

Prayers of Healing and Transformation – Viv Stacey (Contextual Spirituality Group)

In different places and within diverse groups there is a renewed interest and enthusiasm about creating prayers and liturgies. These prayers are often created, prayed and recorded immediately. They therefore have a freshness and spontaneity about them.

The contextual spirituality group in Cape Town recently created prayers for healing and transformation that were articulated and formed in a story telling process eg in the context of Ravensmead, with residents from a community in the Cape flats shared the realities of daily encounter with the problems of alcoholism and drug abuse. A question merged: How can we learn to facilitate this healing process of story telling in different contexts of need?

In our own experience we have found the following 2 insights helpful:

1 liturgical prayers help healing to happen

It follows then that facilitators need to anticipate the possible phases of this natural healing process and have at hand prepared phrases (e.g. We have heard a story...”) that easily spark off a response for participants.

The five phrases anticipated in our workshop and reflected in the format were:

Telling and listening to stories *-prayer of -acknowledgement*

Acknowledging and receiving what has been heard *-Prayer of receiving our stories*

Expressing our spirit's response – *prayer of response*

Discerning the movement of change – *prayer of transformation*

Re-visioning and rededication of ourselves *-prayer of consecration.*

In other contexts different phases would be more relevant

For instance, in situations where there is loss, the phrases reflected in the prayer may be the stages of lamenting, of letting go, and of moving on

2 To create together is to experience the Creator

The creative process is of itself a healing one. It draws people into the experience and draws out of them ideas and images that heal and reveal hidden truths about themselves. In the process each story is re visited a number of times and the group struggles together to articulate the kernel of it – what was this story really about? As the group's experiential journey continues the hidden truths wrapped in the story begin to merge and release their power to set us free.

The following exercise ?? is an example of Prayers for healing and transformation which were created through the process of story telling within a meeting of the contextual spiritual group feb 1997

Prayer of acknowledgement

We have come together to listen to each other and ourselves.

We have heard a story about crime and corruption that creeps into our daily lives.
We have heard a story about inadequacy and fear in the presence of people who seem more powerful and educated than we are.
We had heard a story about an independence that makes us feel that we must solve everything alone
WE have heard a story about self- imposed isolation where friendship is not expected nor asked for
We have heard a story about cultural barriers that block friendship and true community
We have heard a story about social prejudice that prevents us from hearing and accepting offers of help
We have heard a story about fear-filled memories that make us hesitant to respond to ordinary human needs
We have heard a story about indifference to the privilege of learning

Prayer of receiving our stories

We opened the ears of our hearts to hear
We opened the eyes of our minds to see
We felt the echo of the stories in our own souls

Prayer of response

**Our God who listens to us speak – without judgment fear or discrimination
you are mother to us**

You receive the stories of your children
You nurture and teach us through our stories
You understand the hidden parts of our stories you give yourself to us through them

Prayer of Transformation

Our truths are revealed in the telling and we are set free

Where there was unawareness, now there is conscious rejection of corruption
Where there was helpless inadequacy now there is regard for our own worth and gifts where there was isolation now there is freedom for deep friendship and living in community
Where there were cultural barriers now there is courageous reaching over them for relationship
Where there was prejudice now there is openness to hear and receive help from unlikely people
Where there were forgotten injuries now there is awareness of our frailty and desire for healing
Where there was ingratitude now there is a commitment to a culture of learning

Prayer of Consecration

discover life Through our stories we are made holy
We are in tune with each other
We rediscover God
Are challenged we admit our smallness

We know our greatness we become involved we come to our sense

story

In your presence

We see a society that respects and cares

We see ourselves vulnerable to each other we see ourselves embraced

We see ourselves stirred up

We see ourselves free from the past see our deep longing see our neediness we
see our wholeness

IN your presence we live in the world

Amen