

Reflections

Healing through prayer

THE 'HEALING Okehampton' team is a priceless gift to the people of the town. I like to herald this fact not because of their courage, availability and interest in the people that they engage while on service but of the unseen physical and mental health outcomes their prayer brings to people.

The neglected subject of how prayer/faith/spirituality can heal has been put under rigorous scientific examinations by researchers throughout the world in the last decade.

I was personally motivated by 'HEALING Okehampton' to research the implications of spiritual experiences on healing through the neurofunctionality of brain-mind relationship.

I feel qualified to deal with this topic since I have been awarded grade 'A' recently by Bristol University for the research on brain-mind-behaviour interconnected functionality in ADHD.

Some extraordinary spiritual experiences for which explanations are very scarce were once considered as a consequence of psychological or brain disorders. But the recent neurofunctional studies on spiritual experiences reveal how several brain areas get activated producing complex function patterns that have health benefits.

In the case of Christian prayer, the specific part of the brain 'God spot' (in the temporal lobe) is



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in active stimulation causing multidimensional functions (evoking positive emotions such as love, hope, forgiveness and contentment) in human behaviour and relationship. These do have impact on neural pathways which connect the endocrine and immune systems.

Therefore, prayer causing spiritual experience reduces the arousal in the SNS (sympathetic nervous system) and HPA (hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis) restoring physiological stability and strengthening immune capability. More specifically this process enhances cardiovascular muscles and boosts positive mood with self-esteem.

If we would like to build a healthy society, along with our best medical professionals we need prayer groups like 'HEALING Okehampton' all around our towns and villages.

'Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus'. Philippians 4:6-7.