



Reflection

Currently, around the globe there are 20.8 million refugees who have had to leave their homelands in search of peace and security. A group of women religious leaders, sponsored by the National Council of Church of Christ, USA had a two week pilgrimage to the Middle East.

During their time in Jordan the word “co-existence” was mentioned frequently and signs of hope were witnessed during dialogue with Jordanian women. And, joyfully, there are people – both Israelis and Palestinians – who bring levels of peace and understanding to the region. Women in Jerusalem are claiming the peaceable kingdom and are transforming Jerusalem in small but mighty ways. On the West Bank the possibility of peace is being brought to women through belonging to an International Peace Centre. Through these ministries peacemakers teach the beauty and necessity of understanding “the other”.

Meeting with women and children who have been impacted, and in some cases devastated by the trauma of homelessness, prompted the Rev Sue Turley to offer this reflection.

Images of Jordan.

The air smells thin and dusty, earth tones all around green pines, olive trees, tan and brown ground. The hillsides merge up from the brown earth covered in desert sand like a blanket of fog. The sun, a flat disk hanging over the Dead Sea, hides behind the sand filled sky.

Mt Nebo borders the view in mounds of beiges, browns and tans.

Jesus walked these desert lands, baptized, lived and healed here.

Do you feel him? Do you see him? Can you hear him crying for his people, wailing over spilt blood. Children's blood, mothers' blood, fathers, sisters and brothers' blood.

Only for the winds to blow this life back into the air as if it was never there.

The sands of Jordan absorb the spilt blood of our sons and daughters while mothers' tears flow, and the olive tree bears fruit.

-Mary Mc Intyre.

Snippets

- CWS recently initiated a visit to New Zealand for several overseas young people in a Global Youth Peace Encounter. St David's, Palmerston North had the privilege of hosting two East Timorese, two Fijians and one person from Sri Lanka. It was inspiring to meet them and to hear the appreciation of the East Timorese of the support APW had provided through the Special Project.
- The Governor General of New Zealand will host a reception in Wellington on 1 October to celebrate the mission work of PCANZ in North India. Heather Tate and Jill Little will represent APW.
- APW commissioners to General Assembly will be Heather and Jill, and Mary Mc Intyre will be an observer. The APW Recommendation will be presented in partnership with the Global Mission. The recommendation seeks support from PCANZ in raising awareness of the rising cases of HIV/AIDS in NZ and the Pacific, and the link of poverty and gender inequality. Your prayers are appreciated.

'Handful of Sand'

St Columba, Tauranga has members in their congregation related to Roger and Paula Levy who with their children, David and Grace, live at Onesua High School, Vanuatu. St Columba held a silent auction recently when \$1,500 was raised to purchase a water blaster for Onesua. Its use will precede the painting of walls and roof and help maintain property.

Last year's project, adding toilets to the married quarters at Talua Training Centre, has just been completed by John Wright of Christchurch. This is

our “handful of sand” of which Andrew Bell wrote in the March issue of Global Mission News.

– Barbara Walls.

Special Project Packs:

These should be in the hands of Presbyterian co-ordinators/secretaries by early October. If you have not received a pack, please contact Rae Simpson.

The overseas section of the Special Project is Lauru of the Solomon Islands. The Lauru Land Conference was founded in 1981 to focus on the land and the cultural identity – dis-

putes, logging, development aid and the needs of communities... The Women's Programme “brings women together to empower and educate them while developing their leadership skills...helping them find new ways of earning income from the sales of crafts, giving them more confidence in participating in decisions about the use of their community's shared resources and educating them about the issues confronting Lauru and the Solomon Islands in general.

- Rae Simpson.

Northern Regional Day

Our day started with morning tea and greeting old friends as well as meeting new people. Julia Buckingham, president of Auckland Presbyterial, welcomed everyone. Forty women from Auckland, Hamilton, Tauranga, Whangaparoa, the Methodist Women's Fellowship were in attendance; and from Palmerston North came NCG representatives and our special guest facilitator, the Rt Rev Pamela Tankersley, Moderator of General

Assembly.

Our theme was "Jesus calls us by name" and our programme started with sharing how we came by our names, and some interesting stories were told. After Pamela dramatized the story of Chuza's wife (Lk 8.1-3), we were involved in role-playing, going into groups representing the people who would have been involved with the visit of Jesus – Jewish hierarchy, villagers, the people healed, the disciples as well as the women. In the afternoon five people shared how God

had called them by name. With images like "doors opening", and the "God nudge" we were reminded that God calls each of us in a very personal way. We all had great fun with heaps of glitter, stickers, pictures and glue as we made bookmarks around the verse "I have written your name on the palm of my hand. You are precious in my sight and I love you." The day ended with a wonderfully peaceful time and shared Communion.

- Ailsa Freeman.

South Island Regional Conference

Forty four people gathered at St. Andrew's, Ashburton for a weekend of fellowship, fun, food (and fat!) The theme, "**Many Branches, One Burning Bush**" was well established in the opening service conducted by the Convener, Delwyn Moylen.

The keynote speaker, the Very Rev Michael Thawley chose the topic, "**The Spark that Lights the Fire.**" This was expanded to highlight the colourful diversity of the world – cultural, social backgrounds and political experiences of God. The differences are the sparks that light the fire. We were reminded that conformity snuffs out the fire. We were urged to celebrate diversity while still being true to ourselves.

Flags of NZ, Australia, Samoa and USA, together with a display of artefacts, emphasized our multicultural theme. Saturday's proceedings began with devotions, followed by a Powhiri and Maori cul-

tural items by local school children who presented all the members with crosses made from flax.

The first international contribution came from the Rev Malu Fruean who explained protocols of visiting families in Samoa. One must always approach the head of the family first. Respect for age and each other is still very strong and is always part of the thinking. After lunch Mrs. Thelma Bell, a charming Filipino, shared a delicious chicken and rice dish, "Adobo" before speaking about her homeland. Thelma followed her informative talk with a graceful dance using a large cylindrical piece of material.

Bible study based in Galatians 3.28 was presented by Mrs. Almond Royds. In this excellent study we noted the diversity of people and how the early church recognized that its mission was to break down barriers that divide people. It was very humbling to learn that the two largest Presbyterian Churches in

Auckland are Korean, and that more Christians worship in China than in Europe.

Following the beautiful conference dinner which highlighted our Scottish heritage, the Rev Dr Graham Redding, Moderator Designate, spoke on "Leadership" and roles of laity and ordained ministers. He stressed that the need to reach out is very great. The evening concluded with colourful items from Ashburton's Cook Island community.

On Sunday we joined the congregation of St Andrew's and shared Holy Communion.

Congratulations to the Ashburton folk for organizing such a challenging conference. Many branches were indeed represented, but one burning bush. – Lois Diaper.

It was wonderful to meet APW members from the North and South at these recent conferences. Thank you to the two committees who worked very hard to put the programmes together and provided much food for thought.

– Heather Tate.

A Note from the Treasurer's desk:
We would appreciate all affiliation fees to be paid as soon as possible. Funds raised for the Special Project 2008 should now be in my hands ready to be dispersed at the NCG October 17-18 meeting.

White Remittance Forms:

Sadly, some of these are being sent to the address of the late Diane Croft. *Please* ensure all forms and correspondence be sent direct to me.

- Jocelyn Hannay,

APW PO Box 489, Feilding, 4740

Website: Thanks to Jason in the National Church Office, our APW Website (www.pcanz.org.nz) is being updated slowly. Please visit the site and give us your comments and feedback. I welcome any photos of your gatherings/activities. Please send material to Lafulafu@xtra.co.nz