



Fellowship of the Least Coin

PRAYER CONCERNS 2010

These prayer concerns are provided for participants in the Fellowship of the Least Coin. Each time they pray for justice, peace and reconciliation, they set aside one "least coin" as a tangible token toward their prayers being answered. We invite you to pray with us and put your least coins to work with those from around the world. For more information, visit our FLC pages at <http://www.wicc.org/programmevents/Fellowship/index.html>.

JANUARY: Human Sex Trafficking

Canadians are looking forward to the Vancouver Olympics in February 2010. These Winter Games will be a time of great celebration for our country. Unfortunately, the Olympic flame is not the only thing that will be brought into Canada from other countries for these events. On a darker side, thousands of women and children will be brought into the Vancouver area as victims of the human sex trafficking trade during the Olympic games. Vancouver already has an international reputation of being a sex-tourism destination and experience has proven that this activity doubles when the world comes to a community.



"Human Trafficking is one of the most dehumanizing and victimizing acts perpetrated on the most vulnerable of our society", says Dianna Bussey, director of The Salvation Army's Canada and Bermuda Anti-Trafficking Network. It involves the sale and purchase of human beings for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

Many Christian organizations are focusing on this issue by hosting forums to increase public awareness and offer people the opportunity to become involved in positive action intended to reduce the demand and to free and care for victims. As Christians, it is our responsibility to pray and "speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute" (Proverbs 31:8). Let's unite our voices in prayer and protest on behalf of the victims of this exploitation and oppression.

Pat Phinney is the Salvation Army appointee for WICC. She lives in London, ON.

FEBRUARY: World Day of Prayer - Cameroon

In familiarizing myself with the issues of the next WDP country, I am delightfully surprised at something or saddened by atrocities that are being committed against women. This year I am saddened to learn that Cameroon has recently been receiving attention due to "breast ironing". This harmful and widespread practice involves pounding and massaging the developing breasts of pre-pubescent girls with hot objects to try to make them disappear. The most widely used instrument is a wooden pestle, heated bananas, coconut shells or smooth flat stones. It is believed to be an efficient

means of delaying pregnancy; by "removing" signs of puberty, as many mothers believe it protects their daughters from the sexual advances of boys and men who think their daughters are ready for sex. With the help of sponsors, a group of teenage girls called the *Association of Aunties* has produced a TV campaign to expose this issue. Despite this exposure breast ironing has not been banned by authorities. While victims are protected under the law, they are often too young and very unlikely to report their family members.

In a country where sex education is still

very taboo, we pray that it will



come soon and young women will no longer have to suffer such abuses at the hands of mothers who do it in the name of love and protection.

Marilyn Fortin is WICC's President-Elect and Executive Representative to the World Day of Prayer International Committee for the Caribbean/North America Region. She lives in Belleville, ON.

MARCH: Canada/US Relations

In referring to the war in Afghanistan, Robert Fowler said (not a verbatim quote) to get it done, we had to do some unpleasant things...there are other places in the world where we can get girls to go to school without having to kill people. Would we consider using force to get girls of school here in Canada? Our demographic system works for us, sometimes, but does that mean the whole

world should be a democracy? In Canada we are so consumed with security that we sometimes fail to see those different from us as brothers and sisters. We pray that Christ may dwell in our hearts through faith, as we are being rooted and grounded in love -- Eph. 4:17 We give God thanks and pray for: The families of NATO soldiers killed in the Afghanistan War; our NATO Soldiers

on the ground in Afghanistan; and the Afghan civilians who have become casualties. We pray also that the Ambassador to the US, Gary Doer, may work with both governments as an instrument for peace in Afghanistan.

Kofo Dedeko is a WICC Council member. She lives in Brossard, QC.

APRIL: Papua New Guinea

Papua New Guinea is a land rich in natural resources. The volcanoes have enriched the soil allowing indigenous people to earn a living from subsistence farming, supplemented by panning for gold. Land ownership is a matrilineal. More than 80% of the population live in rural areas and most of these women are illiterate, making it difficult to understand and learn the intricacies of land ownership. There are no deeds, but possession is recognized by the government. There is a slight oddity in the fine print, land ownership only includes the earth six feet below the surface. The mining company owns the gold. In recent years, large foreign companies wanting to broaden their base, like Barrick Gold of Canada, dis-



covered this land rich in mineral deposit. Life changed in PNG. Barrick professes the benefits they bring to PNG. Increased employment, roads to access schools and health clinics, water

and power supplied to nearby villages resulting in an 11% increase in PNG's gross domestic product. Open pit mining is damaging to the environment. It destroys the natural landscape, requires vast amounts of water, and creates acid mine drainage affecting 800 kilometres of river systems until it empties into the Gulf of Papua. This impacts the lives of the

people. Their land has become too acidic for food production, fish in rivers is declining, and what health issues will be long term from the residual metals and other toxic waste from open pit mining? Bill C-300, an Act Respecting Corporate Accountability for the Activities of Mining, Oil or Gas Corporations in Developing Countries is before the Canadian Government to ensure that environmental and human rights standards are upheld. Let us pray that the people and environment of PNG be protected from the hazardous waste produced from the open pit mining and that Bill C-300 be passed into law.

Irene Churchill is the Lutheran appointee to WICC. She lives in Eganville, ON

MAY: Suffering of the Dying

One cannot care for the dying without encountering their suffering but suffering is not always recognized. Conversations about suffering are rarely brought forward by health care professionals in their encounters with the dying or their families. "How strange it seems that suffering and its relief, which is central to the mission of health care, is mentioned so infrequently in many hospitals and within the health care delivery system. The success of modern science conveys the impression that suffering has been conquered, but sensitive observation in any health care environment demonstrates that suffering is pervasively present" (Reed, 2003, p. 4).

Every year more than 259,000 Canadians die, 75% of all deaths occur in acute care hospitals or long-term care facilities. A large majority of those who face impending death experience suffering and could benefit from the services offered by hospice palliative care which focuses on the relief of suffering and improving quality of life.

Statistics Canada projected the rate of deaths in Canada will increase by 33% by the year 2020 to more than 330,000 deaths per year. Will Canada be prepared to provide a comprehensive integrated hospice palliative care program and services to Canadians who need the services? "Unfortunately the answer is no

- without improvements to access and the political will to make necessary changes and investments to the current health care system" says Sharon Baxter, Executive Director Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association.

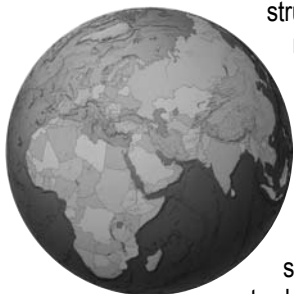
"Let us pray for the dying, that they may find relief from their pain and suffering. Let us pray for leaders in government to recognize the need for increased hospice and palliative care services and may governments provide funding to enhance quality end of life care in Canada."

Rev. Elaine MacInnis is a WICC council member and educator in spiritual care at end of life. She lives in Toronto, ON.

JUNE: Globalization

Globalization is at a crossroads once again. As each 'empire' winds down, (Roman, British and America) new power entities fight for the right to make the new rules. With the global economic crash of 08/09, we have been exposed to the

knowledge that the structural rules put in place during the 70's were not structurally sound. The trade agree-



ments made by NAFTA and others were not made to include the welfare of the global masses although many of us in the developed world have benefited from them. As time goes on however, we will continue to observe and be affected by the meltdown of the middle class, while the poor get poorer. The recent economic crash solidifies this position. So the clash is on over which direction is the best way to go forward to rectify the situation.

On a recent visit to Singapore I was astounded to find Canadian pork for sale in their supermarkets. As if farmers in Asia are unable to raise hogs? I think they call this 'dumping'. The same thing

happens to rice and other commodities. Subsidized hog farmers in central Canada are complaining that their global markets are drying up due to a combination of swine flu and the price of fuel. We now see that our present corporate government has promised to continue to subsidize them. Our prayer for the future is that a caring and loving change in thinking will transform those in power to change a system that defies logic.

Gloria Cope is WICC's Co-Chair Program. She lives in Nanaimo BC

JULY: Israel and Palestine

Is there any political, religious, social dynamic more challenging to comprehend than the Israel/ Palestinian 'situation'? The land upon which these tensions arise cradles some of the oldest human communities in the world. Cultures that developed the earliest forms of writing: societies that thrived in inhospitable environments. This land gave rise to the three great religions of the book - Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Objectively, these qualities suggest this region should be sanctified - set apart and made holy by virtue of its revelation of God's grace through its nurturing of humanity. Yet this is not so. Instead of

being sanctified by a spirit of human unity it is set apart by the amount of human blood that has, and continues, to be spilt upon its soil.

Are we the generation that can change this? Do we have the will to do so - the courage? To unravel the past, to sort out the quagmire of ancient and not so ancient political, economic and racial tensions that scar the Holy Land, will take a sense of international honesty, accountability and unity that has proven illusive. But as people of faith - all Faiths- isn't that exactly what we are called to do? Let us pray that God's reconciling grace inspires the leaders of all nations to work



in unity toward a resolution to the tensions that plague the Holy Land so that it may once more be truly sanctified and set apart as a model that embodies the spirit of our living God.

The Reverend Janet Anstead is WICC's President and the Christian Church Disciples of Christ appointee to WICC. She lives in London, ON

AUGUST: Guyana

Currently in Guyana there are incidents of crimes which include murders, robbery, kidnapping, which are reported daily in the media. Domestic violence in different forms is very prevalent in every part of our country and there is some degree of frustration and hopelessness as a result.

The World Day Prayer National Committee of Guyana has identified areas where there is need for greater attention. We ask for prayers especially for our children and young people. We pray for the work of the Guyana Responsible Parenthood Association



(GRPA) which plays a very important role in the community. GRPA is undertaking two projects in need of prayer:

1. A Temporary Day Care Centre for Young children. This is intended to be a

safe haven for children whose parents/mothers are at work; and
2. Basic Remedial Course for Rural Early School Leavers. A literacy program for young women who have not been able to complete their education in an effort to help them become contributors to society.

We thank all those National Committees who have supported us in our efforts. We ask your prayers as we work together in the extension of God's Kingdom.

Waveney Benjamin has been a member of the WDP Committee of Guyana since 1967 and is now Chairperson of WDP Guyana.

SEPTEMBER: Living with Piracy

Somalia is situated in the Horn of Africa, surrounded by Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya. To the north and east it is lapped by the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean. It is a country of approximately 10,000,000 people. Anarchy reigns in Somalia. It is a graveyard of foreign-policy failures, and has experienced only six months of peace in the past two decades. Somalia's pirates have made headlines around the world. Clearly, this is a concern. However, this prayer intention arises from a simple conversation I had with a taxi driver a year ago while traveling from a WICC meeting to the Guildwood

train station in Toronto, Ontario. Whenever I encounter someone from another country, I ask that person about their country of origin, their length of time in Canada and their family. During such a conversation with the aforementioned taxi driver, I told him about WICC and our connection with FLC and international prayer concerns. He earnestly asked me to pray for his country. I disembarked at the station, entered and sat down to await my train. Within a few minutes, the taxi driver ran into the station and gave me a newspaper article on the pirate economy engulfing his country. The article explained that the profits of this law-

lessness had reached a record high but life for the people is chaotic and desperate.

Let us pray for the people of Somalia that are killing each other for a handful of grain and for the countless starving and orphaned children.

Eleanor Arless is WICC's Chair of Communications and the Roman Catholic appointee to WICC. She lives in Pointe Claire, QC.

OCTOBER: International Committee of the Fellowship of the Least Coin

In October, the International Committee of the Fellowship of the Least Coin met in Nairobi, Kenya. Representatives from Africa, Asia, Canada, USA, the Caribbean, Europe, Latin America, Middle East, the Pacific bonded and deliberated under the direction of ICFLC Executive Secretary Corazon Tabing-Reyes.

In 1956, after being refused entry into Korea, Shanti Solomon was inspired to begin a world wide prayer movement for peace and reconciliation. Women around the world, as they pray daily for injustices toward humanity to cease, contribute a least coin of the currency of her country.

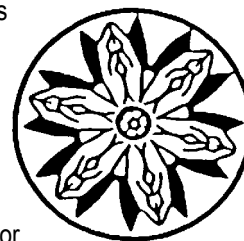
As this fund grows, quite considerably, women, especially those in remote rural areas around the world are encouraged to apply for small grants to help their people live better lives, especially as it concerns children, youth, women's work, the disabled, etc. Through enlightened leadership, focusing on justice, gender, poverty issues, it is the goal of ICFLC (as an ecumenical organization) to aid the God of all people, to spread love and compassion to a needy world. Ironically, current world news is focused on the drought in Kenya and the resulting plight of its people. The ICFLC extends a helping hand through emergency funds, for

urgent needs such as this.

Let us pray to our ever present and caring God for all those who need

strength each day to face seemingly insurmountable obstacles. Grant to our ICFLC group, wisdom, love and understanding to try to the best of their ability, to do much with so little, to lessen the hurt in your amazing world. Amen.

Inez Penney is WICC's ICFLC Representative. She lives in Moreton's Harbour, NL



NOVEMBER: The Women of Afghanistan

Afghanistan entered my field of consciousness through the story of a woman called Soraya who was caught in adultery - a serious offense in her country. While the man with her was reprimanded for succumbing to evil, Soraya was punished as the personification of that evil. With her arms at her side, she was buried up to her shoulders and stoned to death. Amnesty International recorded that her killers were instructed on the size of stone to be used. Soraya was a victim of the Taliban brand of Islamic Fundamentalism that 96% of the women interviewed at the time, denied was inherent to either Islam or Afghan

culture.

Before the Taliban soared to power in 1996, 50% of government employees, 40% of physicians and 75% of teachers were women. Since then, prohibited from working, going to school and moving outside without a male chaperone, women have been reduced to the status of possessions. This sudden and repressive social change resulted in a massive increase in depression and suicide among women.

And yet there are some remarkable flickers of hope. Against all odds, some women are networking to support each

other; to do what they can to keep education alive - despite the lack of resources. More recently, 300 women courageously walked in protest in the streets of Kabul.

Let us encircle all the people of Afghanistan with the energy of our prayer so that justice and peace may prevail through an infilling of God's spirit of love and peace.

Lynne Downes is a mentor for those taking the Education for Ministry course. She lives in Qualicum, BC

DECEMBER: Violence Against Women

Violence against women and girls is a universal problem of epidemic proportion. Such violence is unacceptable, whether perpetrated by family members or strangers. As long as violence against women persists, we cannot claim to be making real progress towards equality, development and peace. For the most part, the human cost of gender-based violence is invisible. Fear continues to prevent many women from speaking out, and data collected is often insufficient and inconsistent. Some progress has been made in bringing this issue into the open and placing it firmly on national and international agendas. December 6 is the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women in



Canada. This day marks the anniversary of the murder of 14 young women at L'école Polytechnique in Montreal in 1989. As well as commemorating the 14 women whose lives were violently cut short, December 6 represents an opportunity for Canadians to reflect on the phenomenon of violence against women in our society. It is also an opportunity to

consider the women and girls for whom violence is a daily reality, and to remember those who have died as a result of gender-based violence. Finally, it is a day on which communities should consider concrete action to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls.

Let us pray: God we ask for you to be with all victims of violence. Let them know through our prayers and actions that they do not walk alone. Give us courage to be involved in raising awareness through advocacy, education and training and developing networks to end violence. Amen.

Amy Hill is WICC's Co-Chair Program. She lives in Mississauga, ON.