

Integral Health Education and Counseling
Medical Ministry International
Elizabeth R. Seunarine, B.Sc. R.N. PHC Email: e.seunarine@mmint.org

MMI's IHE & C program is aimed at healing the spiritual and physical lives of patients through the teaching and modeling of whole-person health. This health promotion model is based on the fleshing out of the true understanding of SHALOM as God's plan for humanity. This is accomplished through all levels of teaching and whole-health promotion.

SHALOM

Shalom "Originates from the Hebrew root word "slm" signifying "a state of perfect health and salvation". Shalom is not static but something dynamic, "living perfectly, integrally in a state of well being materially and spiritually as much in the individual as in the community." Exodus 18:23(the people will go in Shalom) alludes to this idea. (Quotes from Bible Dictionaries.)

Judges 8, 9, 11 and 31 apply to the people of Israel. Shalom signifies good relations between persons, man and woman, man and Yahweh. The opposite of Shalom is not war but everything that would endanger the well being of the individual and the good relations between persons. Original sin and the sins of Israel disturbed the good relations between Yahweh and Israel. In the end times, the Messiah Jesus Christ will re-establish Shalom. Shalom has the feeling of Health or Salvation. In the New Testament, Shalom was used as the meaning of Peace, in key texts such as Juan 14: 27 (Jesus Christ is the one who gives Shalom, Health, Salvation). Ephesians 2: 14 state that Jesus Christ is our Shalom. In Galatians 5:22, Peace, Shalom is a fruit of the Spirit and of Justification. Romans 5:1. (Taken from Bible Dictionaries)

Jesus Christ is our Peace; He has destroyed the wall of separation and hate bringing the two nations, gentiles and Jews, together making them one in His flesh.

SHALOM IS SYNONYMOUS WITH INTEGRAL HEALTH

WHAT IS INTEGRAL HEALTH?

It is the concept, which describes the form of interaction between various components of our being. A person is made up of body, this is the physical part and of mind, this being a mental-emotional-social component. All of these components interact with the environment and forms a whole which rotating around the spiritual being gives as a result an integral entity.

It's difficult to imagine a state of "complete health" if one of these components are lacking. If a person believes he is in physical health but has strife with his neighbor, he isn't really in complete 'health'. In the same measure, if someone thinks he is in good health but mistreats the environment, a part of his health is missing. The integrity of health depends on the well being of the person in its TOTALITY. One component directly affects the other. Emotional factors directly affect the physical state of the individual. An example can be seen when tension factors are manifested in the presentation of ulcers, cephalias and chronic infections due to lower immunological status. When a person lacks peace within himself and with God, multiple insecurities ensue. In John 4, we find Jesus beginning a

conversation with a Samaritan woman. He starts, by using the physiological need of water to gain her trust. Speaking of water and Jacob's well, the conversation continues as they speak of the environment "where should the mount of worship be? Jesus continues unfolding the conversation and touches on issues of her personal life. When it is apparent that Jesus knows of her socio-emotional life, she recognizes His divinity. He offers living water and she finds her PERFECT HEALTH, HER SALVATION. The result is the birth of the first missionary. She runs towards her town to bring others to the man who offers LIVING WATERS. "Come, and see him who told me all about my life. Couldn't he be the Messiah?"

The kingdom of Shalom draws near when every creature is given the opportunity to recognize each component of his being taking responsibility for its total care and, defending it against every dysfunction. In this way, he draws close to his Creator and discovers the Spiritual Health that God offers, LIFE ETERNAL in His Son, Jesus Christ.

The biblical texts suggested in this ministry of Integral Health Education and Counseling speak of healing, curing of pains and brokenness. Isaiah 61 and 65 speak of liberation and of a new heaven and a new earth. As we offer solidarity, an extended arm and the GOOD NEWS of SALVATION, we participate in the PLAN OF GOD. We have to offer light in darkness, that is, the understanding of the prevention of disease, physical, mental, environmental and spiritual.

Each ministry of INTEGRAL HEALTH COUNSELING is a MINISTRY OF SHALOM, bringing souls, complete lives to the feet of God. For this and all, we conclude that INTEGRAL HEALTH IS AN EVANGELISTIC MINISTRY.

Elizabeth Seunarine. 1995

MMI:

MMI organizes one and two-week volunteer opportunities designed to serve the world's indigent and working poor who have little or no access to medical, dental and surgical care. Since 1967 over 35,000 MMI volunteers have served in more than 40 countries. The number of patients MMI treats in a given year is nearing 350,000. In addition, MMI residency programs in ophthalmology have trained scores of physicians from developing countries who return to their own nations to fill the huge gaps present in specialized care. On projects not yet supplied with Integral Health, Gospel literature is passed out in the waiting lines and local pastors are invited to share the Biblical message.

1986:

In 1986, I participated as a registered nurse, in a medical-surgical-dental project in the capacity of nurse practitioner. This was in partial fulfillment for the practicum required of the *International Health Program* offered to RNs at *Seneca College in Toronto, Ontario, Canada*. The emphasis of this training was in Primary Health Care and Community Health Internationally. On the project, I examined patients taking histories and physicals and doing primary diagnoses in conjunction with the present physicians. As I listened to the patients, I realized that more than 75% of presented cases were symptoms of preventable diseases. I saw the need for patient education. The lack of understanding of disease etiology, mind, body and soul was evident. I was mostly investigating and analyzing educational needs, offering explanations and prevention when pertinent.

The patients and I prayed together. Many patients demonstrated symptoms which were somatic manifestations of emotive/spiritual problems i.e. insomnias and gastric ulcers. When stories of broken homes or family death came up, tears were shed and the patients

would invariably demonstrate the need for verbal catharsis. It was quite obvious to me that in the system of patient flow within these roaming clinics there was inherently a lack of time and opportunity for bringing this type of healing to the whole person on a wide spread basis. The press of the hundred and fifty person-line at times did not allow personal counseling to be done by the physicians

The situation was ideal for establishing a system whereby health education would be a vital part of the patient flow. The Dominican people seemed amenable to the idea of sharing, listening and learning. On the same project but in March of 1987, groups of young people would gather around the clinic, curious to see what was going on in their community. The open, receptive, reactions of these young people were the first signs that widespread health education was feasible. This became the impetus for a new branch of ministry on the rural projects.

PERMANENT MEDICAL CENTER:

In the capital city of Santo Domingo, the mission had opened a Permanent Health Care Center, Hospital Dr. Elias Santana Medical Center. This center specialized in Ophthalmology and the training of Residents and Assistants. The surrounding communities consisted of the urban poor. The houses were made of pressed cardboard and tin metal slabs. Hygiene conditions were deplorable. Many of these communities were nests for drug addicts, delinquents and young prostitutes. Total health teaching was needed. Paquita Bido, a local health educator and pastor's wife became my partner; we had similar interests. From this newly created mission Medical Center the Gospel was to be preached through example and through teaching; one of the Center's goals.

At the Santana Center, we initiated a department and named it Integral Health (Salud Integral), a term we coined and used though unknown at that time. Health lectures began in the waiting rooms and health poster bulletin boards were prepared. Personal counseling was encouraged. The target population became patients, staff and the populations in the surrounding communities. A program encompassing weekly visits was established. A health promoter course for volunteers was established and promoted through the local churches. Thirty-five volunteers graduated from the 60 hr. course in March of 1988. These health promoters served in their own communities, living and teaching health principles. Some came to the Center and volunteered their services; one or two found employment at the Pediatric department. Monthly meetings of the graduates offered an opportunity for further study and sharing experiences.

ON MMI PROJECTS:

On the rural projects, starting in March of 1988, patient flow changed. IHE area was created. A separate area for Children Health Education was soon developed. In these areas, trained personnel share educational messages in health maintenance and the gospel is preached. Where as previously, the patient being examined would leave the consult area and wait at the pharmacy, they now proceed from consultation to the IHE area while their prescriptions are being filled.

PHILOSOPHY OF INTEGRAL HEALTH:

As the need expanded so did the opportunity to develop the philosophy of Integral Health. From inception, the Biblical text of Isaiah 61:1-3 was chosen as the central text. The anointing of God upon His servants is to set the captives free, to change the spirit of heaviness for a garment of praise. The captivity spoken of is not only of sin but the prison of

ignorance in the absence of knowledge or information. The 'Shalom' concept was taught. When we speak out for the poor and the oppressed, when we instruct God's people how to take care of the environment, live lives of purity, 1 Thessalonians: 4, 2-8 sanctifying lives, as on to the Lord, we enter into abundant life, that life that Jesus Christ spoke of John 10:10. Isaiah 65:17-25 is another critical text. A 'new heaven and a new earth' begins now with our participation "no longer will a child die of few days."

Psalm 32 speaks of confession. David says, "While I kept silent my bones wasted away." We believe this to be literal; psychological effects on physiology in autoimmune diseases such as some forms of arthritis.

MECHANISM

In all Integral Health lectures there is a close metaphorical parallel between a physiological concept of health and its spiritual counterpart. As lectures are shared to all populations, this methodology is used: the integration of *these two metaphors*. From the very description of the disease, emotion or environmental issue, a particular common point of reference can be found. This point is the pivotal axle on which both or all components are addressed.

EXAMPLE 1:

More than 80% of adult patients coming to our medical clinic on projects complain of lower back pain. Daily agricultural labor contributes to this. A typical health lecture would begin by dynamically asking for a show of hands of those who suffer body or back pain. Most respond positively, raising their hands, nodding their heads or touching their backs. When a patient model is asked to come to the front to demonstrate how heavy objects are lifted, and to demonstrate what good posture is or how grass is chopped, everyone has fun and an opportunity presents itself to demonstrate flaws in the postural habits of us all. From a detailed lecture on proper lifting techniques, using anatomical models, charts and demonstrations, the question is asked, "what should our POSTURE be before God?" "What is posture?" Posture is the position we hold before a certain issue. Daniel chapter 6 is read and explained. Daniel does not change his posture before God's law. "There shall be no other gods before me". At times, along with proper spiritual posture come threats to our lives. The world asks us to bow our knees to its norms and expectations. Yet. "What should our posture be?" Daniel found his answer in God's backbone response to his faithfulness evidenced in the closed mouths of the lions. Our posture is in Jesus Christ. " He who doubts is like a wave that the sea tosses to and fro," says James chapter 1. "This person is unstable in all his ways." God wants us to be firm in Christ. The call is made to join Christ in firm relationship.

EXAMPLE 2:

In situations of psychological care, patients are received through a whole person approach. Social, economic, family situations are analyzed. God calls us to balance and calls us to invite Him into all our situations traumatic or joyful. Total Life Counseling emulates Integral Health principles... At the Santana Center, patients make appointments with our Integral Health Christian Counselors. We go through a total person analysis and apply Biblical principles to each situation. When necessary, patients discovered to be beyond counseling or psychological treatment limits, are referred to Christian psychiatrists for chemical treatment. However, most are taken care of through Integral Health Christian Counseling.

SUMMARY:

With this simple explanation of physical and spiritual metaphors, the need for a declaration of faith and change of heart is encouraged. Many hearts have been touched. Using this God-given concept of Integral Health, hundreds of persons have come to a saving knowledge AND CONFESSION OF Jesus Christ.

People need a listening ear, special attention and the love of Christ, love that motivates the teaching of new things, care for bodies, environment, trees, relationships, families. We believe this is what God defines as the WHOLE PERSON. Jesus attended to these integral needs. We do the same, resulting in persons wanting to construct tents of contentment as the disciples did with Jesus in the Mount of Transfiguration. These "tents" where hurt people are healed integrally, wholly, are where they want to gather and thank God. They and WE want the real church, the redeemed of the Lord taking preventative and sustained care of the whole person, to thrive.

Through the programs at the permanent health centers and the IHE & C ministries on the rural medical clinics, groups of new believers not only integrate into the local congregations with whom MMI works, but in areas where there are no churches, new believers have formed their own congregations or prayer cell groups.

VISION:

In Integral Health, we accept the challenge; we see this as a call to the liberation of God's people. It is our call and purpose.

ON MMI PROJECTS IN RURAL AREAS:

Integral Health teaching is done on all projects where trained leaders are available, so far in Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Peru, Haiti, and Honduras.

SANTANA CENTER PROGRAMS:

Through the IHE & C department, there are multiple programs meeting various needs.

Examples:

The HIV program entails pre-test counseling. This gives an opportunity for analysis of lifestyle values. 1 Thessalonians:4 is often shared. Many make a profession of faith when principles such as "secondary virginity" and "second opportunities" are counseled.

The Diabetic Club has grown over the two years since inception. Patients are compliant with diet, exercise and medical regimens. Values of life and health are taught.

PHYSICAL RESULTS:

As the MMI projects return yearly to the same sites for clinics, patients have returned year after year. Up to 70% of messages are remembered and practiced from year to year. Over the 15 years of IHE & C, changes in the knowledge of physical, environmental and spiritual health have been observed. Regions where projects were taken twice a year are now visited once a year; others regions have been removed from the calendar due to fewer turnouts and shorter lines. Comments from project participants give feedback. Martin McClain, participant from Ohio and patient helper for two consecutive years commented, "Betty, what is Integral Health telling the patients? Last year almost everyone in the line had

terrible itchy skin, and scabies. This year, there is hardly anyone with that problem.” On pure observation, a change was noticeable.

SPIRITUAL RESULTS:

Through IHE & C, churches have been founded and church growth observed.

In March of 2001, on an MMI project, two volunteer health promoters working with the department gathered about 40 men from the ages of 15 to 65 and held a group-chat “for men only” : “ The Privilege and Responsibility Of Being Male”. The group spent about an hour and half together discussing male issues and God’s mandate. An invitation was made to accept a serious walk with God through Christ. Many responded positively.

Inside the clinic, 40 of the 60 adults who came to the clinic made professions of faith through a conversion experience. Discipleship material was given. I encouraged these new believers to gather together for prayer and Bible study promising that Pastor Morales would visit. *Pastor Morales did visit the group the following week.* About ten had gathered and has continued meeting every Tuesday since March 2001. This growing group now meets in an open building. Discipleship classes are given; adult baptism for many will take place this summer 2003. *A church was formed through new believers gained through INTEGRAL HEALTH AND COUNSELING with Pastoral follow up.*

Near the hospital Santana, in a narrow, poor neighborhood factory waste products flows in abundance through makeshift canals. IHE community program chose this area for worship-clinics. Along with topics of physical contamination and consequent danger, health promoter Pastor Domingo Sanchez in health talks pointed out spiritual contamination and it’s eternal damage. He shared the love of Jesus Christ, community members wept.

They soon began to suggest to Domingo, “ We want a church here.” Pastor Domingo visited often both during work hours and after taking members of his church with him. *A church was founded in “ La Compuerta” and is functioning to this day.*

SOCIAL /COMMUNITY IMPACT:

Where there is a reverence for God, there is usually a marked difference in hygiene and health. Certain communities are still known for delinquency but the incidence of crime is lower than other areas. Past patients, then young people have gone on to higher education, joined churches and become community leaders.

STRUGGLES:

At the Medical Center, we struggle still with financial underwriting of this preventative program, wanting to properly remunerate the various professionals in this multidisciplinary team.

We have learnt to be wary of community well-wishers and collaborators with hidden political agendas, including established community committees.

In the past, attempts have been made for networking with several other Christian organizations practicing community health. Unfortunately the idea did not catch on and disappointingly has not been sustained over the years. However we have been successful in linking with Public Health for immunizations and a major Christian Organization for work with Blindness, the Handicapped and Audiometric work.

PRESENT AND FUTURE:

In MMI, the goal is to train IHE& C coordinators in each country where MMI has projects as well as establish IHE& C departments in each permanent center there. Currently IHE occurs in Santo Domingo and at the MMI Medical Center in Milagros, Guaguil, Ecuador.

CONCLUSION:

When the vision is captured and the workers are faithful to the task, when multiplication techniques are applied, there is qualitative improvement of health albeit difficult to measure quantitatively. Nonetheless, MMI's IHE&C 's program built on past successes hopes to continue preaching and teaching whole-health, addressing comprehensive needs. In so doing we will continue to effect changes in the lives of the patients and communities we serve. IHE & C can make this happen.

Just recently, a 17 year old, second pregnancy with a second common-law husband, came to the office for routine HIV pre -testing counseling. Amongst tears, admits disobedience to mother and ignoring God. When encouraged, through brokenness only God can bless, she asked forgiveness, sought reconciliation with God, and accepted His love. Tears of joy were shed. HIV pre-testing counseling was the way God chose to return His child to Himself.

