

Women of Faith Reaching The Community

Dorcas 'Full of Good Works' - Acts 9:36-43

This is a **review** of the 2015 fifth annual Women of Faith Conference with the theme this year as “**women of faith reaching the community**” and based on the life of Dorcas, for her charitable nature and dedication to good works, a model to the community whose members revere her.

The three day conference which ended with a feast on Palm Sunday was a huge success with delightful guest speakers, informative seminars and workshops, a variety show and inspiring performances from the many choir groups and worship teams that thrilled the capacity audience.

The guest speaker Dr. Rosalind Murphy, incumbent of St. Thomas Church in Blackpool delivered a lively and scholarly series of lectures, her insight and humour were profoundly enjoyed by all present. In her opening address Dr. Murphy addressed the rich legacy of Dorcas, identifying her resurrection to life, her discipleship, integrity of character and her being an exemplary woman of substance. She identified the challenges Dorcas had as a woman in her time as similar to the challenges women today face in society. She identified the role of women as representatives of the church in the community and the role of the church as a place of prayer for healing and personal transformation. **Dorcas worked hard in her community giving her time and effort for the benefit of the needy.** Rosalind praised the women in the church using their gifts to praise and to honour God. “If you give your gifts to the Lord very early on you get ‘jump starts’. Like a leaping gazelle, he will open doors of opportunity for you.” She also described Dorcas as quick witted, fast and able to jump-start her life and be discerning. “She can be envisioned as a woman who is capable of surviving and flourishing in the most challenging environment or circumstances and being adept at overcoming perilous situations.”

She encouraged women to take ‘time off’ and spend time with the Lord in private. She also en-

couraged women to let people know they have given themselves to the Lord “for as you have given yourself to him, he will give himself to you and your worth shall be known.” She described God as “the fella who will not let you down” and **the one you can always depend on.** She encouraged women to have an intimate relationship with God giving themselves in totality to his love.

Dorcas is described as being devoted to good works and acts of charity. “Let your acts of charity be based on compassion and kindness. Demonstrations of random kindness can generate a

two-way stream where you will receive kindness in return.”

Dorcas is portrayed as a remarkable woman. “Her name defines her as a woman of God that is capable of surviving and flourishing in challenging situations while her profes-

sional gifts and skills distinguish her as a leader contributing to the growth and stability of the local business community.” The role of the church in the community involves every aspect of upbringing and prepares us for socialization out in the community. Dorcas was disciplined and had to put herself up to be more than just a wife. She put her message of God together in order to put it out to people in the community who may not have the same level of discipline that she had. **“We need to be obedient to God so he can work through us. So he can transform us for his ministry.**



In the seminars, Natalia Lester-Bush who actively serves in church and prayer ministry and is currently completing a Master's degree studying girls' education in developing countries led the seminar on **of Reach- People,** sensitive trafficking.



Creative ways ing Vulnerable dealing with the issue of human

She spoke of the abundance of oppression and the darkness of slavery and the need to bring it to an end and give to charities. She spoke of how an unstable family situation could make you unsafe and the role of the church in raising children, keeping marriages going and keeping families together. She said we need to be a church that is an example of true Christians and show that we can be supportive of those who are unstable or at risk. She said a collective decision needs to be made in society to stop human trafficking and she spoke of the ease in duping people and then selling them and highlighted the high profitability of the trade. "Human slavery is growing faster than weapons or drug trafficking." She urged people to honour God by fighting against human trafficking.

Audrey Kendall, an award winning head teacher in Brent well known for raising standards in education both academically and morally led the seminar **'Women Reaching School Communi-ties'** and encouraged women to identify the things they do well at home or at work and focus on them in order to yield re-encouraged focus on the opportunities they transforming our nity through the sector.



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In her seminar **'Women Reaching Work and Business Communities'**, Sue Stamper Iveson, a former lawyer, now a career coach employing creative methods in communicating focused her workshop on creative ways of reaching women in the work and business sectors. In her workshop she asked? "Are we reminding ourselves of the characteristics of God exemplified in our working days? Are we able to identify God's mercy, compassion and forgiveness in our daily lives? Ask yourself do you know who you are as a child of God? Qualities of a child of God identified were

loved, chosen, obedient, privileged, integrity, blessed, grateful, freewill. the cursed charac-identity honoured, kind, servants and of She spoke about need to stay fo-on the reality and ter of God. "Our is totally in Christ."



Mike Kelly is a motivational speaker, life technician and founder of The Institute of Wellbeing dedicated to supporting people to develop their wellbeing so that they can maximize their self-fulfilment in life. He spoke on 'Reaching Community Through Relationships' focusing on how healthy relationships can become tools of reach- ing our communities. He identified issues of personal wellbeing, who you are and your identity and how these things affect the way we make decisions daily. "You need to develop yourself to be in a better position to make better relation- ships." He also spoke about **Women and the Wellbeing of Their Community** and pointed out that wellbeing is about the quality of life you live. People who have the faith have a heightened sense of wellbeing and the church has a respon- sibility to harness wellbeing and dispense it in our communities. The concept of the Sabbath offers an insight into God's plan for the wellbeing of hu- man beings. God created the world in six days and rested on the seventh. "**Gratitude is the atti- tude that determines your altitude**" were his closing words. In the interactive session moder- ated by Sola Osunami questions raised were; 'How do I know what God's will is with regards to marrying a non-Christian? Looking for a husband in church and kissing before marriage?



Pastor Akin Akinola replied "establish your boundaries and if the person really loves you they will wait." In closing he thanked all the speakers, the organizing committee and attendees for mak- ing the conference a grand success.

