



Dr. Kirsten Cloete

Oneness of Spirit

*"Massively Blessed"
from Serving*

*You were all called to travel on the same road and in the same direction,
so stay together, both outwardly and inwardly.
You have one Master, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all,
who rules over all, works through all, and is present in all.
Everything you are and think and do is permeated with Oneness.*

— Ephesians 4:4-6 (MSG)

Wow, did this verse take on a whole new meaning for me in Jamaica! I had absolutely no idea what to expect from my first STM trip to Jamaica in November 2016. None. I just knew that I had been thinking and praying about getting involved in some type of mission work for a long time, and I also knew that I loved being a chiropractor! So when I stumbled upon the CCA website around mid-2016 and started reading up about missions trips, I knew that this was the Lord opening a door. It wasn't actually even a good time for me to be taking so much time off work, as I had recently started practicing independently in London, and had also moved houses the month before! I was still being prompted to go though, so I decided to listen for once and booked my spot.



Needless to say, I arrived after the 10-hour flight from the UK pretty drained yet excited! I am originally from the east coast of South Africa, so I was very happy to be back in the heat and humidity, and the sunshine and immediate friendliness of the Jamaican people (*even at the airport*) brought me back to life!

Part of me had felt slightly anxious at the prospect of traveling all the way to Montego Bay, Jamaica, by myself and spending a week doing outreach work with a group of total strangers. But it soon became clear that this group of 'strangers' had been carefully brought together by the Lord Himself, handpicked to do His work at this particular time. The way God bonded our group together still absolutely amazes me. Each person, being a different age and stage of life, each with their own unique character, their own gifts, as well as their own fears and anxieties that may have potentially weighed them down or caused them to shrink back, but, most importantly, each one inspired by, and filled with the SAME Spirit of the living God! It really was this Spirit that brought us together and made us into a team!

At the start of the week, our seasoned and wonderfully energetic Team Leader, Dr. Theron Stallings, told us on the bus en route to our first clinic, "*Team, this week you are all going to laugh a lot, and probably cry a lot too!*" And boy was that true! I think I must have cried at least once a day for some reason or another. Not out of sadness, but more just as a result of being incredibly moved by people, situations, conversations, watching the Spirit move or all of the above.

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Oneness of Spirit, continued,

During our week in Montego Bay, we set up two clinics per day at various schools, children's homes and churches, and treated a variety of patients of all ages. When arriving at the clinics, we were greeted with a huge amount of love and openness from the local people, and showered with hugs from many of the children. It was greatly inspiring to witness the strong leadership of the headmasters of many of the schools we visited, and how they lead the staff and children with such love, integrity and passion.

As is true in South Africa, poverty, gangs, violence and drugs are some of the social issues facing Jamaica as a country. It was therefore greatly encouraging to see that the local churches we visited were taking a stand, and tackling these extremely difficult issues courageously and head on, both practically and in prayer. It really was a blessing for us to be able to support these churches in whatever way we could.

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Over the course of the week we met up with and spent time with some extraordinary Jamaicans who demonstrated what it really means to live by faith. Extremely hard-working, committed and servant-hearted individuals who are making a massive impact in their communities. These people reminded me of the African proverb: *"If you think you are too small to make a difference, you haven't spent a night with a mosquito!"* It was hugely challenging to me, and really made me consider my faith, and the *"why are we really here?"* question of life in a new way.

By the end of the mission, it really felt as though we had spent a much longer time together as a team than we had, and I felt sad to say goodbye to my new friends! The love, care, kindness and encouragement that I personally received from Jamaica 2016 team members still completely overwhelms me. I really was not expecting it. I thought I was going to *"give"* on this trip, but ended up receiving so much more than I could have ever imagined.

Thank you so much to Theron for leading us, to Dudley our unbelievably hard-working and good-humored driver, to Carla and the home office crew, and to our whole team of chiropractors and support staff who made the week what it was. I count myself massively blessed to have met and served alongside you all!

Dr. Kirsten Cloete is a 2008 graduate of Durban University of Technology and practices in London, England. She became a member of the CCA last September.