



Peter Williams/WCC

**Do not fear...**...a patient being helped in a Christian hospital in Bucharest, Romania.

desperate, who often come to the services of healing on a Thursday afternoon, brought there by a last glimmer of hope.

But first, let us hear what some of the people who come seeking our help have to say: A young Sicilian poet, Nino Amore, (a pseudonym he chose for himself) comes from Germany whenever he can and fills our church's guest book with pages of Italian poetry. It helps him to get over his problems and his homesickness for Etna. Nino tells us that, years ago, he dreamt of a large church in a foreign city and when he entered the Elisabethenkirche for

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concerts by amateur bands, songs by the gospel choir, and a wide variety of classical and modern concerts are organized on all days except on Tuesdays and Fridays, when people meet for regular silent meditations.

The public has also shown a marked enthusiasm for the different forms of monastic plainsong.

Also, every day from Tuesday to Saturday the Elisabethen coffee bar serves a tasty lunch.

### Faith, hope and love

I am asked, "How much do you earn as a healer in your church?" I answer, "Nothing, materially speaking, but a rich reward from heaven in the encounter with people who are suffering."

We think of ourselves as a medium for the healing power of our creator, we do not promise miracles and certainly cannot force them; we are just "somebody who is there". We are there for people who have tried every treatment without success, those in pain, the heartbroken, the lonely, the

the first time, he knew he had found it. "This is home — *sono a casa*".

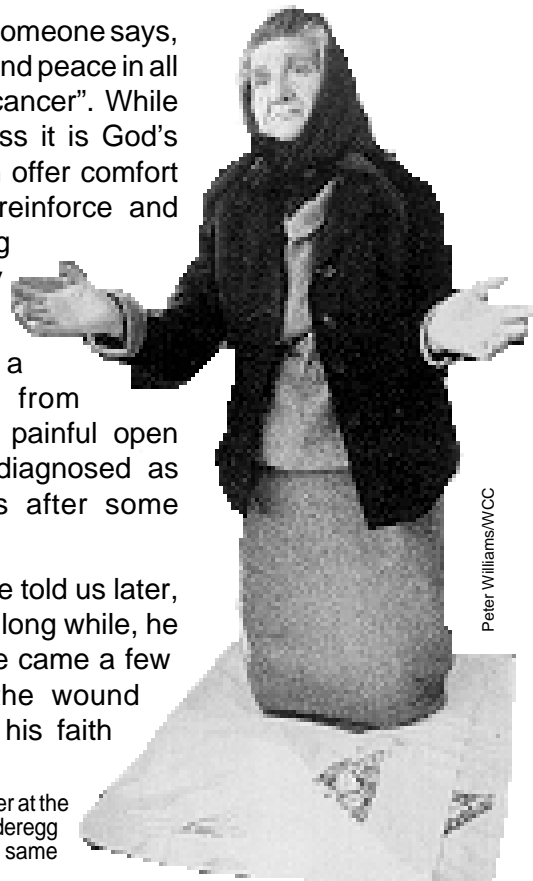
It is rewarding too, when someone says, "You're an oasis of calm and peace in all the fuss surrounding my cancer". While we can do nothing unless it is God's wisdom and will, we can offer comfort and love, which often reinforce and trigger the self-healing energies latent in every human being.

In another incident, a sceptical businessman from Zurich suffering from a painful open wound, which doctors diagnosed as "incurable" came to us after some coaxing from his wife.

That same evening, so he told us later, for the first time in a very long while, he felt the need to pray. He came a few times and, gradually, the wound healed. As Jesus said, his faith had helped him.

Rev HR Felix is an ordained minister at the Elisabethenkirche and Beatrice Andereg works in the healing ministry of the same church.

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## WCC PUBLICATIONS

### Margrit Christ

World Council of Churches  
P.O. Box 2100,  
1211 Geneva 2  
Switzerland  
Tel: 41 22 791 6111  
Fax: 41 22 791 0361  
E-mail: cm@wcc-coe.org

**Health, faith and healing: International Review of Mission** Vol XC Nos 356/357 January/April 2001.

This issue is a valuable resource and reference book for those who are interested

in gaining more information about the increasing interest in inter-cultural dialogue on the understanding of faith and healing.

Most of the articles published in this issue are the revised

versions of the papers presented at the consultation on 'health, faith and healing' at the Mission Academy of the University of Hamburg in Germany, June 2000. Price for one issue: SFr 12.50, US\$ 7.95, £5.25, EUR 7.95.

## WHO PUBLICATIONS

### World Health Organization

1211 Geneva 27  
Switzerland,  
Fax: 41 22 791 4167.  
E-mail: austinm@who.ch

**Man Cures, Gods Heals** by Kofi Appiah-Kubi. This book, is on religion and medical practice among the Akans of Ghana. Published by Totowa,

N.J. Allanheld Osmun in 1981. 173pp. ISBN 0865980011X.

**Health Medicine and the Faith Traditions** edited by Martin E. Marty and Kenneth

L.Vaux published by Philadelphia Fortress Press, in 1982. 350pp. ISBN 0800616367.

## OTHER PUBLICATIONS

### National Institute for Healthcare Research (NIHR)

Tel: 301-984-7162  
Fax: 301-984-8143  
web: www.nihr.org

**Handbook of Religion and Health:** Harold G. Koenig, Michael McCullough and David Larson.

This interesting and comprehensive book throws light on the positive and negative effects of religion on health from childhood to old age. The book attempts to analyze the effects of religion on physical and mental health through reviews and research, which include ailments like depression, heart disease, stroke and cancer. Published in January 2001, 672pp., \$52.00.

**The Forgotten Factor in Physical and Mental Health: What does the Research Show?** by David Larson and Susan Larson.

The book provides an excellent overview of the published research on spirituality and health and is a must for all those who are interested in learning more about it. Published 1994. 170pp. \$45.00

**Scientific Research on Spirituality and Health: A Consensus Report** edited by David Larson, James P Swyers, and Michael E McCullough

This is a compilation of the findings from NIHR's Consensus Conferences on spirituality and health. This work studies the science of spirituality and health in physical, and mental disorders. Published 1998. 185pp. \$50. A model curriculum for physical psychiatry residency training programmes.

**Religion and Spirituality in Clinical Practice** by David Larson and Susan Larson

A critical resource for any psychiatrist or health worker wishing to enhance their ability to assess and address their patient's religious beliefs as well as to understand the impact that these belief systems can have on their patient's clinical status. It is a unique model curriculum for psychiatry residency training

programmes. Published 1996. 100pp. \$35.00.

**Neglected Dimensions in Health and Healing: Concepts and Explorations in an Ecumenical Perspective** published by the German Institute for Medical Mission (DIFAEM)

This 97-page booklet is a compilation of articles that reviews the ecumenical discussion on health, healing and wholeness. It highlights how some of the concepts, terms and actions have undergone important changes over the years. Interestingly, the six articles that make up this booklet tackle different facets of faith and healing. It transcends the scientific and medical conception that limits health and illness as something that is just physical and encourages the reader to accept the issue in its social and religious-spiritual context. This book is available free of cost on request from DIFAEM.

# JESUS - THE MODEL OF HEALING

## MARK 5: 25-34

*Daniel Fountain from MAP International has contributed this thought provoking bible study.*

Jesus healed people as whole persons: body, mind, and spirit. We can do the same.

The woman with chronic bleeding was ill in the totality of her life. She had numerous physical problems – irregular bleeding for twelve years, anemia, weakness, and infertility. Her social problems were worse because she was unclean (Leviticus 15:19-30). Everything and everyone she touched became unclean. She was probably divorced, abandoned by her family, and without friends. Grief, depression, and anger at society and probably at God filled her mind. Spiritually she was cut off from God because no unclean person could go to the temple to worship or ask for help.

When she heard about Jesus, she determined to go to him even though she would make him unclean. Were she seen doing this, she could be stoned to death. Nevertheless, this was her only hope. When she touched his robe, she knew she was healed and turned to flee. Jesus, however, stopped her. Why did Jesus expose this woman publicly? He knew she had been cured. When I treat sick persons and they are physically cured, I am delighted. Why was Jesus not satisfied?

### The healing word

Jesus called this woman to come to him because she herself, as a person, had not yet been healed. Terror now filled her heart because she presumed he would condemn her. With great fear she came and told him her whole story. And Jesus took the time to listen! As she lay expecting a word of condemnation, she heard instead an incredible word, a single word that totally healed her. She heard Jesus say, “My daughter.”

What heals the broken heart and the wounded spirit? We have much technology to heal the body. But what heals the spirit? This story makes

it clear – a healing word. With her ears the woman heard Jesus call her his daughter. With her heart, she heard him say, “I love you. Come into my family. You are clean and whole.”

### The key to healing

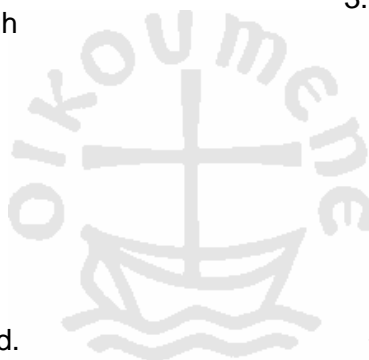
How did Jesus heal her, and how can we do the same?

1. Jesus used physical power to heal her body, and he has given us other physical powers – medicine and technology.
2. He listened to her story. He took the time to do that even though he was rushing to Jairus' house to save his dying daughter.
3. As he listened, Jesus discerned her real problems – total rejection, anguish, and despair.
4. He then knew the word her heart needed to hear, and he spoke that word.
5. He affirmed her as a person, and made it possible for her to return to her community as a whole person.

By listening to sick persons and discerning their heart's problems, we can be led by God's Spirit to speak the words of healing that will resolve the anguish of their heart. By restoring peace to the heart, the physical body will be strengthened and often healed. Proverbs 14:30 explains this – “A heart at peace makes the body strong; envy rots the body.” Scientific studies of stress and the influence that feelings have on our organs and immune system confirm this. Let us learn to be healers of persons as Jesus was.

### Question for Reflection

- As health workers how do we follow Jesus and be healers of persons in body, mind and spirit?



The 500,000 strong Ogonis, are a minority indigenous group in Nigeria who live on the north-eastern fringes of the Niger Delta. They are mostly subsistence farmers and fishermen and have preserved their land and rivers in a sustainable way for centuries.

In 1958, Shell –the international oil company - found oil in commercial quantity in Ogoni and since then have extracted oil from 98 oil wells. While Shell extracted approximately 900 million barrels of crude oil from Ogoni, the poverty rate in Ogoni continued to rise. Also relentless drilling for more than four decades have caused severe environmental problems and have resulted in high morbidity and mortality rates for the Ogonis. But who cared?

Contact No. 156 in 1997 on "Environment and Health" reported extensively about the events in Ogoniland and the close link

between human rights violations, environmental devastation and health. Since then many things have happened. One of the persons who has been closely involved with these events, **Owens Wiwa**, gives us an update on the situation. He worked as a physician among the Ogoni people for many years until he realized that all his clinical work was futile unless the political questions behind the ongoing human rights abuses were addressed properly.

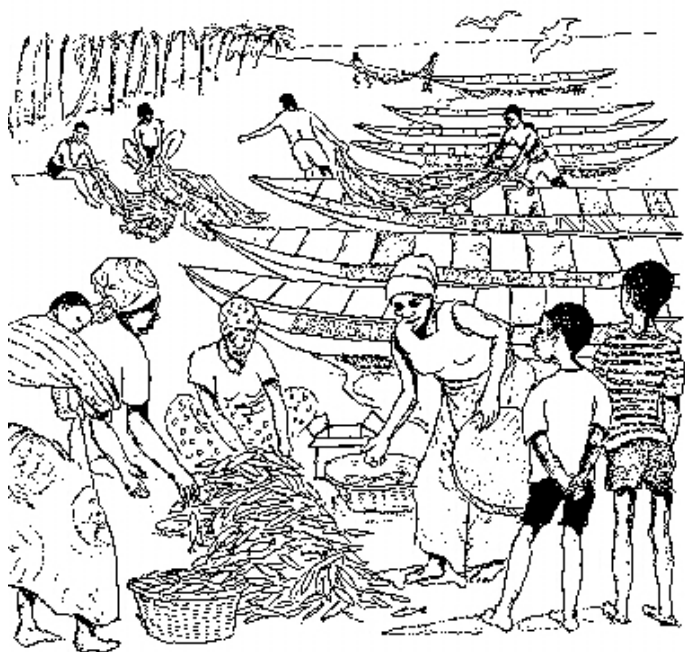
# Miles to go...

## The Ogonis struggle for justice



WICC??

**1990s** In 1990, the Ogonis formed the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People ( MOSOP) to campaign non-violently for a clean up of the Ogoni environment and to put an end to the political and economic marginalization of the Ogoni people within the context of Nigeria.



In 1993, the Ogoni people publicly declared Shell *persona non grata* and forced the company to stop its operation on their land. However, Shell, in alliance with the government of Nigeria, reacted to this development with policies and practices that resulted in the death of over 2,000 Ogoni peasants, the destruction of 30 villages, and the exiling of about 5,000 young and middle aged Ogonis.

Among the Ogonis killed were 9 activists wrongly hanged in November 1995 allegedly for murder which they did not commit. One of the activist was my brother, Ken Saro-Wiwa.

I was one of the Ogonis declared wanted for the alleged crime for which my brother and eight others were executed. Like many other Ogonis, I went into exile after the 1995 hangings. With the return of Nigeria to democracy in 1999, I made four trips to Nigeria.

### Return Visits to Ogoni

The first was made in June 1999, 12 days after the democratically elected government took office. During this trip , I met President Olusegun Obasanjo, who subsequently issued an executive order for the release of the remains of Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight Ogoni activists to their respective families.