



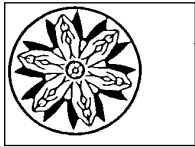
The newsletter
of the

Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada

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Summer 2002



Fellowship of the Least Coin

Gathering in

The central concept of the Fellowship of the Least Coin is that two simple tools – a prayer and a single coin – can have a powerful effect for change.

All it takes is one person, joining thousands of individual persons around the world, who makes a commitment to pray regularly for justice, peace and reconciliation. With each prayer, these individuals place a single coin, the least coin of their own country, into a jar. Day by day these pennies, centavos, pesos and rupees are collected in containers in many countries of the world.

The prayers of people around the world are the most important and underpinning aspect of the Fellowship of the Least Coin. The individual and group prayers for peace in the world lead toward the healing of broken relationships among individuals, families, communities and nations.

Each time we set aside a least coin as a symbol of our prayers, we know that this coin will join many others from all parts of the world to advance the causes of justice, peace and reconciliation.

In Canada, as in other parts of the world, individuals and groups collect these coins throughout the year. Once a

year, usually in October, we meet at a regional Ingathering Service to dedicate our symbols of prayer – our pennies – before we send them to the national coordinator of the FLC, the Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada. Our pennies are then sent to the FLC international office to continue their work.

Although the draft of the Ingathering Service is created by the international committee, the service is frequently adapted to meet the needs of the countries in different parts of the world. In Canada, the Fellowship of the Least Coin Committee, chair of the board, the director and a number of the staff of the Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada are all involved in the writing and editing of the Canadian service. This means that many different people in the world have shaped the service that we use in October.

The Ingathering Service is inserted in this newsletter. The FLC monthly prayer concerns for 2003 will be included in the next issue of WICC News, due out in December 2002. For more information, contact the WICC office at (416) 929-5184 or wicc@wicc.org.

*Viola Duff, Chair,
Fellowship of the Least Coin Committee*

Special report

WYD: from the eyes of my soul

Jessica Walters-Regnier is a student at McGill University in Montreal and a member of WICC (currently on leave). She attended the World Youth days held in Toronto from July 18-28 on the theme "You are the salt of the earth...You are the light of the world". (Mt. 5:13,14) This is her report:



World Youth Day 2002 was possibly the most incredible week I will ever have experienced in my life. Although I could tell you about all the activities I took part in and the events that went on, that would not capture what I experienced at World Youth Day. I continually noticed a common and supernatural sense of unity and friendship in the midst of the masses of diverse youth from all around the world. Whether I was attending mass, riding the transit, or listening to a rapping priest, Christ was incessantly radiated in the atmosphere. Never before have I felt so near to God's very presence. Song and prayer were certainly abundant everywhere – most notably

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Letter from the President

Voices for change

Before Claire Heron takes over as President in November, I want to take the opportunity to thank each one of you. I am aware that we have a wonderful staff and a hard-working council, but it is you who makes the Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada what it is. More than 80 years ago, a group of women came together for prayer and action, believing that they could make more of a difference if they spoke with one voice. Those original founders of WICC proved that change can take place when we work – and pray – together.

In the same way, your voices, your participation and your feedback help to make WICC work. You organize the World Day of Prayer Services all across Canada, you hold Fellowship of the Least Coin services each fall and you gather together to speak out on justice issues that affect women. We hope you will continue. We rely on you to be our connection to your communities and encourage other women to become involved. If Canada becomes a better place for women and children, then it will be because you in your community have played a part in making that change.

I encourage you to consider organizing a Great Canadian Coffee Party to participate in WICC's campaign to combat violence against women. Take our challenge and just begin to imagine how a simple coffee party, held in many places, could result in much good. And again, thank you for your involvement. We at WICC are grateful that God has called such a wonderful committed group of people to work for change.

Joyce Christie

WICC NEWS

is published and distributed by the Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada. Established in 1918, WICC is a national council of representatives from 11 church partners.

The Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada is a national Christian women's council encouraging women to grow in ecumenism, to share their spirituality and prayer, to engage in dialogue about women's concerns, to respond to national and international issues affecting women, and to take action together for justice.

Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada

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Endowment Fund

A shining opportunity

"It only takes a spark to get a fire going, And soon all those around can warm up in its glowing. That's how it is with God's love – Once you experience it: You spread God's love to everyone... You want to pass it on."

©1969, Kurt Kaiser

There have been times in all our lives when we have been spiritually fueled... when God's spirit sparked our lives. Perhaps we were blessed with a wonderful talent or opportunity. Perhaps it was in the ecumenical women's gatherings sponsored by WICC. Perhaps there were special friends, companions or teachers who shone forth for us at just the right time. Such sparks have glowed among us; they are precious gifts that can make all the difference.

Endowments fuel the future, supporting the Council's vision for ecumenical opportunities among churchwomen. Endowments identify and energize opportunities for mission which might have seemed impossible otherwise.

Endowed mission programs can

respond consistently to challenges facing communities, nations, and the world. Ongoing programs can meet unforeseen needs, and new programs can be initiated and sustained. Day-to-day operations can be undergirded, opening the way to seek expanded witness among churchwomen.

We have been empowered again and again by gifts from those who have gone before us. In the same way, our gifts can help tomorrow's Christian women face their future with greater security and hope.

We are called to be faithful stewards. We are encouraged to pass on what we have received...the light entrusted to us. Thus we can show our gratitude for God's gifts, for gratitude not expressed is like a beautifully wrapped present not given. In faithfulness

the darkness does not overwhelm, nor are life's lessons dimmed, but instead blaze for eternity, to the glory of God.

The WICC Endowment Fund provides an opportunity for Council alumni and friends to contribute to the future of the Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada and succeeding generations of church women. The fund is a permanent endowment which makes available interest fund income for the continued support of the ever-expanding programs of WICC to meet the needs of Canadian churchwomen.

An endowment grows to fund mission. Please give generously to the WICC Endowment Fund by mailing your gift to WICC at the address above.

Karen Hincke, Executive Director

"I will give you as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth." Isaiah 49:6

"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overwhelmed it." John 1:5



From Romania to Lebanon

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! The offering received from the 2002 World Day of Prayer services was the largest ever. The Council needs to thank many collaborators, including the World Day of Prayer International Committee – for choosing timely and relevant themes and working with writing countries to raise issues of social justice – and Council staff members, particularly Gillian Barfoot, for their hard work in creating useful hands-on materials that can be easily adapted by ecumenical groups across the country as they plan their World Day of Prayer services. Finally, we thank all local coordinators for planning creative ways to engage women in worship, prayer and social action.

I would like to share one letter that I received about a creative service from the Ottawa area. I'm sure that there are many other examples of such hard work to make the World Day of Prayer service come alive:

I went to an 11 a.m. service, which was very well attended. As we entered the church, we were greeted by two friendly ladies wearing special headbands given to them by a Romanian lady in their congregation. They each had a round tray with pieces of French bread; in the centre of the trays were real Romanian salt dishes (from the same Romanian woman) filled with salt. We each took a piece of bread and then dipped



Some World Day of Prayer 2002 participants, like these in Wilberforce, Ontario, chose to tell the story of Abigail through drama.

it in the salt and ate it. Romanian music was playing while we waited for the service to begin. The leader for the service was wearing a Romanian costume, and the four women representing the Romanian women wore colourful headscarves and blouses. An excellent choir of women was leading the singing of the hymns. A little three-legged black pot was used to hold the water for the sprinkling; it had belonged to a Romanian lady's grandfather who had been a Romanian orthodox priest and had been imprisoned for 25 years by the communists.

Downstairs, after the service, there was a beautiful display table with Romanian crafts and real Romanian food cooked by this same Romanian woman. There was also another big long table piled with more food for the lunch after the service.

Everyone came down for the meal. The 11 a.m. service this year turned out to be even more popular than the one last year which had pioneered this pattern and had been very well received. I think the news had spread!!

As we prepare for the World Day of Prayer 2003, written by the women of Lebanon, the whole world anxiously watches and listens for developments in the Middle East. While the world focuses on Palestine and Israel, our prayers are for peace in that area. Surrounding countries, such as Lebanon, only too clearly understand the need for God's peace, as the peace brokered by humans seems impossibly fragile. Under the theme "Holy Spirit Fill Us", we will join with Christian women and men from the Middle East as we acknowledge the power of the Spirit that brings the peace that the world cannot understand or of its own power create.

We invite you to join with women and men in Canada and around the world on March 7, 2003, as we pray for the coming of the Holy Spirit into seemingly impossible situations. We also pray that our hearts may be opened to the working of the Spirit, and that we may feel the Spirit's guidance in our lives and our organizations.

Carla Pattinson

Chair, World Day of Prayer Committee

Grant recipients 2002

The Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada is pleased to announce that offerings received during the World Day of Prayer in 2002 assisted with the following projects:

CANADA

- Immigration Detention Project (Action Réfugiés Montréal), Laval, Quebec: \$5,000
- Communications Project on domestic violence (Buckhorn Rural Outreach Committee), Lakefield, Ontario: \$1,650
- Educational Workshops Project (Christian Task Force on Central America), Vancouver, British Columbia: 3,000
- Shelter for women and children refugee claimants – bridge funding (FCJ Hamilton House Refugee Project), Toronto, Ontario: \$4,850
- Everyday Living Skills (Regina Home Economics for Living Project), Regina, Saskatchewan: \$5,000
- Family Time Programme (West Broadway Community Services), Winnipeg, Manitoba: \$3,500

INTERNATIONAL

- Femmes pour la paix – peace education project (Canadian Friends Service Ctee), Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo: \$4,500
- Health clinic (Vision Peoples in Mission), Nairobi, Kenya: \$5,000
- Women's leadership project (Inter Pares), Guatemala: \$5,000
- Intervention against domestic violence (Asociación Evangélica de Asesoramiento Familiar), Managua, Nicaragua: \$5,000
- Women's Reproductive Health Peer Educators' Training (Yayasan Peduli Sesama), East Java Province, Indonesia: \$5,000
- Drinking Water Systems (World Neighbours), Nepal: \$5,000
- Self-Help Program for Single Mothers and Divorced Women (Women's Rural Advance), Baiyer, Mt. Hagan, Papua New Guinea: \$2,500
- L'Espérance pour demain (L'Ass. Stantul Stelian), Romania: \$5,000

Proceeds from the World Day of Prayer also support the international organization, cover the costs of printing and distributing WDP services and resources throughout Canada and support the ongoing work of WICC.



Jocelyn Rait, WICC council member and representative to the International Committee of the Fellowship of the Least Coin (ICFLC), is finally heading to a long-delayed

meeting. The international committee was originally scheduled to meet last fall in Beirut, but cancelled due to unstable and dangerous conditions. But now the meeting is on again. The Annual Meeting of the ICFLC will be held in Seoul, South Korea, from October 16 to 19. The main purpose of the meeting is to allocate grants for project applications. While she's in the area, Jocelyn is also planning to attend the Annual Meeting of the Asian Church Women's Conference in Seoul from October 10 to 15.



WICC's Fall Council and Annual General Meeting will be held from November 8 to 10. Look for a report in the Winter issue of WICC NEWS.

WYD: from the eyes of my soul *continued from page 1*

in all of the jammed packed buses and subway cars!

On a personal level, my trust in God's presence and love has skyrocketed. Every day, I noticed anew the presence of Jesus in the curious onlookers, in the weather, and in the warmth and patience of the people of Toronto. Through the experience of having been so near to Pope John Paul II, and having been so engulfed by thousands of fervent Christians, I felt a powerful intimacy with God.

I have been greatly blessed by this experience. What I know in my mind became a reality in my heart. God is surely close to each one of us, giving us love without condition. Through World Youth Day, I have been reminded that God's love is endless. God desires that we choose each day to be vessels of this amazing love.

Women Doing Theology

remembering, reVisioning

What do you call a symposium that brings together women of faith to discuss and explore theological thought and community? In the words of one participant: "Wonderful!"

WICC helped to organize and support this event, held in Winnipeg this past spring, which featured more than 30 workshops, discussions, worship and other opportunities for "Remembering and ReVisioning Faith".

Look for a full report in the upcoming Fall 2003 issue of *Making Waves*.



The sharing of the Spirit (symbolized by fire, above) and the celebration of community (through music, below) were vital elements of the weekend theology symposium.



Several council members attended the Winnipeg weekend. This group, posing with the *Making Waves* quilt, included the quilt's creator Bernice Santor (in back, third from left), and Anna Greenwood (in front, second from left).

Dear readers

Are you tired of the paper chase? Would you be willing to help us lower our mailing costs? If so, we would be glad to e-mail this newsletter to you in pdf (Adobe Reader) format. It is also available on our website at www.wicc.org.

Likewise, if you need to change your address or know someone who would like to be on our mailing list, just let us know.

Contact our office by phone at (416) 929-5184 or e-mail at wicc@wicc.org.

Calendar

◆ October 5 & 6

The Great Canadian Coffee Party: We challenge you to invite your church group, book club, sewing circle, or faithful friends to meet together over a cup of coffee and talk about how you are affected by violence in your community, in Canada and around the world. By asking those who attend to make a donation of the price of a cup of coffee (or more!), you can use this event to raise money for a local or national initiative against violence, or organize your own community non-violence activity. For more information, look for the insert inside this newsletter.

◆ December 6

National Day of Remembrance and Action: The Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada produces an annual service of remembrance and hope for the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. For a copy (available free of charge), please contact the WICC office at 416-929-5184, by e-mail at wicc@wicc.org or visit our website at www.wicc.org.