

Ways in order to claim and re-claim our energy, spirit and resources to be a better part of the whole.

There are many ways to know God or the divine and our historical clashes are significantly rooted in these differences in ultimate meaning. For example, whether outside or inside the Christian tradition that African American history in this country tried to limit us to, I experience a primary spiritual expression for people of African descent to be human relationship. It is wide and deep--extending notions of family and clan, before birth and beyond death. This is the primary way we measure our well-being. This aspect of our Way is evidenced by our still being a deeply loving people after having our most treasured relationships trampled and put in the service of other peoples relationships. By the same token, one of the best ways to diagnose our spiritual disease is by seeing to what extent our relationships with each other are broken or abused.

My experience of white people is that a primary expression of their spirituality as a people is through their sense of security. The benchmark of well-being is in handling matter, in utilizing "resources" be they human ones, other living ones or inanimate ones. The depth of it is expressed in an ability to produce tremendous levels of resources

and its height in spiritual terms is seen often in a selflessness and deep generosity about how these resources are distributed and held sacred. Yet, their spiritual disease can be diagnosed by seeing to what extent white people abuse these resources and thereby undermine their own and others' security and survival.

Judging by the state of our respective communities--and I would extend this out beyond those two "peoples" into so much of our world--we are not very centered in the best of our Ways or clear about how they can respectfully inform each other in the service and best interest of us all. This at a time when our global history has brought us to a place where we have no choice but to be influenced by each other and to deal with the interconnections between ourselves and our Gods.

This is the work we are connecting with when we come together in identity groups and in mixed groups where we are more conscious of our particularities. I do not think we will solve the problems of the world. I do think can we create something we do not have when oppression is overlooked: a greater authenticity and shared power. Really naming and addressing one difference across oppression alerts us to the complexity of other systemic oppression--class, sexuality, religion. It is

a way to learn to keep some sense of wholeness as we take things apart and dream of different ways of doing things that are grounded in our histories and cultures as peoples.

When you come to WTC's groups for specific peoples, I think you will find loving family you may or may not recognize at first who want to explore your reality with you as a way to understand and value their own. You will find people who will do their best to love you and challenge anything that deepens the myth of separation. And when you choose to come to mixed groups, we expect we can all be there more secure in and conscious of our individual and collective selves. Only then can we commit to the difficult process of learning to share power across profound difference in a way that affirms our multi-faceted existence and chooses life for us all. #

*A note to our readers:*

*Imani-Sheila Newsome specifically requests that no one copy the womanist liturgies we carried in the Dec/93 issue of the WTC newsletter.*



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