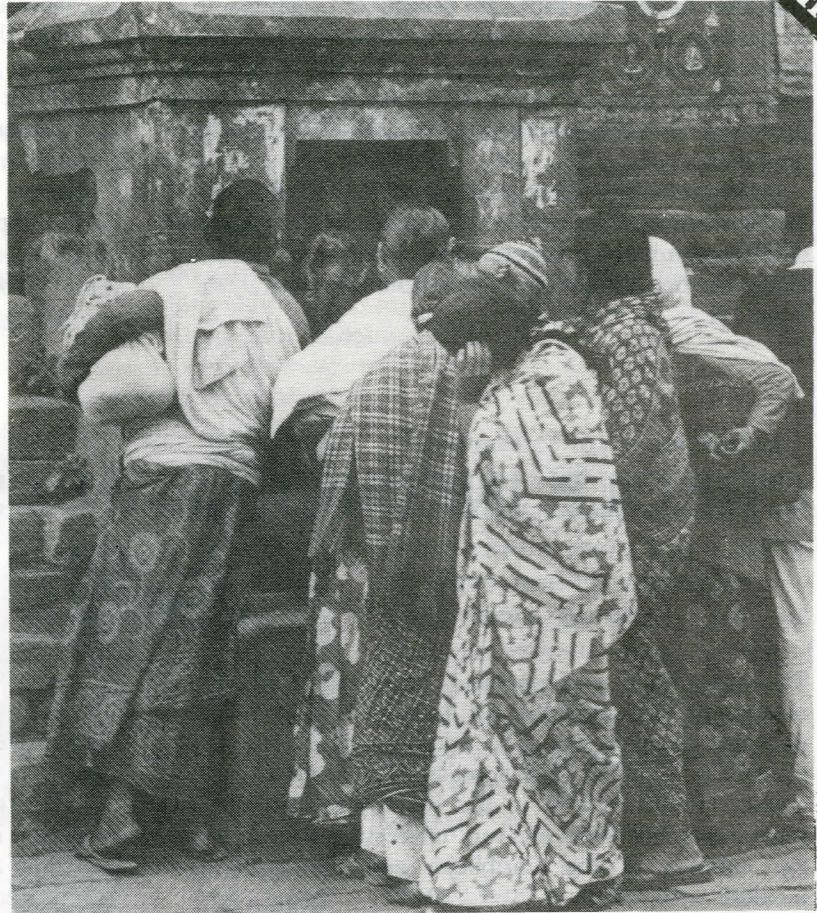
COVERING UP AND KEEPING QUIET

By Sheila Stuart, based on an interview with Nesha Haniff, Author of *Blaze a Fire*

Religious Forms
and Social Norms

Di next day Mum send me up a Miss Ursie yard. She did have a glass case wid grater cake and potato and cornmeal pudding dat she sell. She give me some and she start tell di verse to me. 'I saw a new heaven and a new earth. For the first heaven and the first earth were passed away.' Me stand up and hear her, but every time me start say it, me member dat dem say me talk bad and me fool-fool and me start cry.

'Exodus' A Run Lionheart Gal, Sistren with Honor Ford-Smith, Sister Vision, 1987.



Hindu women in India worship the local deity on their way to market

Photo: Vivant Universe

The subordination of women by men is pervasive within all religions. The ordination of women is taboo or women are forbidden to be heads of most churches, yet religion is the most powerful force in women's lives. Male domination, in essence, has more to do with culture than with religious philosophy.

My father used to tell me when I was a little girl, "you're not pretty, you'll have to work hard for your living". "Children should be like old men's beards seen but not heard". All during secondary school, I wouldn't say a word in class. I was timid. I was shy. I've outgrown it, thank God. But all of these concepts you're being fed from birth. When a child is born it is open and receptive to everything it hears, so you don't even know what is in your subconscious.

Nancy St John.

Within the Caribbean, it is important that we separate the religious ritual from what happens in the social spheres of life. A Muslim woman (like all other women) is in charge of the home although it may seem to an outsider that the man is in charge. This responsibility which women have for family life cannot be separated by religious, racial or regional boundaries.

Interestingly, the religious ethos of Muslim and Christian women are similar in some respects. Muslims consider Jesus to be one of their prophets, and they believe in one God. However, they believe that Mohammed was the mass prophet in a whole line of prophets. The religious practice of Muslims consists of a series of rituals rather than religious services in the Christian context.

Muslim women veil themselves and keep themselves well out of the limelight. However, this does not negate the fact that they play a particular role within the religious boundaries of Islam.

The Islam being projected today in terms of women is not really the Islam of the Koran. For example, the

Koran does not say that women should veil themselves - what it does say is that you should cover yourself modestly - that you should cover your bosom modestly.

The Islam of today has been greatly influenced by Arab culture, which comes out of a history of Nomadic tribes, where women were traditionally a prime resource and were targets for rape and pillage and therefore had to be kept in a kind of "jail" in order for them to be protected. More importantly women were seen as "assets" which were at stake and therefore had to be protected. In other words they were seen as the property of men.

This influence emerged in the rest of the world. Today when Muslim women veil themselves, it's because of a structure which is very "Arabized" and it takes on legitimacy because the prophet is from that area.

The veil also prevents women from participating in direct economic activities particularly those carried on outside their homes. It is likewise considered right for a man to be engaged in productive activity. He is considered the principal bread-earner of the family. The veil, therefore has become the main obstacle for the development of women in the social, economic, political, and cultural fields. However, nowadays the use of the veil is diminishing due to the pressure from increasing poverty, necessitating increased participation of the women in productive endeavours and earning for the support of the family.

Shamsun Nahar Chowdhury in Awake, Asian Women and the Struggle for Justice, APHD '85.

CREOLE INFLUENCE IN ASIAN FORMS

By S Stuart/N Haniff

The ethos and philosophical basis of Hinduism is profoundly different from the Judaic Christian religions of which Islam is one. The Hinduism practiced in the Caribbean is similar to that practiced elsewhere. For example, Hindus believe in the sanctity of life and are vegetarians, but there are very interesting ways in which the cultures of the Caribbean and Hinduism have melded.

Hinduism comes primarily from India, and is based on a tradition of Asian orientations where the belief is that God is everywhere and in everything, manifesting "itself" in a variety of ways. There is no belief in God as the supreme being.

Hinduism however, can be very individualised as opposed to Islam and Christianity which are mass based. You do not have to attend church every week. Worship in a public form is episodic occurring every month or fortnight. A woman can exist in her own private sanctity and do her own meditation because of the individual nature of Hinduism.

Hindus believe in pujas and women are very much involved in these. Puja is a ritual ceremony of worship

of which there are different kinds: to celebrate, to mourn, just to pray. A lot of natural things are used in these ceremonies including leaves, milk, incense and candles.

The ritual ceremonies of Hinduism are anthropologically very interesting and in the Caribbean what has happened to a lot of these rituals is that they have become syncretized to the reality of the region. So, for example, a woman could go to the temple wearing a long shirt over a pair of blue jeans as long as she is modestly covered or a Hindu could have a rum shop even though the drinking of alcohol is forbidden.

Hinduism does not have the same veiling structures for women as the Muslim religion. Veiling is very much subjected to the culture of the part of India from which the person came. Depending on the caste, class and region of the person, Hinduism takes on a different personality. So in India, you can have a number of cultural dimensions of Hinduism.

A lot of Indians who are in the Caribbean come mainly from village areas in India and did not possess the traditional conservative culture of the higher class

The belief system of Hindus incorporates within it the ritualistic procedure that will enable us to follow equally a female saint as we would a male saint. Sarasawatie has different attributes. One of them is education, knowledge, and when our children are preparing for the 'Eleven Plus' all that year boys and girls will go and worship at the feet of Sarasawatie and ask her blessings. She is also the Goddess of Speech and music. If a Godhead wants a favour in the area of speech or music or education, despite his position in the Pantheon, he will have to come and submit himself to the mercy of Sarasawatie Mata.

Deo Sharma

which treat women differently and so, for example, a village woman would be a working woman who would go out into the fields and work.

The higher up the social class one goes the more conservative the role of the woman becomes where she no longer possess the degrees of freedom she had when in a lower social class where she had to go out and negotiate for her survival.

A middle class woman for example is "protected" by her husband, and she lives a very sheltered life where she would not even come out and entertain with her husband - if she does venture out she covers her face with a scarf.

It would appear that the caste system has a lot to do with the Hindus' belief in reincarnation. One can be reincarnated to do lowly tasks as punishment for some wrong deed committed in some life before and there is

no feeling that one is being unjustly oppressed because there is something intrinsic that has brought about this downfall in one's social position.

"If the woman does not cover her head, she might as well cut her hair. And since it is a shameful thing for a woman to shave her head or cut her hair, she should cover her head. A man has no need to cover his head, because he reflects the image and glory of God. But woman reflects the glory of man; for man was not created from woman, but woman from man. Nor was man created for woman's sake, but woman was created for man's sake. On account of the angels, then, a woman should have a covering over her head to show that she is under her husband's authority."

St. Paul.



Photo. Stephanie Martin

"I remember my grandfather telling us children, 'Go to bed now – the spirit is watching.' I always knew there was a spirit up there, and my ancestors knew about the spirit – it's just that somewhere along the way I learned that Jesus might have been a white man. Of course, Jesus loved all people whether they were black, white or yellow." *Mary Pappin.*

"Since God is spirit and not material, in terms of the physical body, and since God is all pervasive, that is, there is nothing that is not God in expression, then God has to be completely sexless. God is spirit – whole, complete and perfect, and at the level of the spirit, so are we." *Nancy St. John.*

THE 'Y' AND WHEREFORE

By Elaine Rainford from her presentation at the WAND 10th Anniversary Consultation.

When I was
a girl
I turned away
from the sane and delicate
dreams of girls
wanting more
and less

*Claire Harris (Born in
Trinidad, lives in Calgary, Al-
berta, Canada. Reference used
here from Translation Into Fic-
tion. Fidlehead Poetry Books
and Goose Lane
Editions, 1984.)*



Negro Dancers in Jamaica to a Creole Art, C. 1820's. During the period of slavery and later under colonialism imitation of the dominant culture and the persistence of African forms produced two distinct Caribbean forms of cultural expression. (National Library of Jamaica)

Photo. Dance Jamaica Grove Press

"Our symbol is the Blue Triangle which represents the body, mind and spirit of the woman and girl."

The Caribbean YWCAs came together as a regional structure within the world movement in 1958; the aim was to coordinate the work of YWCAs in the region and to support and strengthen those YWCAs with no staff, which were at that time in the majority. The YWCA has been in eighteen territories in the Caribbean over the years, and there are now twelve which function as some kind of organisation.

The main objective of the YWCA is the total development of the woman and girl. In fact our symbol is the Blue Triangle which represents the body, mind and spirit of the woman and girl.

The strategy we use to pursue the objectives or aims is in all the programmes we do. Everything in the YWCA is considered programme, we are well known in the field of housing and hostels and we also organise

seminars. All that is referred to as programmes; and it is through the woman's involvement in these that we are assisting her to grow.

"PEACE" - A POLITICAL ISSUE: A CHALLENGE TO THE "Y" FROM WITHIN

In 1983 we had a rude awakening. We had the World Council meeting in Singapore. The trip from the Caribbean took so long that many of us arrived only having heard little bits of news, much of which was American influenced, about what was happening in Grenada. At the same time, the world movement had organised a pre-consultation of the YWCA, the theme of which was "Peace, Education and Development". The Caribbean was represented by three young women from

Belize, Surinam and Trinidad and Tobago, and they were all traumatised to be with this group of sixty young women from the Middle East, South Africa and other territories who knew nothing about peace. The Caribbean girls knew nothing about conflict. At the same time recommendation was made to the World movement that at the next World Council which was to be held in 1987 all the YWCA boards or decision making bodies should have 33% representation of youth. So the young girls came to the Caribbean Regional Meeting and said "we want to participate in that meeting" and they reminded us of what was happening in Grenada; they thought they ought to be more involved and they recommended that we focus as a region on peace with a view to having a Youth Conference with the theme "Peace Education".

In 1985, the celebration of International Youth Year, how could the YWCA say no? You have to look progressive! And I as the Caribbean Area Secretary reminded people they should stick to their guns. So as soon as we left Singapore, preparations were made for our Peace Education Youth Conference.

It started with a group of fourteen young women from seven territories, and we met in Grenada where they were exposed to all the issues relating to peace. We were there for ten days, they were to develop an agenda for the Youth Conference that they had recommended and this was done. The topics that they chose were fascinating. One of them was "Witnessing for Christ" in different contexts, in solidarity with the human race; and this gave us the opportunity as we were meeting in Jamaica to have all representatives of the political parties on a panel and talk about their policies and how they were working in Jamaica for peace. This was an eye-opener for everybody. There was also the topic "The Arts as a Weapon for Social Change", in which Professor Nettleford really went to town. It left such an impression on the girls that when they went back to their own countries they began to see how they could use art to change situations. The Caribbean office of the YWCA continued its peace education efforts throughout the region, and in fact became one of the U.N. Peace Messengers on September 20 of this year (1988).

This work on the issue of Peace, I would say was quite successful, because it opened the eyes of a group of nations - we are talking of about fifty people initially - who would go back home and share the message with their peers.

It served a two-fold purpose because the Young Women's Christian Association is not as young as it's supposed to be. The majority of our members are way over forty, and we really must have programmes to empower the young. So this programme helped in that respect, and in fact, many of these young women are on boards and other committees running programmes in their own associations.

The Strengths of the YWCA

The "Y" is a membership movement. People can join. It has credibility because in many territories, the YWCA is the oldest organisation. We are about to embark on the centenary of the YWCA of Grenada. They begin their centenary celebrations in April, 1989. Next to the U.S they are the oldest YWCA in this part of the world. Another strength is that we have excellent material developed at world level for training and general information. Then in the area of pooling, we have a scheme known as Cooperation for Development through which the richest and the poorest Y's contribute in one way or another to helping each other to carry out programmes.

And its most important strength is that the YWCA is governed by a Constitution; we have rules. It's up to the Associations and individuals in the association to make use of these rules, but it is important to know that there are rules.

We have access to the media. When Joyce Bynoe, now employed at WAND, was our Communications Secretary, she brought the media closer to the YWCA, and since she changed that position, the YWCAs have always felt that it's their right to have access to the media and this is a good thing. We have gone one step further in that we have access to UWIDITE Satellite programme in the Caribbean.

The Weaknesses of the YWCA

The "C" in the name Young Women's Christian Association should be listed under strengths because it is from our Christian beliefs that we should develop strength and faith in our society. However, we hide behind the "C". For example, we are Christians so we can't get involved in political issues even when our sisters hurt. We cannot give support - open support.

We cannot condone sex education and contraceptives. In fact, our preamble states that we bring together "women and girls into a world-wide fellowship in which they may come to know the love of God and his Son, Jesus Christ, and demonstrate that love through responsible action". Now most YWCAs forget that.

Most YWCAs think that sewing classes, cookery classes, school leavers' programmes are enough. We do not do enough work on advocacy although we have the credibility, and we do not often speak out on specific cases of injustices to women and children in our own countries and communities. Yet we speak a lot about apartheid in South Africa. We speak a lot about oppression in the Middle East. So we need at some point to find the balance in what our YWCAs are for.

The other weakness is that young women and poor women are rarely included in the decision-making processes of the YWCA. There are a few tokens who are sometimes so inhibited by the others that they end up agreeing with suggestions made by middle class members of the board even though they may not be in their best interests. That is something that we must speak to if we are going to move in the way we say we are going to.

We often forget that we have limited human and fiscal resources and too often take on projects that we cannot manage. We live in the past where we had many

volunteers who gave their services free. That has to change but it can only change when we begin to be serious about bringing young people into the decision making process of the YWCA. You see, we have leaders who have been in the YWCA and on other Boards for the past fifty years. There is nothing wrong with being in the 'Y' for fifty years. Once you are a member you can remain a member until you die, but there is no reason why you should still be making decisions on behalf of the young people of the community.

UNEMPLOYMENT & THE SKILLS APPROACH

By Kurlyne Alleyne

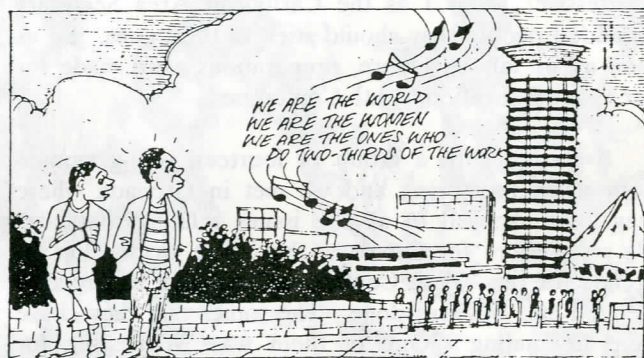
"Is there something besides cooking, sewing and other craft skills that women want to learn?"

The YWCA is a membership movement consisting of young women who are sensitive to the crises of values in our world and want to be involved in, and are committed to building or reshaping today's world. But, this strength of membership is sometimes threatened by a perception of the association as mainly for middle class rather than 'grass roots' women.

The Young Womens' Christian Association was started in England around 1855 when two women - Emma Roberts and Lady Kinnaird - were concerned about the welfare of girls leaving their rural homes to work and live in the cities. Most of the time these girls, desperate for shelter in London and unable to afford proper housing, had to opt for squalid living conditions or depend on men, some of whom took advantage of their situation and exploited them.

Emma Roberts was a woman from a poor family and through her concern for the spiritual life these young girls she started a prayer circle. Lady Kinnaird on the other hand, was wealthy and she was able to set up hostels for these young women. The Y developed and today the movement has spread to over eighty-three countries around the world.

Throughout the years, the Y has provided assistance to young women through housing in hostels and spiritual development through prayers and service. However, the programmes have been extended to provide the chance for women to pursue their specific interests and concerns and develop their talents and new skills. In Bar-



That's the trouble with educating women. Now they can use new math to arrive at outrageous figures.

bados, the YWCA provides training, vocational guidance, community service and recreation through study sessions, camps, seminars, discussions and other programmes.

One of the most successful programmes, is the evening class, offered to the association's members as well as the general public which has been beneficial to a number of women and men. Many say that the skills learnt at the Y have helped them in earning extra income or simply enhancing the skills which they had previously. However, there are a number of women who have gone through several activities and yet say that they are still unemployed. Is there some way that the YWCA can motivate those women into creating opportunities for themselves? Do they need help taking their skills a bit further? Or is there something besides cooking, sewing and other craft skills that women want to learn? Perhaps these are some of the questions that committees ought to consider when planning such programmes.

Some people are of the opinion that the "Y" is for old people - this is a misconception. I suppose they have made that assumption because more "mature" women are usually seen representing the association from time to time and also because in the past and probably still today, its boards and committees are dominated by women over the age of forty.

ETHOS AND ACTIVITIES OF THE BARBADOS MOTHER'S UNION

By Undine Gollop from her presentation at the WAND 10th Anniversary Consultation.



Edna Manley, *Worship*. Acrylic/pencil on paper. 20 x 16". Private collection.

Photo. Jamaica Journal 2011

"The Mother's Union feels that asking for issues to be attended to in a quiet way brings better results than making a lot of noise!"

The Mother's Union in Barbados was formed in 1913, as an off shoot of a Central Organisation formed in the United Kingdom. It is now one of the largest groups in Barbados with a membership of over 2,500 women. Membership is now open to unmarried women as well as married women with a stipulation that they must be communicants. In carrying out its programmes the Mother's Union has networked with other organisations, for example, the Soroptomists. We have done so in recognition of the social problems and have therefore moved out from the narrow role of assisting mothers in the upbringing of their children. Strong sisterhood has been built; any member wearing the Mother's Union pin can access assistance from any Mother's Union branch. The broad objectives of the Mother's Union include: upholding Christian principles; bringing up children in the

Christian way; promoting conditions favorable to family life; assisting those in adversity.

The Mother's Union works closely with Government, but regards itself as *non-political*. The Minister of Women's Affairs seeks their support and action on issues. Some which we have taken up are: lobbying for 'dub music' to be disallowed on public transport, particularly for school children, and closed court hearings for women victims of sexual violence; attending to training and behavioural patterns of children; assistance to the elderly, to ensure that money goes into areas needed; and provision of a reception centre for abandoned children.

The Promises

When a new member joins the Mother's Union she makes her promise before God as a solemn commitment to a way of life. This fact is often not realised by those who think of the Mother's Union members as the parish caterers. A new member promises:

- To stand by the undertaking to try and live a Christian life which was made at her baptism.
- To uphold and support the objects of the Mother's Union with God's help.
- To plan her life to include worship in church, prayer and Bible reading.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE MOTHER'S UNION AND THE CHURCH

The Priest says, "The aim of the Mother's Union is the advancement of the Christian religion in the sphere of marriage and family life".

Underneath that legal wording there is something of great importance. For the first time the Mother's Union has stated clearly that its prime aim is "the advancement of the Christian religion". We are not trying to recruit members into our society but to help them to know Jesus Christ and to find Him within their own marriage and family life, and we can only begin to do that by trying to show the love of Christ ourselves, within our own family and to all those we meet. Of course, none of

us feel able to do this adequately. We can only do it relying on the strength of Christ Himself through our prayers.

Now that the Mother's Union admits divorcees and unmarried mothers who are communicants, it is vital that all those joining the society really understand what responsibilities they are undertaking, what they are committing themselves to. So it seems sensible that we should base our preparation of new members on the Admission Service itself.

FIVE OBJECTS CONCERNING MARRIAGE

"To uphold Christ's teaching on the nature of marriage and to promote its wider understanding".

The Christian teaching about the lifelong nature of marriage is still the first of our objects. Today, marriage is threatened on all sides; some even consider marriage unnecessary if the relationship of a couple is stable. While new divorce laws make divorce so easy in many countries, it is now possible for women to be divorced against her will. Nevertheless, most couples when they marry intend it to be "till death do us part", but such are the pressures of today that many marriages do break down because young people have no example of a stable home life of their parents Christian marriage on which to base their own ideas of marriage.

When a marriage breaks down it is not for the Mother's Union to judge the 'sinner'. Jesus didn't condemn. He said "Go and sin no more". Our part is to show His love and compassion as we try to help divorcees to come through the bitterness of their experience, and perhaps, to build a Christian second marriage.

We promise to uphold Christ's teaching on marriage, but we also promise to make it more widely understood - to do something about it and not just hold up the flag. This object means involvement, means we all have to do all we can to explain what Christian marriage really is, to learn about it ourselves, to support discussion groups, study groups, or any other activity which tries to promote understanding of a healthy growing marriage.

CONCERNING CHILDREN'S MOULDING

"To encourage parents to bring up their children in the faith and life of the Church".

No matter what sort of religious education a child gains at school (if any) it is the parents' teaching in the

very early years which is far more important, and this covers training in the Christian faith, worship and Christian behaviour. Many parents feel inadequate to undertake teaching of this sort and here is one field where the backing and fellowship of other Church people can be so very helpful. Many Mother's Union booklets are produced to meet exactly this special need.

Don't let anyone be content with saying "I'll let my child choose about religion when he's old enough to understand". We don't let children choose about the things we regard as important like cleanliness, diet, clothing, schooling and so on. We try to pass on to them the things we value, and what is of greater value than the growth of a child's soul? But we have to be sure of our faith before we can pass it on.

INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF PRAYER

"To maintain a worldwide fellowship of Christians united in a prayer, worship and service".

This is the proof of all Mother's Union commitment. Prayer and worship as the foundation of marriage and family life, and expressing itself in service for others. The Mothers' Union offers its members help and encouragement in their study. Through the Wave of Prayer we pray for members around the world. The Worldwide Mothers' Union prays for us in Barbados. It is stimulating to belong to a worldwide society and to be interested in family matters outside our own particular diocese.

SOCIAL ADVOCACY AND PRAYER

"To promote conditions in society favorable to stable family life and the protection of children"

This object covers the social problems work undertaken by the Mothers' Union as a society pledged to concern for marriage and family life. All legislation before parliament, which in any way affects conditions for women and children is carefully examined, and if necessary, the Mothers' Union submits recommendations to the Government Department concerned. The Mothers' Union voice is heard on the various problems of today - abortion, VD, drug taking, adoption, battered wives and babies, children watching TV and so on. Our Reception Centre project fulfills this object.

As Mothers' Union members we try to be informed about these problems and support by our prayers what is being done to solve them.

GOD'S LOVE IN HARD TIMES

"To help those whose family life has met with adversity"

This object involves all Mothers' Union members in practical concern and understanding for families in any sort of difficulty. Many of us know from experience the tragedies and heartbreak that happen in a family and we remember the help and support we most appreciated then. This is what we, in turn, can sometimes offer to someone else in similar need, bringing our understanding and our conviction that God Himself upholds us through these dark days that come. This kind of help doesn't fit into any of the expert slots in the welfare state, but often it is the one most welcome.

The function and status of the woman in the Bible are very strongly influenced by the patriarchal form of family life which prevailed among the Jews in Biblical times. Fundamentalism accepts patriarchy as normative for the modern family. The woman's role within patriarchy is that of wife and mother.

While she is the object of love and honour within the family [Proverbs 1:8; 6:20; 10:11 Leviticus 20:9; Deuteronomy 27:16] and her authority within the family is second only to that of her husband's, she is essentially the bearer of children and the wife who satisfies the sexual desires of her husband whose name she comes to bear in marriage. Incidentally, marriage for the Hebrews was a transaction in which the authority over a woman was surrendered by one man to another.

Dale Bisnauth

'Interpretations': A Short Conversation



MADA WADADA, A REALITY OUTLOOK

By Sister Eleanor of Rastafari in Jamaica from her presentation at the WAND 10th Anniversary Consultation.

"Why is society annoyed by the presence of a group which not only strives to become self-sufficient but further cements its reality in a spiritual force originating in Africa, the beginning of mankind?"

In approaching this topic, I am not going to give an intellectual analysis but rather move from the reality of a movement of which I am a part. I therefore bring you greetings in the name of Mada Wadada - Mother Love - a movement guided and directed by King Alpha and Queen Omega.

The activities of Mada Wadada are in three major areas: the development of spiritual strength and understanding; creation and expansion of a strong economic base and widening amongst ourselves and others the knowledge of the Motherland, Africa.

As a Rasta woman we find it impossible to conceive of a woman's group i.e an organisation of women for women. We choose a different perspective. Guided by the major principle of King Alpha and Queen Omega, To Love one another as we would ourselves, we practise collective security and community. We teach one another to develop a sense of self worth and independence within this collective security, knowing that economic independence and personal spiritual growth has by principle revealed the full capacities of the woman, as every woman is a mother if not for her own children, for someone else's, and every man finds his mate in a woman. It is therefore possible for us to see ourselves as part of a WAND seminar which emphasises a basic purpose of altering the inequitable relationship between a woman and her objective environment.

CREATION STORIES AND THE STRUGGLE FOR SPIRITUAL GROUNDING

The creation myth of Adam and Eve is very similar to the African epic of Isis and Osiris which emphasises action rather than words. Similarly MADA WADADA, being guided by a way of life and thought, our present actions reflect years of thinking, visions and prophecy of in the main part, the male members of the movement. It is their groundwork on which we now build and consequently we are still going through the process of being freed by ourselves, our sisters and our bretheren.

I want to bring out the importance of two of the major areas of work in this movement, namely, economic and spiritual development. To do this I am going to focus on our members ourselves. Take one member, woman, mother of ten children, three different fathers, not an unusual scene in the scenario. Her contribution to MADA WADADA is a reality outlook, a knowledge that she still has a sense of personal dignity even though having to move from partner to partner to fulfill both economic and spiritual needs. Another member, widow of two children, economically strong, shattered by recent death of her husband, bringing to the movement again a sense of dignity and a need for some spiritual strengthening which she seeks in this religious grounding.

What am I saying here? How are these two sisters different from some rich celebrities who we read of from time to time? It would sound as if class and colour begin to take on added importance. No one is upset when the rich behave as the first example. Why is society annoyed by the presence of a group which not only strives to become self sufficient but further cements its reality in a spiritual force originating in Africa, the beginning of mankind?

As we encounter opposition based on class lines and religious orientation, we realise the strength of our determination and the strides that we are making and must make.

The woman aroused is a force to be reckoned with as she guards the future of her race and continuation of her culture. Consequently as we analyse our growth we notice that: internationally, more and more bretheren come to acknowledge of their sisters and allow her her freedoms. Internationally, more and more the sisters adopt new strategies to achieve economic independence, and consequently independence of their children. More and more, bretheren firmly grounded in the faith encouraged by this new source of strength, exhibit even clearer directives to the movement and religious growth. What we now need is access to economic sources which will allow for project development, allow for training in management and administration.

Africans are a people with a sense of the past. We also know where we want to go and we will not swerve from trying to do what we consider right.

We will continue to fight against those who attempt to denigrate or look down on our religion and our way of life, by both strengthening our economic base and deepening our spiritual prowess.

Let me close by wishing you all
Salaam Lekelu Kemu Peace be unto you.

RADICAL BEGINNINGS: ORIGINS OF CARIBBEAN METHODISM

"In England Methodism was a working class religion. In the Caribbean it became the religion of the mulattos."

Dale Bisnauth

At the time of emancipation the Anglican Church, Dutch Protestant and French Catholic churches were being encouraged by the colonial authorities to admit blacks into their congregations and to provide schools for the assimilation of ex slaves into an undisturbed social and economic power structure dominated by the white planter class and the colonial church.

In those years, the Methodists, Baptists and Moravians (called "non conformist" and frowned upon by the dominant Church of England) joined in the struggle of blacks to leave the plantations and establish an independent economic base for a new society. The symbolic movement of Jamaicans, for example, from the plantations to the hills was supported by non conformist churches who provided thousands of acres of land bought with church money.

It is not surprising then, that between 1831 and 1841 the Methodist Church in Jamaica doubled its membership. The Baptists tripled theirs in the same decade. As time went on, the training of black people as deacons, preachers and teachers within their congregations led to new fields. Black clerks, subordinate estate managers and schoolteachers took up these service occupations and their formative role in the creation of what would become the black middle class.

Where did the early radicalizing influence of the Methodist mission come from? In the article on page 18 by Clarice Barnes we hope to provide part of the answer.

The question still to be answered by all of us, and it concerns not just Methodism, is how can the precedents for Caribbean sovereignty found in the Caribbean cultural forms be recognised? What is the connection between spirituality and its political expression? As one participant lamented at the WAND tenth anniversary consultation last November, "There are black people wearing three-piece suits to breakfast! Can there be a Caribbean presence? Can we as *Caribbean* determine who we are, even as we live off other people's borrowed money?"

N.P



Colin Garland, Mr. And Mrs. Goose Goes Shopping.

CREATION STORY

I was created to be the wife of Bailey Smith and the mother of his children.
Sandy Elliff

Metaphysical teaching believes that man and woman together are a perfect creation. That the man, that is, the physical male being is representative of the strength of God. The female is the love-nature of God. We believe that God is neither male nor female, that God is father/mother God. The minute you begin to think of the fact that you've been told from the cradle that you are made in the image and likeness of God and then say "God is a man" how come we women are here? Something has to be wrong with the story. As soon as you begin to examine it and evaluate it you have to say 'But it can't be true'. There is nothing to support it.

Nancy St. John

Every one of our dieties has a female consort, and each one of them shares equal power. In the inner depth of the study of Hinduism, Manu, the first man in the Indian world has his body divided into two halves. The right side of the human body is the male side and the left side of the human body is the female side.

Deo Sharma

It hurts to think that we survived for 40,000 years and in 200 years nearly all died out. And the culture that we lost is heartbreaking ... I haven't got it (my 'dreamtime', my creation story). It would put me in with the rivers, the trees, the land. Here I am, an Aboriginal person, and I've lost my dreaming. (I have only fragments). I think from my mother, something about a snake, something about a tree.

Mary Pappin, Mutti Mutti of Australia.

St. Paul, went back to the creation story in order to draw. "... upon principles of proper leadership that are expressed in human sexuality ... God does not act arbitrarily. God didn't flip a cosmic coin in eternity and say, 'Heads, I'll make man first'. There was a plan to it. And when under the pressure of satanic assault, that order of leadership was reversed and Eve initiated action, the result was catastrophic ... It is no wonder that Satan assaulted Eve first; she was woman, made by God to be ever so sensitive to spiritual input. She was made to respond, and Satan lured her to take independent initiative."

George Peters and Michael Braun

The domination of nature means that the historical process of domination recreates within the psychic structure of individuals a second nature that presents historical domination as natural and unchangeable. Consequently, there is a difficulty at the center of the theory: how is it possible to recognize



Western art may have depicted Adam and Eve in an apple orchard in a rather warm part of the world.

"I would postulate the origin of modern man as a gradual spread, first to the Middle East and Australia and America. In my view, modern man who lived within the past 150,000 years originated in Africa."

Chris Stringer, British Museum quoted in New Scientist, October 1988



Detail from 'Paradise' Lucas Cranach the Elder 1472-1553

Photo: The Bible Story by Guy Daniel, Grosvenor Press Limited 1955

and Eve as undressed Europeans liming in an
England, but the latest in western science

people in Africa more than 70,000 years ago;
east, then probably into Europe and to the Far
west. All living people have a common ancestor
and it looks like that common ancestor lived

in National Geographic Vol. 147. No. 4,

internalized domination and still maintain that motives and experiences that demand a free society are possible? Critical theory turns to memory to ground the possibility of the critique of the domination of nature.

Pat Mills, *Woman, Nature and Psyche*, Yale U. Press 1987.

For millennia men have fought wars and the Blade has been a male symbol. But this does not mean men are inevitably violent and warlike. Throughout recorded history there have been peaceful and nonviolent men. Moreover, obviously there were both men and women in the prehistoric societies where the power to give and nurture, which the Chalice symbolizes, was supreme. The underlying problem is not men as a sex. The root of the problem lies in a social system in which the power of the Blade is idealized _ in which both men and women are taught to equate true masculinity with violence and dominance and to see men who do not conform to this ideal as "too soft" or "effeminate".

Riane Eisler *The Chalice and the Blade*, Harper and Row 1987

You cannot ignore the male role in heredity. It is men who make invasions, kill the defenders, seize their property, take the women as wives or concubines.

Milford Wolooff

Further verifying that there were ancient societies organized very differently from ours are the many otherwise inexplicable images of the Deity as female in ancient art, myth, and even historical writings. Indeed, the idea of the universe as an all-giving Mother has survived (albeit in modified form) into our time. In China, the female deities Ma Tsu and Juan Yin are still widely worshipped as beneficent and compassionate goddesses. Similarly the worship of Mary, the Mother of God, is widespread. Although in Catholic theology she is demoted to nondivine status, her divinity is implicitly recognized by her appellation Mother of God as well as by the prayers of millions who daily seek her compassionate protection and solace. Moreover, the story of Jesus' birth, death and resurrection bears a striking resemblance to those of earlier "mystery cults" revolving around a divine Mother and her son (or, as in the worship of Demeter and Kore, her daughter).

Riane Eisler *The Chalice and the Blade*

We will be working for years. There is so much to learn. But there is one strange thing. We have no evidence of fighting among the groups. They buried their dead, but the remains of dozens of individuals show no sign of people having been killed on purpose. This suggests a certain peaceful organization a certain agreement on the way to use the landscape.

Jean Clottes, director of prehistoric antiques, in the French Pyrenees

EMPOWERING THE DISADVANTAGED:

'THE WORLD IS A PARISH'

by Clarice Barnes



William Rhule, Healing The Sick 1981

Photo. Jamaica Journal Vol. 20 No. 4

"How long, O Lord must I call for help, but you do not listen? Why do you make me look at injustice? Why do you tolerate wrong? The wicked hem in the righteous so that justice is perverted."

Habakkuk 1 vs 2-4

Eighteenth century England was riddled with human crisis and contradictions. It was a golden age for the gentry who frolicked in luxury and privilege, controlling both government and the judiciary. On the other hand the common folk lamented a "birth to death horror".¹ Exploitation of the poor seemed a natural prop for the industrial revolution, a fundamental force of change for England and the rest of the world. Neither church nor state extended a hand of humanity to the desperate and hopeless marginalized majority.

It was from this context that the social prophet, John Wesley, emerged bringing a message of liberation and transformation. Wesley's unbridled attack on the issues of corruption, injustice, social and economic decay

which plagued England and its colonies made him extremely unpopular with the rich and with the Church of England. He persisted, despite persecution, to put his liberating message into action through the social programmes which included the establishment of orphanages, schools and the provision of textbooks, the first free dispensary in London and, significantly, a home for battered women.

The Church of England, then a haven of the privileged rejected Wesley and his new converts. Recognizing that the latter needed spiritual guidance and instruction, he organized them into groups called "societies". Another important institutional development was the subdivision of the society into smaller groups of members. These units, called "classes" put into practice a highly effective organizational system which became the hallmark of the Methodist people.

Each "class" had a leader, and the objective of these small families of believers was to share with and care for each other. This simple idea was indeed a fundamental social action at a time of widespread deprivation and degradation.

The idea for this self help method of social organization arose from a practical, material problem: how to settle the debt on the first Methodist meeting place. Members were asked to contribute one penny at their weekly meeting. Although the requirement must have been difficult in that economic context, the commitment of the "class" provided a model for the provision of spiritual, financial, social and pastoral sustenance. Strict self discipline, untiring service to others were nurtured in these small cells as were the literacy and leadership skills which became the ammunition for challenging and changing the perpetrators of injustice.

Other notable institutional foundations included the dominance of local or lay people in the preaching ministry (again emphasising the talent and skills of the person undecorated by money or academic qualifications), and a conference which brought together local and clerical leaders to evaluate the work and plan new strategies.

Methodist organizing has influences significantly other social movements and forces of changes. "There is no doubt that the cellular organization of the Methodist movement was almost its greatest strength and not only other religious movements, but the trade unions, the chartists, the labour movement and to some extent the Communist Party have paid it the compliment of imitating it."²

Of what significance was English Methodism to the Caribbean then?

Wesley's uncompromising condemnation of the slave trade contributed in some way to its abolition. In his "Thoughts Upon Slavery" he adopted a moral position which must have disturbed the merchant and planter class. He declared, "I absolutely deny all slave holding to be consistent in any degree with even natural justice. The whole business is pursued to get money and its excuses are empty and hypocritical. It is better that all the islands should remain uncultivated for ever - than they should be cultivated at so high a price".³

Antigua became the birth place of Methodism in the Caribbean when Nathaniel Gilbert a planter and Speaker of the House of Assembly became convinced by Wesley's teaching. Much to the horror of the plantocracy, slaves on the Gilbert Plantation were taught religion. English law decreed that a Christian could not be a slave. This and the challenge that the plantocracy perceived that the education of the slaves would present, made the early Methodists of the Caribbean the subject of much persecution. Sophia Campbell and Mary Allen (Alley), two black slaves converted with Gilbert along with his wife and sister-in-law were key leaders in the spread of that revolutionary flame in Antigua and throughout the Caribbean and America.

The Tradition of Women in the Caribbean Methodist Church

Women have always played significant roles in Methodism. A woman was present at Wesley's conversion. Women shielded him from angry mobs and have been trampled in his defence. There is no doubt that the message of social liberation which he conveyed impinged on every aspect of their lives. Methodist women in the region continued in this tradition. In Jamaica, Mrs May Ann Akle Smith who defended the visiting English clergyman Dr Thomas Coke from a drunken white mob, became the leader of the first society. Kitty Dorsett pioneered the work in Montserrat, Duchess Simons in Grenada, Ann Gill in Barbados and Mother Abel in Central America. This group of women stimulated tremendous social reform, anti-slavery thinking and leadership.

How has Methodism influenced contemporary Caribbean society?

Currently women continue to outnumber men in membership and they have also retained their hold on the top positions of the laity. Although the Methodists have led the way in the ordination of women, they are scantily represented on the clergy. One woman minister questions whether the move towards ordination is merely a response to an emergency since there is at present a shortage of Methodist ministers in the region. She also pointed out that male colleagues are not as accepting of the idea willingly, perhaps as a result of adherence to old testament teaching on women. If this analysis is correct it represents a serious deviation from the notion of equality of genders in the sight of God. Another concern is whether the Alley and Campbell spirit, remains in the hearts of those ordained or whether they are simply agents of subjugation for other women.

The self esteem and leadership training which the Methodist church offers through its teaching and organisation have produced leaders from its membership for all areas of society. In countries where Methodism is dominant, the majority leadership in schools, hospitals, social services, the judiciary, the civil service are drawn from its membership. Does this make a difference to the style of management and the quality of people being nurtured in our region? Do people who call themselves Methodist demonstrate in their real lives the same tenants upon which Methodism took its form? What type of politics are they supporting at this time of crisis in the region? Has the politics which concerns itself with liberation of the poor and marginalised informed the policies which these Methodists advocate?

Methodists around the Caribbean and Americans have celebrated two hundred years of the Church's presence in the region. It is one of the oldest regional institutions, indeed its itinerant ministry and the unity which it demonstrates as a Conference transcends national barriers. An example of the regionalism so often mouthed by politicians.

How does this regional connexion/church as the Conference is called, respond to the needs of Caribbean today? Wesley's vision was for the building of a group committed in belief and action to transforming society. Yes, schools, day care centres, and work with the elderly are some of the social provisions of the church, but, if John Wesley returned would he be convinced that the people called Methodists in the Caribbean and the Americas exist more than in name alone?

1. The Man from Aldersgate (1982) Friends of John Wesley

2. Davis R, (1963) Methodism Epworth London.

3. Craton M, et al (1976) Slavery (Abolition and Emancipation), Longman, Lond, New York.

The author gratefully acknowledges the assistance given by Rev. Wycherly Gumbs, Chairman of the Methodist Conference of the Leeward Islands District. His monograph, Methodism: Its Root and Fruit provided the basis for this article.

AFRICAN MIRRORS IN CARIBBEAN MANSIONS



Photo: Camera Press: Adrian Boot

"In our societies there are many African women who belong to African religions (Orisha, Baptist, Indigenous Church of God, Pocomania) who are being ignored in our councils".

Helen Pyne Timothy, speaking at WAND consultation.

The evolution of Afro Christian religions was the process through which different religious philosophies met and took on new forms which became part of and resembled the mass culture of the West Indies.

These Afro Christian cults provided "mirrors" into which the emerging creole society could look and see images of resistance to an ideology of servility.

Kumina, Mayalism

Came from the Ashanti, through the Kumina ritual, the spirit of the ancestor takes control of the dancers body communicating hidden knowledge to the living. When black Baptists from the Southern United States, came to Jamaica, possession by the Holy Spirit and baptism in water were Christian aspects embraced by the transplanted African form.

Advocates of Kumina and Native Baptists formed alliances against the existing power structure several times in the course of Jamaica's history. The planters outlawed Kumina after emancipation recognising its connection with work stoppages on the plantations.

The suppression of Kumina failed. When in the 1860's the mission churches, worried about a dramatic falling off of their membership which had boomed immediately after emancipation, attacked the population with a strategy of mass conversion, the result was an African revival "with oral confessions, trances, dreams, prophecies, spirit seizures and wild dancing". (*C. Sunshine*) Kumina became Pocomania, which in turn had its influence on Rastafari to come with the message of Marcus Garvey in the 1930's.



Marcus Garvey

The theme of repatriation was a powerful element of Garvey's message. His slogan, "Africa for the Africans, those at home and those abroad," resounded around the world as the colonial powers completed their scramble for Africa. Garvey defied the whole system of white domination, at the same time challenging blacks to build themselves up as a self-reliant, proud people. His movement soon incurred the enmity not only of white America but also of the black intelligentsia, which feared the strength of his openly race-based appeal. He was arrested by U.S. federal marshalls on trumped-up mail fraud charges, imprisoned for two years in Atlanta and deported to Jamaica in 1927.

C Sunshine, The Caribbean Survival Struggle & Sovereignty, EPICA Publication 1988

* Migene Gonzales-Wippler, quoted in the Caribbean Survival, Struggle and Sovereignty, Catherine A. Sunshine.

Vodou

The people of the Dahomey region of Africa brought with them to Haiti the worship of their *voduns*. The planters imposed the French *Code Noir* in an attempt to instill Roman Catholic right over the slaves. "Latin Liturgical rituals meshed with the traditional rites of dancing and drumming until Vodou became an Afro Christian religion, widespread at all levels of Haitian society as a form of popular resistance to domination by the European/Christian value system." (*C Sunshine*)

Shango/Santeria

"During the course of their captivity (in Portugese colonies), the Yorubas started to recognise their gods behind the white facade of the Catholic images". So it came to be that Yoruba *orishas* and Catholic saints dwell together. Chango (Shango) the Orisha of Fire and Storms is identified with Saint Barbara. Olorun-Olofi, the Creator, with Christ. Oggun, the Orisha of Iron and War, St Peter. Santeria evolves a magical use of herbs and ritual objects for healing or casting spells. White Portugese and Spanish creoles took up the practice and in Trinidad its influence on creative expression is widely acknowledged in the defiant tradition of *kaiso*.

BLAZE A FIRE



Profiles of Contemporary Caribbean Women

NESHA Z. HANIFF

Sister Vision
Black Women and Women of Colour Press



HINDU WOMEN'S ORGANISATION, TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

By Brenda Gopeesingh from her presentation at the WAND 10th Anniversary consultation.



Mallica Reynolds, Revival Goddess Dina-1968.
Lignum Vitae-H34-Collection: National Gallery of Jamaica

Photo: Arts Jamaica Vol. 3 No. 3 and 4

“Traditionally, the Hindu woman has seen herself as the backbone of the family life”.

Brenda Gopeesingh

“Let all the women stay home and I am sure the church will be empty”.

Undine Gollop.

“The women are working, they are the backbone of this society, as everybody says. Why take them from the backbone and put them on the side and pay them? Pay them for what they are already doing in a just and fair way”.

Nesha Haniff.

East Indians first arrived in Guyana in 1938 and in Trinidad in 1845. They brought with them ‘Hinduism’ which is more than just a religion. The proper name of the faith is Sanathan Dharma. “Sanathan” means eternal and “Dharma” means religion or way of life. Thus Hindus have formed part of the population of Trinidad and Tobago for almost a century and a half. Today, Hindus comprise between 25 and 30 percent of our population of 1.3 million, that is, 330,000 – half of whom are women.

Few of the early Hindus had any formal education and originally Hindu girls were not permitted equal access to formal education. However, over the past quarter of a century the sexes have had equal opportunities for education. And our women have acquitted themselves creditably.

Traditionally, the Hindu woman has seen herself as the backbone of family life, self-less and ever present in the family crisis, one of her major roles being the preserver of culture. She is generally seen as an extension of her husband, not as a person in her own right. Although she has made strides in her level of education thereby increasing her presence in the workplace at higher positions, her image for the most part remains unchanged.

Many of us have come to take our pride and liberty in pursuing our religion for granted. We tend to over-look the fact that the terms on

which Indians entered the society relegated us to the lowest occupational status. Furthermore this low status was duplicated by our entry into the towns thereby conferring upon us a low level of self-esteem. We should not lose sight of the fact that the Indian woman too did not escape the oppression of indentured labour.

The Indians, however, refused to accept the low regard in which they were held. In doing so, they socialised mainly with those of their own background and culture. Their religion provided them with a shield which protected them from derision and contempt which emanated from the rest of the society. These factors more than any other explain the late entry of the Indian into the major areas of social and political life.

It is no surprise therefore that our women are reluctant to participate in an organisation that is deliberately setting out to focus attention on themselves and what they are doing. Our women have been strengthening the foundations on which they themselves have been existing for generations without self-awareness and without any conscious need that their contributions be recognised. That seems to be the major part of the work we had to do: to make our women see the necessity to be recognised as women; to awaken them from their apparent indifference to what is going on around them in terms of the wider society. Very little response came from the Hindu women on the contentious issue of Clause 4

of the Sexual Offences Bill*, the implications of which related to us as it did to all the women in our country.

limited to the practice of one's religion but embraces social and cultural habits which are so closely related to the faith.

FEMALE PURITY AND PRESERVING THE CULTURE

Within Hinduism, the epitome of woman's morality was tested in the Ramayana, the Indian holy book, where Sita Mata (Mother Sita) demonstrates the purity of the person who has to be the carrier and transmitter of tradition. It is said that when the farmer was ploughing his field his ploughshare hit a goblet. In the goblet was all the necessary biological material for the formation of a child.

He took the goblet to his king. When the time was right for the child to be born, the king cracked it open and Sita came into the world. King Januk became Sita's adopted father. She was raised and married to Lord Rama, who was the incarnate of Vishnu to come rid the world of evil. In this case evil was a king named Ravana, who was a raphinos, a person who cannibalizes other human beings in the process of belief. Sita was kidnapped by evil Ravana and taken to his Kingdom in Sri Lanka. But because of her purity and goodness he couldn't molest her or sexually assault her in any way. That goodness was overwhelming and he couldn't get close to it.

Dr. Deo Sharma, is a Clinical Applied Psychologist, a Bridgetown businessman and an Author of The Vedas and the Psychology of Managing Human Resources.

We are looking at something that is environmental, genetic, biological. Indian women have been transmitted this information from generation to generation, that men are generally not compatible in terms of physical strength as women are. And while they have this information, they do not use it. Instead, they propagate that person whom they call a husband, son or father into into a position of strength; not falsely, mind you, but into a position of strength and then court that behaviour to continue to be reflected in the world's view as a strong, male, dominant figure, but it isn't really. I am yet to see an Indian man who dominates his family.

Deo Sharma.

From
Zòt fouten twòp
You too fas'
To Woman step forward
To Woman
Equal in Defense
Huh
You tink it easy?

Merle Collins, Because The Dawn Breaks

In our efforts to mobilise the Hindu woman, we are becoming aware of the very attitudes which prevailed towards the women who spearheaded the organisation of the '60s. There is a quiet doubt about our motives – whether we are encouraging women to neglect their families, whether we would cause women to control their men and so on.

In spite of this, we should acknowledge the count-less numbers of our menfolk who are truly supportive of our desire to stand side by side with them rather than one behind the other.

REASONS FOR ESTABLISHING THE ORGANISATION

To date Hindu women are still not represented in public life in proportion to their percentage of the total population. Thus, at the conclusion of the First Caribbean Hindu Conference held at the St. Augustine Campus of the University of the West Indies in April 1987, a few women discussed the idea of establishing a body which would deal specifically with matters affecting the Hindu women and her relationship with the wider society.

In particular, these women recognise that the average Hindu woman has had little experience in the Hindu bodies and thus was even more reluctant to participate in other community and national bodies. It must be pointed out that the Hindu way of life is not



Applique wallhanging with Carib motif, Grenada. Betty LaDuke, Companeras

* Popularly known as "Clause 4", referring to a section of a bill tabled in Parliament dealing with the right of a married woman to charge her husband with rape. The clause created a furore in Trinidad and Tobago in 1986.

STRATEGIES AND TACTICS OF THE HINDU WOMEN'S ORGANISATION

By Brenda Gopeesingh

"I say this as a Guyanese first of all. I say this second as an Indo-Guyanese. When regional men and women use the issue of race, particularly in relation to Indo people of the Caribbean is very sticky and one that relates also to the study and structure of women in the Caribbean.

I would like to suggest that we have more than a token presence in Caribbean women's conferences and Caribbean studies. I would like to suggest also, that the number of Caribbean people of Indian descent is roughly one million in an area where there are five million people.

There are five hundred thousand invisible women in the region who are silent and marginalised and it is an issue of all us sisters here to look after and look out and advocate for those women."

Nesha Haniff speaking at WAND Consultation

ISSUES CONFRONTED

The HWO took issue with various national organisations on the inequality of treatment meted out to the Hindu Community and by extension of the Indian community. It must be pointed out that the African and Indian populations of Trinidad and Tobago are about even - 42 percent each.

For example, the National Commission on the status of Women launched with the the UN Decade for women did not include a single Hindu woman.

A local television series "Women Today" highlighting issues affecting women was abruptly terminated after nine of its thirteen episodes had been televised.

In particular, the hour long programme which was taped several weeks before the axing, was never shown while the issue on African women, which was taped shortly before the series was terminated, was aired. This lack of sensitivity by the authorities caused much public debate and the lone state-owned television station, under new management, subsequently produced another hour long feature which was aired at Divali¹.

When President Hoyte² visited Trinidad and Tobago last year at the invitation of the Sanathan Dharma Maha Sabha which prides itself as being the largest Hindu body in our country, numerous organisations staged a mass protest demonstration on the grounds that the Hoyte Government had openly discriminated against the Hindu and Indian communities in Guyana. The Guyanese people had been denied free and fair elections and President Hoyte's government had been guilty of numerous rights abuses. The HWO issued a release outlining its objections to visit and also joined in the protest demonstration.

More recently, the HWO complained to Sport Aid International about the exclusion of Indian cultural items on the 6-hour telecast aired to almost 1 billion people world-wide on September 11, 1988.³ The London Body agreed that Indian items be included in the programme but this decision was not implemented by the local organisers.

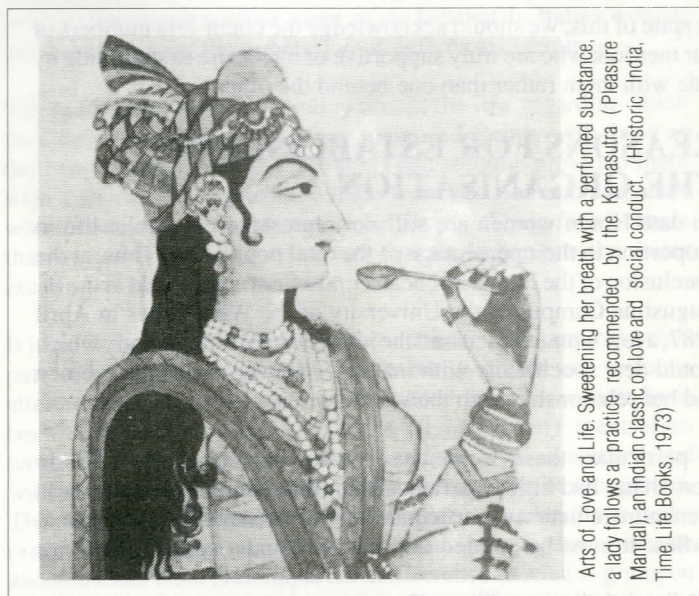
On the more positive side the HWO joined in the National Beautification project when 150 poui trees were planted along the nation's highway. In October 1987, the HWO held a function to launch the UN Decade of Culture.

This organisation has also proposed to the authorities the need to review and update the Hindu Marriage Act which was passed in 1945 in order to take account of the social, religious and legal developments in the interim.

LIMITATIONS

The general feedback is that many Hindus agree that there is a real need for a body such as ours. However, we still face many obstacles, in the first place, there are conflicting signals regarding the role of the Hindu women. Secondly, men feel threatened by assertive and outspoken women. Thirdly, our own women are not supportive of their sisters and fail to observe the kind of clublike loyalty of men to their own kind. Finally, many of our Hindu people are unaware of the militant and vibrant women's movement that exists in India today and do not understand that sweeping social changes have taken place since our forefathers left there.

Among the projects planned for the coming year are professional counselling and advice for our women on social and family problems and the hosting of a series of lecture seminars to identify some of the real problems which plague our women and to propose solutions.



Arts of Love and Life. Sweetening her breath with a perfumed substance, a lady follows a practice recommended by the Kamasutra (Pleasure Manual), an Indian classic on love and social conduct. (Historic India, Time Life Books, 1973)

1 Hindu Festival of Lights 2 President of Guyana. 3 Telecast on TTT.

HINDU WOMEN'S ORGANISATION GOALS

The principal objectives of the Hindu Women's Organisation of Trinidad and Tobago are:
To uphold and promote the ideals of dharma (righteous action) and the tradition of Hinduism.
To improve and positively project the image of the Hindu women in Trinidad and Tobago and abroad.
To inform and educate the general population on matters pertaining to the Hindu Women.
To create an understanding and an awareness in the society at large of the role and contribution of the Hindu woman to the immediate community and to the wider national community.
To investigate problems facing the Hindu woman and propose solutions and to liaise with and provide data to national and community organisations charged with planning and implementing programmes and policies for the benefit of our women folk.
To make pronouncements on matters of national interest from a Hindu perspective and on matters of particular interest to the Hindu community.



Photo: Great Ages of Man Historic India Time Life Books 1973

In Hinduism, both a man and a woman share attributes equal to the other. Lord Shiva, for example, dances the Dance of Destruction which is characteristic of the female side of him; that is, when evil is so powerful that good is beginning to lose the battle, Lord Shiva dances, but he adopted the female side of the dance to destroy things evil."

Deo Sharma.

MAN-WOMAN RELATIONS IN RASTAFARI

Prepared by Dawn White (*Gender Relations in Rastafari Group*) and Joan French, *SISTREN Research*.

A project "Gender Relations in Rastafari" was carried out from January - June 1988 by Imani Safari of Sistren Research, and included a total of eighty-six (86) participants - elders and youth, urban and rural. Members from all the Houses of Rastafari were involved in the process as well as ones not affiliated to an organisation.

The task was to examine the nature of patriarchy as manifested in Rastafari. Although the Rastafari woman is "popularly" perceived as passive and lacking in authority, there are clear parallel between the rastafari woman's perception of herself, in rejection of those notions of importance, and those sisters in the wider society who are struggling to realise a system of true equality between males and females.

Participants met among their own sex in the first three sessions, to define their attitudes and perspectives on behaviour around which their daily lives revolve. In the final workshop, all the groups come together to analyse the findings relieved in the researcher's summary. Based on this reasoning, the following proposals for follow-up action to this preliminary process of self-analysis were put forward.

1. Follow-up reasoning and action around the gender issue is necessary for the development of an active network of ones identified during the course of the research;
2. Further research needs to be done on other issues which concern Rastafari, fear of documentation of Rastafari's essentially oral history should cease;
3. The Rasta woman should be allowed to advance without restriction from males. Covering the locks for instance, should not be mandatory, brethren should cease referring to themselves as head and females as tails and carrying this imagery over into their relationship;

4. Rastafari parents should take responsibility for initiating a knowledge of the faith in their children to encourage the development of another generation of conscious Rastafari;

5. Use of the Bible to definite roles and relationships needs to be careful, in order to minimise its influence in the subordination of females in general and the Rastafari women in particular. His Majesty's teachings need to be incorporated more practically into the doctrine.

6. A Resource Centre needs to be developed where one can obtain reference materials on Rastafari, this centre could channel information to rasta ones on a national and regional basis;

7. A mailing list/skills bank needs to be developed so that ones can communicate with each other and organise products for the advancement of Rastafari;

8. Locations for future meetings need to be identified;

9. Participants should take specific responsibility for tasks to ensure the continuation of the networking process;

10. Two working groups - one located in Montego Bay and the other in Kingston, should meet to discuss practical ways in which they can contribute to the development of a larger group. This group should eventually meet regularly to continue to address gender and other issues on concern and for clarification, eventually developing projects around which to mobilise for action;

11. Programmes which foster communications between man and woman need to be developed, in an effort to eradicate entrenched ideas that served to make the woman inferior to the man;

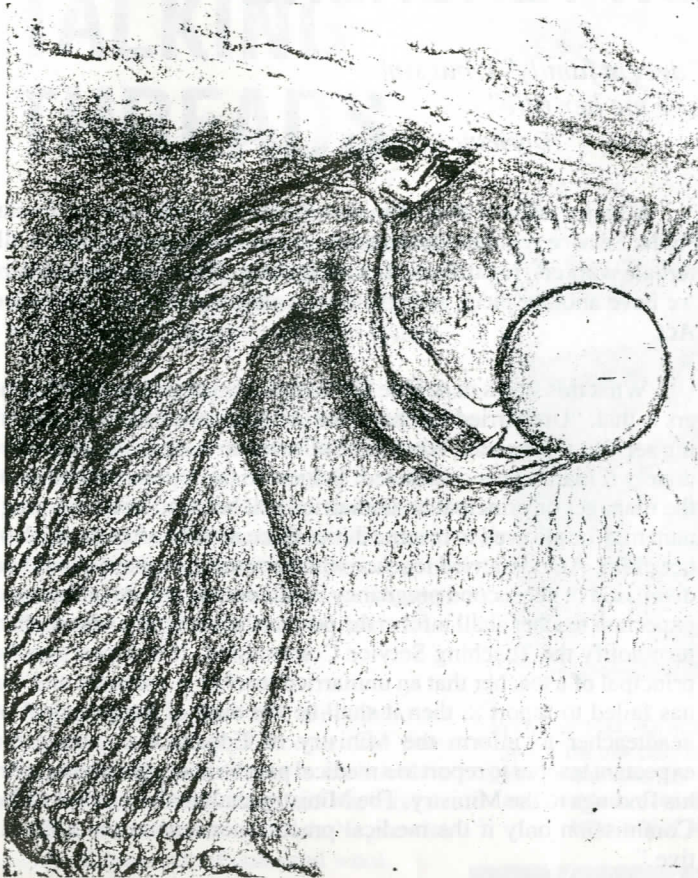
12. Rastafari mansions need to unite so that, as a whole, the nation can move forward.



Peggy Carr possesses a deep sense of feeling, and drawing from her varied technical and artistic experiences, 'Echoes From A Lonely Nightwatch' presents a fantastic picture of the social environment of her Caribbean with a vividness only the poet can create.
St. Clair Jimmy Prince, 1989

COMING SOON CREATION FIRE:
An Anthology of Caribbean Women Poets.
Ed Ramabai Espinet Cafra from Sister Vision Press





"The Orb" by Edna Manley

Photo: Arts Jamaica Vol. 2 No. 2 and 3

"People are just living by miracles day by day"

Chaddis Stapleton, Rose Hall, St. Vincent speaking on the impact of the economic crisis.

A CODE TO LIVE BY

You of tender years can't know the fears that your elders grew by So teach your parents well.

(Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young "Deja Vu" Atlantic Records Corp. 1970)

A woman and her companion had a disagreement over their children's education. She was teaching them their prayers first and he wanted her to teach them the alphabet. He felt strongly about the issue, yet he didn't have time to teach them himself. She should do it, he said. From her point of view learning prayers, songs and rhymes was the beginning of learning to read, and children saying their prayers, like bathing their skin in the morning, was discipline for growing upright.

He won the argument but lost the cause because he wouldn't take the trouble to teach the children. She had to. He talked a lot about preachers taking people's money and the church keeping poor people in their place. She was unconvinced and did it her way.

The question of a woman's relation to God, through the socially created structures of religion, is a hard one. Many of the people we talked with in the preparation of this issue of *Woman*

Speak! were adamant that God was neither male nor female, or that God was both male and female, or that God was oblivious to sexuality. The problem is that religion is not.

A woman's fundamental experience of being is female. And nowadays it's fashionable to say that women's creativity, and labour is what makes the world go round. The female gender has great power. Why women will not use that power in a conscious assertion of our gender interests is a question that emerged in many discussions at the consultation. The mystery of the "historic defeat of women" is still unsolved but the power of mythology and religious symbolism in ordering men's and women's relations is there for all to see.

Even when the religious text does not condemn women, the social practice of religion is centered on the control of female sexuality within the framework of a workable social system. What is beginning to change is women's belief in the existing structures to provide for her welfare and the interests of the others she is responsible for. Realizing more and more that "men are also trapped in this horror", as one participant at the consultation put it, women are looking at our own testimony for alternatives.

STAND UP, STAND UP FOR TEACHERS

"My father was a (name of a "decent family"), but since I am a bastard, my mother gave me her title"

(Domestic worker)

In a number of Caribbean states in 1989 unmarried women are being harassed by the guardians of Victorian morality. We've had 10 to 20 years of political independence in most Commonwealth Caribbean territories. We've had legislation to protect the rights of all the children in our societies. We've had so much bla bla bla about Caribbean culture. But 14 years after the UN declaration of equality for women, unmarried female teachers find themselves annoyed by a moralistic minority. In the name of decency and development, these self appointed good souls are legitamised by a long and ugly collusion between those aspects of the church concerned with social control, those self-aggrandising elements within the lower middle classes as they clawed their way up the social ladder, and the pervasive misogamy which blights women's lives everywhere.

It is time to stop this hypocrisy. Unmarried teachers need support from their colleagues in the profession, particularly the support of married women teachers. They need the support of their unions, particularly the men in those unions who need to think about how it came to be that these regulations don't apply to them as unmarried fathers. They need the support of women in the church, the women's bureaux national councils of women and from the women's movement generally.

THE MATERNITY LEAVE ISSUE

Cynthia Satnay is a member of the general council of the St. Lucia Teachers Union. 80% of the membership of approximately 1,100 is female. At the national executive level, with the exception of the past president, all officers are male. On the general council, however, there are a number of women and Cynthia is president of one of the local branches. The following is adapted from her presentation of WAND's 10th Anniversary consultation.

A major issue is that of maternity leave. Under the St. Lucia Public Service regulations maternity leave should be granted to all female workers, regardless of marital status. However, for teachers we have another piece of legislation, called the Teacher's Service Act.

What this states in Article 23, Suspension of unmarried Teachers is that: "Unmarried teachers shall be suspended from the teaching service if pregnant, but will be allowed to resume duties immediately if marriage is contracted. Subject to the recommendation of the manager or principal an unmarried teacher who becomes pregnant may be allowed to resume duties three months after the birth of her child. An unmarried teacher who becomes pregnant should be dismissed in her second pregnancy if still unmarried. An unmarried expectant teacher shall inform the permanent secretary who shall in turn notify the Teaching Service Commission. If it appears to the principal of a teacher that an unmarried teacher is pregnant and she has failed to report ... then it shall be the duty of the principal or headteacher to inform the Ministry of Education ... cause the expectant teacher to report to a medical practitioner, who shall report his findings to the Ministry. The Ministry shall make a report to the Commission only if the medical practitioner reports the affirmative."

From 1987 our union has been fighting what some people call a losing battle. But I will point out some of the reasons why this whole article should be deleted. First, the present clause is discriminatory on the grounds of sex, marital status and profession. Second, it contradicts ILO/UNESCO recommendations of 1966 on the status of teachers. Third, the article is inconsistent with the staff orders which grant maternity leave to all public sector employees.



Weighing the heart of a priestess (left scale), jackal-headed Anubis balances it against a figure representing truth; baboon-like Thoth, on top of the scales, records the result. On the right is an offering of beef.

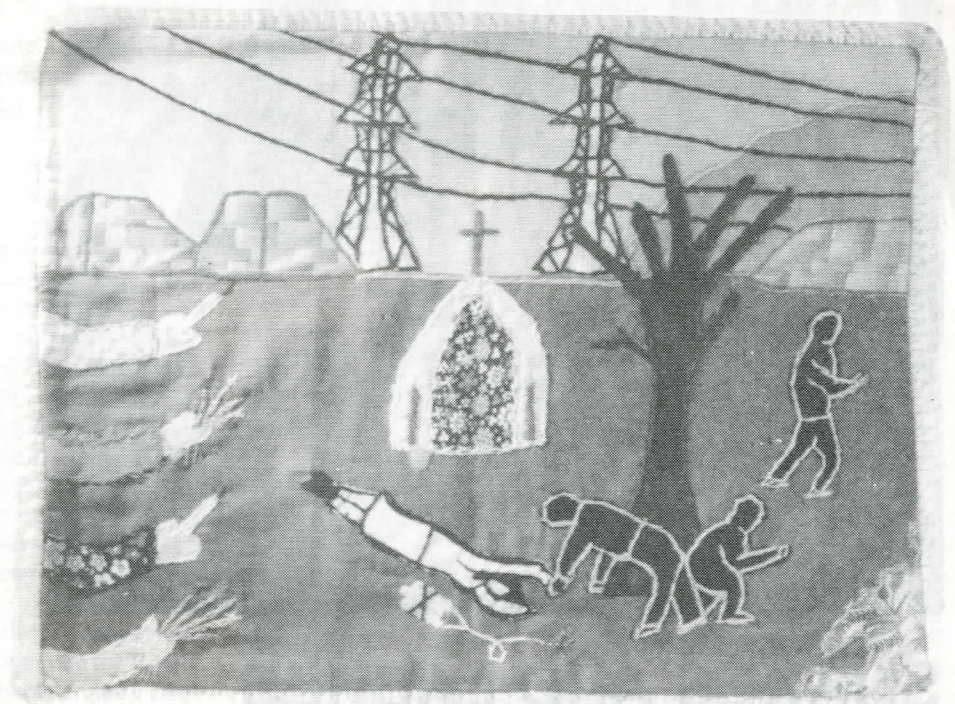
TALKING THREADS

Narrative patchworks made by Chilean women, *arpilleras*, are an artistic phenomenon symbolizing the power of those without guns to protest and resist facism.

Since the military coup in 1973, which threw down the democratic government of Salvador Allende, women in Chile are helping sustain a popular movement for social change. With needle, thread and piles of scraps, they are keeping an historical record of everyday life under the military regime as well as creating powerful visual images of people's feelings of despair and resistance.

Guy Brett in his work on popular art and modern history, *Through Our Own Eyes* traces the precedents to traditions in folk art (decorating bags and baskets) as well as to a community on Isla Negra who made pictures out of coloured wool.

He suggests two "points of origin" for *arpilleras*. One, the mothers and grandmothers of young people taken away secretly by the DINA squad, would go the church office in Santiago, hoping for legal assistance. Encountering each other in their often futile search, they formed themselves into a protest group, "the Families of the Disappeared". Meanwhile, among the women of the shantytowns, starvation threatened. They were desperate for an economic resource to support their families and the church assisted in the establishment of small projects such as laundries and soup kitchens. Arpillara making became therapy sessions for both groups, and by purchasing and distributing the patchwork the church facilitates some modest income generation as well as helping send out a message from Chilean women to the world.



In Chile in 1984, the military claimed that Maria Loreto Castillo died while planting a bomb under electricity pylons. The true story is recorded in this arpillera. She had been arrested by the secret police, beaten and blown up with dynamite. The evildoers creep away, while, by contrast, hands offer flowers, "... these flowers are thrust toward the victim as if from a human world outside the dark incident. The gesture is really the same kind of action as the sewing and making of the patchworks themselves." Guy Brett

Photo: Through Our Own Eyes, Guy Brett, New Society Publishers 1987



The Angel Gabriel, embroidery by Vidoutie, Red Thread. In the English-speaking Caribbean this women's group, based in a number of Afro and Indo-Guyanese communities, is committed to democratic working relationships and the belief that "the aesthetic matters".



Photo. Through Our Own Eyes, Guy Brett, New Society Publishers 1987

Mamba Muntu – the mermaid, the most popular subject of all with working-class buyers of Shaba painting, By Kalema

SNAKES AND LASHES

By Nancy St. John

“There’s a second part to the golden rule that’s not in the Bible ...”

I hate snakes and for me it’s a bad image too. But why do we hate snakes? It’s because of this same creation story. We’ve been brainwashed into thinking that snakes are evil. As Eve is evil and the word ‘evil’ has come from ‘Eve’. Hence ‘all women are evil’, Hence, ‘women can take men to an early grave,’ and ‘a deep dark hell’. That is why men have been permitted to beat women, to illtreat women, to abuse women, because of the fear that ‘woman smarter than man’. Men are brainwashed with that. The only power they have over women is physical strength.

Why does a woman allow a man to abuse her? I think she allows it because she thinks she needs to be punished. Women will go back again and again, and get licks again and again. I’m not saying she does it knowingly. She’s dealing with her subconscious mind.

This is why they tell you that if a man beats his wife, there’s a ninety percent chance that his sons will beat their wives. It’s in their subconscious. Somebody says something, it makes you angry and you get a reaction. Most men are penitent after they beat the women, you know. And the women go back. But, you see, the women don’t like themselves.

If we can teach that no man can do to you anything that you do not permit, and get that across to women ... You have no idea how many women have come to my group, used and abused. Do you believe in the golden rule? “Do unto others as you would that they should do unto you”. Well I totally agree with it, because it’s the principle by which you ensure that you bring back good into the world. You cannot do evil and hope that your harvest is going to be good. The Law says “As you sew, that shall you also reap”. But there’s a second part to the golden rule that’s not in the bible. And that says, “And do not permit others to do unto you what you would not do to them”.

MARY MAGDALENE: A MODEL FOR CARIBBEAN SPIRITUALITY?

By Sonia Hinds

“The most effective distortion of Mary Magdalene was complete. She has been made into the model of sin and immoral sexuality.”

Mary of Magdala or Mary Magdalene is first mentioned in Luke’s, account as one “... from whom seven demons had gone out” (Luke 8:2) ¹ In both Mark’s and Luke’s account Mary Magdalene is among other women including Mary, the mother of Jesus, who are “looking on from afar” at Jesus’ crucifixion. And if there is one thing that all four Gospel writers agree on, it was that Mary Magdalene witnessed the resurrection.

What we have seen of Mary Magdalene, then, according to Gospel material is one who was healed of seven demons and then one who was able to witness the most fundamental Christian experience _ the resurrection and according to John’s Gospel, the first to do so.

Mary Magdalene is more remembered as the woman who possessed seven demons than the woman who followed and ministered to Jesus and appeared on the day of his resurrection. One must question why the woman Mary Magdalene conjures up such negative feelings on one hand and on the other, she can be seen as a model of transformation, strength, faithfulness, and as embodied to make

sense of the crucifixion/resurrection experience the essence of Christian spirituality.

The church as a whole has dealt less than adequately with the demonic sickness of a woman who followed Jesus until the end of his earthly career. Demon possession in a woman, then, was interpreted as nothing else than unbridled passion, lust, carnality and licentious sexuality. Mary Magdalene's illness was identified as a sexual obsession and she was merged with a woman sinner.²

It seems that as a result the greatest – for women – the most effective distortion of Mary Magdalene was complete. She has been made into the exemplary model of sin and immoral sexuality. But wasn't Peter with his denial, Judas with his betrayal more vivid examples of sin and forgiveness? Or the corrupt tax-collector, Zaccheus? Would not the abandonment of friends or the cruelty of social injustice provide a better illustration of sinful human nature? It is interesting that Greek theologians, by contrast, consistently maintained the distinction among the three women and as a result have retained many multi-sided and colourful images of women. For us, under the influence of western European theology, we are still suffering from a theology that separates body and spirit and seems incapable of discovering humanity in its completeness and wholeness as God's good creation.

For us in the Caribbean the strength of the Mary Magdalene story attests to the resilience of the Caribbean woman. In the family structure which is predominantly matrifocal in character, the Caribbean woman plays a key role. Edith Clarke's book *My Mother Who Fathered Me* poignantly expresses the crucial role of the Caribbean mother.

Although women have not been able to achieve leadership roles in the older churches such as the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches, women continue to be very active in the missionaries and in some of the Pentecostal denominations. Even in the older churches, it is women that make up the majority in membership and play essential roles such as Sunday School teachers.

The women in the Caribbean, like Mary Magdalene, have a strength of character which forcefully suggests that transformation has taken place and as a result, leads to faithfulness and the essence of spirituality, making sense of the death/life motif in the Christian experience. This insightful nature of Mary Magdalene and of women in the Caribbean manifests itself in the older churches where women cannot yet exercise their fullest potential in the ordained ministry but yet even there women continue to offer generously the gift of liberation (healing, faithfulness, and transformation. Perhaps, however, like Mary Magdalene, their story would "seem ... and idle

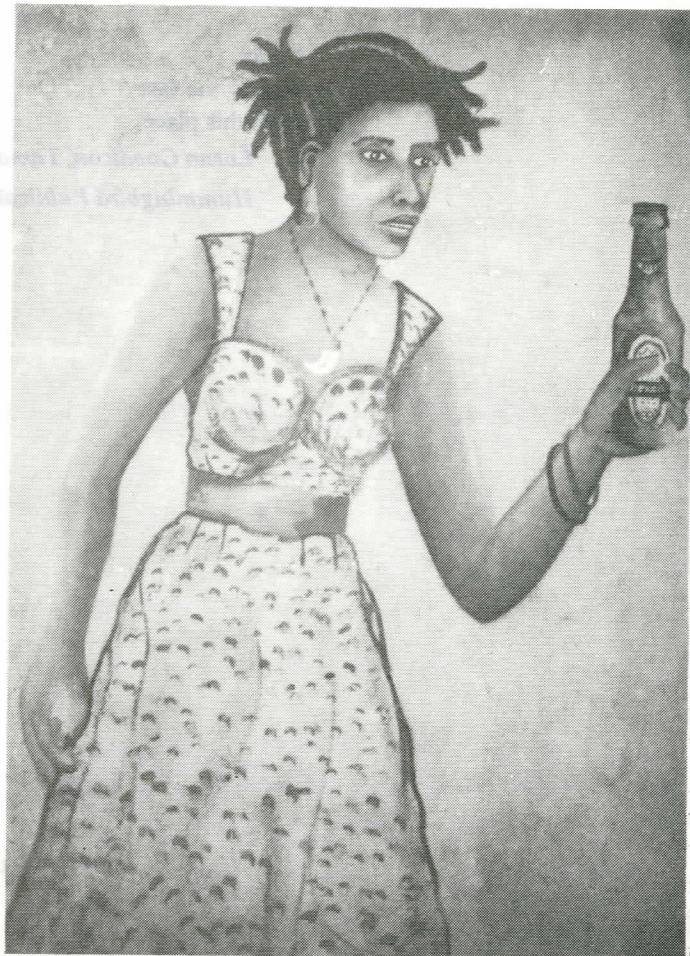


Photo: Ben Oelmann, *Through Our Own Eyes* Guy Brett, New Society Publishers 1987

Most popular and commercial painters are men. A strong, independent woman who breaks the social code is half admired for her freedom, half dispised for her looseness. Bar painting at Bo, Sierra Leone. Guy Brett

tale... and they too would not be believed" (Lk 24:11).

1 Then it was believed that any person who was possessed by demons had to be immoral or suffering from some serious illness. The reference to Mary Magdalene being possessed by seven demons probably emphasised either the seriousness of her condition or its recurrent nature.

2 It is interesting too that Mary Magdalene is constantly confused with the woman (whose name was not mentioned) in Luke 7:36, who was described as "a woman of the city who was a sinner ..." suggesting strongly that she was a prostitute.

me develop a lot since me first know him and him accept it. Him no try hinder me. To me is like di security draw me closer to him and den it becomes love, yuh understand? It reach a stage right now weh if anyting should a do him and him stop work and no have notten fi gimme, me still deh-deh side a him. Me no know if me go stop love him, for him change. Him change a lot!

Didi, Ole Massa and Me, Lionheart Gal

Heart
you fly too fast
from this place

**Lorna Goodison, *Tamarind Season*,
Hummingbird Publications, Institute of Jamaica, 1980.**

