



The newsletter
of the
**Women's Inter-Church
Council of Canada**

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Winter/Spring 2003

Special Report

Korea hosts ICFLC



Jocelyn Rait, WICC council member and representative to the International Committee of the Fellowship of the Least Coin (ICFLC), attended the Annual Meeting of the ICFLC in Seoul, South Korea, from October 16 to 19. While she was in the area, Jocelyn also attended the Annual Meeting of the Asian Church Women's Conference in Seoul from October 10 to 15. This is her report:

As a member of the ICFLC (see February prayer concern in insert) I was invited to attend the 12th Quadrennial Meeting of the Asian Church Women's Conference (ACWC), which was held in Seoul, South Korea in October.

Christian women from 18 Asian-area countries (including Australia and New Zealand) gathered to pray and worship together, to review issues and present

reports, to share their stories and to have fun. It was a marvellously vibrant gathering, particularly when people appeared in their national dress, most of which are extremely colourful and some quite ornate. Several countries offered beautiful fabric and crafts for sale in the lobby – a fundraiser to help cover their expenses. The Cambodians, for example, had to pay US\$250 each for a passport as well as the same amount to register, an enormous sum for them.

The conference was held at the Bahrom Education Centre at Seoul Women's University, where some slept in beds and some on the floor, Korean style. We ate a mixture of Korean and western food in the cafeteria. Although the western food was of the fast food variety, the Korean food was delicious, with many spicy dishes. The national delicacy, gimchi, is a type of pickled cabbage which comes in about 70 varieties! Mealtimes were great opportunities to meet new people and share experiences.

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Fall Council Report

Forward in faith

Communication and committee work was on the top of the agenda at WICC's Annual General Meeting – marking the start of our 85th year – during Fall Council in early November.

Program work discussed included social justice, networking, and communications, as well as services for the World Day of Prayer, the Fellowship of the Least Coin Ingathering, and December 6. Council heard news of development projects supported through our grants and benevolences, and the international connections WICC enjoys through WDPIC, ICFLC and WCC-R (World Council of Churches' Canadian Relations Committee).

The audit committee and treasurer gave positive reports. WICC was close to a balanced budget last year, although we took a major leap of faith to support new programs. With the help of Gail Picco Associates over the next year, we anticipate stronger support for mission programs and the endowment fund.

Council members discussed the shape of program committees and their terms of reference to help WICC work most effectively in its efforts to reach church-women across Canada. This will be

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PHOTO BY ALEC RAIT

Members participate in a sharing session at the ICFLC Annual General Meeting. Jocelyn is sitting second from the right.

Publications Mail Agreement 40021213

WICC NEWS

is brought to you by

WOMEN'S INTER-CHURCH COUNCIL OF CANADA

394 Bloor St. W. Suite 201 • Toronto ON M5S 1X4

416-929-5184 • 416-929-4064 (fax)

wicc@wicc.org • www.wicc.org



Letter from the President

Peace, love & joy

I am pleased to greet you as the new president of the Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada. This is my second term as a Roman Catholic appointee. As you know, 11 denominations appoint members to the Council; other members are elected. My time at WICC continues to be a rich ecumenical experience which is truly a gift to my faith journey.

Let me introduce myself. Through my experience as president of the Catholic Women's League of Canada (CWL), I have worked on social justice issues, especially those which affect women, and participated in meetings with federal government officials on several occasions. I am currently the representative for the CWL to the World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations (WUCWO), a network of women's organizations from 60 countries, and I am the chair of an Endowment Fund in Canada for this network.

In recent years, WICC has responded to many social justice concerns. This is a growth area for us and we hope that you, the WICC constituency, will benefit from leadership and projects that we bring to you in the future. The staff and Council work together to respond to current issues, and we trust that you, as part of the WICC family, will do your part in response to these ideas, information and projects. We encourage you to develop ecumenical networks in your regions. There are many issues that require us to work together for the benefit of the People of God.

The Christmas season surrounds us with many wonders, many of which are secular. As Christians, we pray – and act – for peace, love and joy. I suspect there has probably never been more need for such gifts in our lifetime. So I join you in prayer and action, and know that such a united effort will not go unanswered!

WICC welcomes your input. Contact us when you have good news to report, ideas to share, or needs to be met.

Claire Heron

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

201 - 394 Bloor St. W.,
Toronto ON M5S 1X4
wicc@wicc.org • www.wicc.org
416-929-5184 • 416-929-4064 (fax)

Fall Council update

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considered further at Spring Council, to be held May 30 to June 1, 2003.

The newly-elected Board includes: President Claire Heron (SK); President Elect Janet Campbell (AB); Secretary/Treasurer Helen Melbourne (ON); Membership & Nominating Committee Chair Dolly Williams (NS); World Day of Prayer Committee Chair Carla Pattinson (SK); Fellowship of the Least Coin Committee Chair Viola Duff (NF); Social Justice & Solidarity Network Committee Chair Megumi Matsuo Saunders (BC); Past President Joyce Christie (MB); and Executive Director Karen Hincke (ON).

Roma Paul (NF) will represent Canada at the WDPIC quadrennial and Jocelyn Rait (ON) represents Canada on the ICFLC.

Council members and staff wish you a blessed new year.

Karen Hincke, Executive Director



"They saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh." Matthew 2:11



Just as the wise men gave generously to Jesus, so many of you have given generously to support God's work. WICC would like to say thank you to our friends who have supported us in the past... and appeal to you during this season of giving to think of us once again.

Your gift will help Christian women face their future with greater security and hope. WICC is expanding its programs to meet the needs of Canadian women of faith. Please contribute to the future of the Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada and succeeding generations of church women and give generously.

We encourage you to participate in our work through a donation. Thank you!

Charitable income tax receipts will be issued for donations of \$20 or more.

Enclosed is a cheque made payable to: **Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada**

\$20 \$35 \$70 \$140 Other \$ _____

Please charge my donation to my Visa card.

Card Number: _____ Expiry Date: _____

Name on Card: _____ Signature: _____

Please mail this form with payment to: WICC, 201-394 Bloor St. W., Toronto, ON M5S 1X4
And, if necessary, please correct your name and address on the reverse. Thank you!

"What can I give him, poor as I am? If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb; if I were a wise man, I would do my part; yet what I can, I give him...give my heart."

In the Bleak MidWinter, words by Christina Rossetti



A prayer from Lebanon

Palestine, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran, Syria – these are next door and near neighbours of the tiny country of Lebanon. Imagine what it would be like to share Christ’s love with neighbours who seem to have little interest in loving their neighbour. It is in this context that the women of Lebanon invite us to worship and pray with them on the first Friday in March, 2003, as we celebrate the World Day of Prayer.

Lebanon is a beautiful country with a warm climate, famous for ancient cedars and olive trees. The names of some of the seaports and towns in Lebanon, such as Sidon and Tyre, sound familiar to us as they are the same names and places that Jesus traveled during his three years of ministry. Christians have lived in Lebanon since Jesus’ time.

However, because of how the mountain ranges and valleys run, Lebanon has been a highway of sorts for warring sectors in the neighbourhood. With the creation of the state of Israel came an influx of Palestinian refugees. Tension among countries in the area eventually resulted in a civil war as well as occupation of a large part of Lebanon by the Israeli army. Although the country



is currently at peace, it suffers from the effects of war – politically, economically and environmentally. Poverty, illiteracy, drugs and disease are challenges faced by the population of Lebanon. It is hard to find solutions to these problems when the entire area feels the impact of uneasy and unhappy neighbours.

In spite of these hardships, the women who wrote the service are filled with the hope and peace that can only come from the Holy Spirit. In the midst of hardship, they call on the Spirit of

Truth to dwell with them, to fill them and purify them. They extend an invitation to Christians in Canada to enter into their reality through participation in the World Day of Prayer.

I encourage ecumenical groups across the country to take time to participate in this annual service and stand in solidarity with the people of Lebanon. Learn about the issues facing the Lebanese people, pray with them, become informed and knowledgeable about what their reality is and then take action when and where you can, to further the cause of peace and justice in the world.

The World Day of Prayer is a remarkable tool given to us by God to learn about and refocus our attention on others around the world. It can be educational, worshipful, and community building. Through your prayer and actions in solidarity with the women of the writing country, the World Day of Prayer can be a significant force in the amelioration of poverty and violence facing people around the world.

I encourage you to join with us on March 7 as we pray with the women of Lebanon, “Holy Spirit: Fill Us”.

*Carla Pattinson, Chairperson,
World Day of Prayer Committee*



Above: Anna Greenwood Lee looks on as outgoing president Joyce Christie inspects her snowperson building kit, presented by new president Claire Heron. Right: WICC staff members sing of canoeing and cottage life as a tribute to Joyce.

Fall Council Photo Album



Council welcomed two new members this fall: **Cathie Harris** (left), is the new appointee from The Salvation Army; and **Cheryl Lynn Hagan-Deschamps** is the new appointee from the Anglican Church of Canada. Cathie lives in Toronto and Cheryl Lynn lives in Dartmouth, NS.



PHOTOS BY GILLIAN BARFOOT

In memoriam: Leota Tufts Nason

A member of the Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada in the 1980s, **Leota Tufts Nason** worked on the WDP Committee and was active on the Human Rights Committee during the production of "Hands to End Violence Against Women". Wherever she lived – Fredericton, Saint John, St. Martins – she gave outstandingly of her leadership skills.

In addition to WICC, Leota served on the Atlantic Baptist Board of Christian Education, and on both the maritime and national CGIT committees. In her local congregation, she focused on music, teaching and administration.

Leota gave generously of her time and talents, as a school teacher, librarian, wife and mother (with five grown children). After a long illness, she passed away in October 2001 in Saint John, NB.

By Jean M. Gordon, who writes, "my years with WICC were such a blessing which I continue to cherish."



WICC also notes with sadness the death of longtime supporter and former Council member **Jeanette Aziz** of London, who passed away in the spring of 2002.

Coffee Party update

From reports filtering in to the WICC office, folks who participated in the Great Canadian Coffee Party in early October raised nearly \$900 by organizing a variety of activities, from a church coffee hour to a birthday party. The funds were donated to a women's shelter in Cobourg, ON, Amnesty International, a women's shelter in Stratford, ON, a women's safe house in Edmonton, AB, and Women's Place in St. Catharines, ON. Thanks to all who got involved.

We invite you to start thinking about what you can do next year to help overcome violence against women.

Korea welcomes ICFLC reps

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Plenary sessions were held in a comfortable lecture auditorium, and after the country reports each day Dr Kam Nang Soon led us in a Bible study. We explored our own perspective or system for studying the Bible, and how it has been used as both an oppressive and a liberating tool for women. After each talk we broke into study groups and sat on the floor around a low table in a classroom.

Many of the participants were theologians or ministers, and there was always an English speaker to translate if someone was having difficulty trying to express a difficult concept in her second or third language. Reporting back to the whole group became a lively exercise in women's mutual support. Many participants of them are living in oppressive countries, and find in God's word renewed strength and hope for liberation.

A statement was issued at the end of the meeting, summarizing the women's concerns in recommendations to the ecumenical bodies of each nation, asking them to address gender issues and support women ministers, and encouraging them to pray and work for peace. A particular focus for the next four years will be the issue of migrant workers and their treatment, an issue which affects many countries around the world.

Countries were paired together as prayer partners to work together for the next four years. It is too costly and complicated for these women to meet more frequently, although the benefits are obvious: they receive solid support for the work they are doing, they can commiserate with each other over their sometimes oppressive circumstances,

they can speak together against injustice and voice their longing for a peaceful world, and they can be encouraged by spending time and celebrating their faith together with other Christians, who are a minority in nearly all of Asia.

I felt privileged to be a part of this group, if only for a few days.



Left: ICFLC members Jacqueline and Judith pray together. Below: ICFLC members (including Jocelyn, left) perform a skit at the ACWC Quadrennial in Seoul, Korea.



PHOTOS BY ALEC RAIT

Calendar

◆ January 18 - 25

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity:

This annual event, on the theme "We have this treasure in clay jars" (2 Corinthians 4:4-18), is organized by the World Council of Churches. For the worship service and other resource material, visit www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/faith/wop2003/contents.html.

◆ March 7

World Day of Prayer: The women of Lebanon introduce us to their country and worship traditions with a service on the theme, "Holy Spirit, Fill Us". For information and materials, call the WICC office at 416-929-5184.