

'On the Wings of a Dove' - Prayerline

DAY EIGHT: CIRCLES OF HEALING – RECREATING OUR CAMPFIRES

'Take heart, daughter, your faith has made you well'

The health of Indigenous Australians is the worst in the developed world, with life expectancies 20 years less than other Australians. Alarming, the crisis is getting worse rather than better. In similar countries, such as New Zealand, the US and Canada, the health of Indigenous peoples has been rapidly improved by determined government action over the last 25 years. Why not in Australia?

This situation is not confined to remote communities, nor is it simply a 'medical' issue. It relates to the underlying causes of ill health – nutrition, employment, housing, public and environmental health, and the lack of affordable food for remote Australians. Indigenous people are thus subject to third world health status in a first world country: dying more frequently by preventable diseases and being more prone to particular conditions such as deafness, chronic ear infections and trachoma than the general population. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders have a shorter life expectancy, higher infant and maternal mortality and higher rates of chronic and infectious disease and injury than other Australians. Long-term health problems are evident in one-third of households in both low and high-income groups. Many, especially those living in remote communities, do not have access to adequate housing, reliable supplies of water and electricity or adequate sewerage systems. Such problems can however be solved, with the right political and community will.

Join the Indigenous Health Rights Campaign:
<http://www.antar.org.au/health.html>



One of many Indigenous women offering inspiring leadership in addressing the health crisis is **Pearl Wymarra**, from Penrith, a distinguished teacher and researcher in the restoration of people's emotional health and social well-being. Born at Old Mapoon, Presbyterian Mission in North Queensland, she grew up on Thursday Island. Her mother's family are part of the stolen generation and her father's people are the Gudang Clan of far Northern Cape York. She has taught at various levels from primary school to university. Pearl's vision for healing is centred on what she calls '*recreating our campfires*': renewing strength through cultivating the spirit, supporting community, and

focussing on maintaining the good and proper ways of culture.

READ Matthew ch.9 vv.18-26

The story of the woman in the story is one of great endurance and persistence, faith and hope. Such will and expectation can break open a miracle for young and old, bringing healing waters for all generations. Can we too reach out and trust in the power of change that comes with Christ?

PLEASE PRAY FOR

- * *Indigenous children at severe health risk*
- * *those ministering to Indigenous health*
- * *a renewed will amongst all Australians to address the issues and support solutions*

Prayer for the Day (from the *Healing House*)

Why are we dying so young, God?
Why are our babies more frail?
Why are our elders 'old'
when others are merely 'mature'?

Give us courage to ask questions;
Give us faith to believe things can change.
Give us strength to continue the struggle.

You are the Healer. We lift our sick ones to your gentle touch.
If we can reach but the fringe of your garment, healing will flow out for all.
But the fringe of your cloak is hard to reach, Jesus.
Widen the fringe, so that we can reach too. **Amen.**

People of Peace – *Pearl Wymarra*

Our souls will always be together
For we are as one
One in Hope, One in Prayer, One in Reason
Our Spirits **must** continue to work together
Amongst our peoples, our lands
At any given time and place
We **will muster** that peace we seek
It will manifest on this earth
This is our duty as part of the **big PLAN**
TOGETHER WE WILL WIN

To all the participants at the Brahma Kumaris social event on Saturday night at the forum UN Dialogue Among Civilisations 22-24 August 2003.

Overcoming Violence against women and children