

# *News & Views*

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*December 2006*



European Baptist Women's Union

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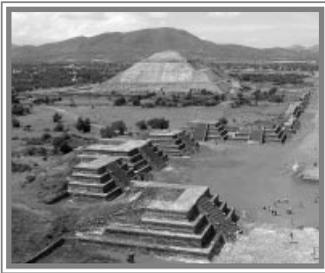
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## WINDOW TO THE WORLD

"*In Mexico woman can be killed without any reason*" – Mexico,

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"*There were music and singing and dancing, praising the Lord. We prayed a lot. Finally we joined hands in a circle. Everybody stood with faces turned to the city, and we prayed for the city.*" – Cuba, **Margun Warem**

"*In some areas are problems with water, also in the city, therefore every evening women and children carry water from wells and springs.*" –

Tajakistan, **Ewa Gutkowska**

## PRAYER REQUESTS

*"As long as the Earth endures,  
seedtime and harvest,  
cold and heat,  
summer and winter,  
day and night  
will never cease."*

*Genesis 8:22*



Autumn – often it is not our favourite season. Cold and rain, fog and wind. While the trees dress up in their colourful leaves, people put on brown or black coats, dark jackets. They close the doors and create their inside world. While outside everything turns silent, mysterious. As we walk in the streets the cold air refreshes our lungs, ruffles our hair.



Is there anything nice in the fall? Of course! Remember as you bite an apple or taste a nice grape. Isn't it good! Yes, we agree, it is an absolutely nice feeling. So, autumn is the season of harvest!

We talk a lot about global warming. We talk, we are afraid, but we don't do anything. In spite of all these problems caused by a lifestyle full of technical things and growing industrialisation, we still have everything we need, and even more in Europe. Does it inspire us to thanksgiving?

As Christians we know everything that we have comes from our Heavenly Father. He provides us bread, water, fresh air. We collect all kinds of crops from the fields through these months. And we say thanks. Traditionally we celebrate thanksgiving services in Hungary.

Praise the Lord for his mercy and love! Praise his name for everything He gives us. Ask the Almighty God in your prayers to bless your food, to bless your life, to bless everyone who turns to him this autumn.

Aniko Ujvari

# **WHO IS RICH** \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ **& WHO IS POOR**



**One day The father of a very wealthy family took his son on a trip to the country with the express purpose of showing him how poor people live. They spent a couple of days and nights on the farm of what would be considered a very poor family.**

On their return from their trip, the father asked his son:

- How was the trip?
- It was great, Dad.
- Did you see how poor people live? The father asked.
- Oh yeah, said the son.
- So, tell me, what you learned from the trip? asked the father.

The son answered:

- I saw that we have one dog and they had four. We have a pool that reaches to the middle of our garden and they have a creek that has no end...

...We have imported lanterns in our garden and they have the stars at night.

Our patio reaches to the front yard and they have the whole horizon.

We have a small piece of land to live on and they have fields that go beyond

...We have servants who serve us, but they serve others.

We buy our food, but they grow theirs.

We have walls around our property to protect us; they have friends to protect them.

The boy's father was speechless then his son added: –  
Thanks Dad for showing me how poor we are

Isn't perspective a wonderful thing?

Makes you wonder what would happen if we all gave thanks for everything we have, instead of worrying about what we don't have. Appreciate every single thing you have!

Pass this on to friends and acquaintances  
and help them refresh their perspective and appreciation  
THANK YOU



Don't forget we have website:  
**[www.ebwu.org](http://www.ebwu.org)**  
Visit it please and share with us  
your experiences!

# We cannot pray

We cannot pray to You, O God  
to banish war,  
for You have filled the world  
with paths of peace,  
If only we would take them.

We cannot pray to You  
to end starvation,  
for there is food enough for all,  
if only we would share it.

We cannot merely pray  
for prejudice to cease;  
for we might see the good  
in all that lies before our eyes,  
if only we would use them.

We cannot merely pray  
"Root out despair",  
for the spark of hope already waits  
within the human heart,  
for us to fan it into flame.

We must not ask of You, O God,  
to take the task that you have given us.  
We cannot shirk, we cannot flee away,  
avoiding obligation for ever.

Therefore, we pray, O God,  
for wisdom and will,  
for courage to do and to become,  
not only to look on with helpless yearning  
as though we had no strength.

## DEAR SISTERS,



*“Call to me, and I will answer you; I will tell you wonderful and marvellous things that you know nothing about.”* (Jeremiah 33:3).

This is very good to have such special DAY when women from all over the world call to God with one voice praising Him and asking Him in intercessory prayer. Through the meeting of the Baptist Women’s Day of Prayer this year and the program prepared by sisters from Latin America “Seeing with new eyes God’s mercy” we could hear and really experienced God’s Mercy and we could see how God works in answer for prayer. I suppose that before this day there were a lot of preparations, efforts that to arrange the meetings in the best way... and after that miracles God’s answering for prayers. I hope some of you will share with us your experiences concerning this day in your countries, churches, houses, different groups.

The Baptist Women’s Day of Prayer is very important day, which the beginning started in 1948. Almost through sixty years, in November Baptist women gathered together and only God knows how many, sometimes secret prayers received answer. Praise the Lord for all of them! I hope that this special day will inspire us to more prayer during our “normal” days that produces results during our daily life. Such prayer is the link binding us with God. This is the bridge giving us the possibility to go over every depth and the way over every precipice and over all dangerous situation in our life. This is also looking for God and finding Him. There are also struggles with Him and victory like in life of Jacob. In the Bible we have very concrete advise: *“Pray at all times.”*

(I Thessalonians 5:17). So, we can continue our DOP because it is difficult to introduce God all prayer requests concerning ourselves and different continents with its needs and struggles.

We should pray at all times but I know that it is difficult to pray when we are weak. I think we experienced that our prayer life goes up and down or even becomes dull. And may be we just wanted to stop praying or treat it as the unpleasant duty. Honestly in my life these kind of feelings were not strange. It seemed to me sometimes that work is easier than praying, really praying. In my ministry I would like to depend more for prayer than own strength or abilities. Therefore it is the prayer that God would change my desires and make me like person whom he would like to see. I realise that in spite of my weakness God is more willing to answer prayer than I am or we are to pray. God encourages us to prayer. Just through the Scripture God shows us that *"...the prayer of a good person has a powerful effect"*.

We know well what had happened with Peter in prison, when *"... constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church."* (Acts 12:5). The prison has been opened, Apostle Peter had became free, bad king Herod died and *"...the word of God continued to spread and grow"*. It happened because of constant prayer. Would you like to have part at such prayer? This is possible in XXI century. God wants to work through our prayer. He does not need great people but He looks for human who would have courage and would be ready to show omnipotence His God.

Let's be careful not to limit God in our prayer because of our small faith or our imagination about Him and His possibilities. Let's expect much more what our request could be express by words. Remember that He is great almighty God and that He can everything. We have to remember also about our position in Christ in front of Him and than we can expect from God great things. God wants to work through our prayers. But only prayer full of determination, fervent prayer, needed time will find God's

answer. Let's look around on our family, neighbours, poor people, women without hope, nations... How many of them are in sins, are hopeless... God wants through you and me to save these loses, needed God's mercy people. *"Be persistent in prayer, and keep alert as you pray, giving thanks to God."* (Colossians 4:2)

Your in Christ,  
Ewa Gutkowska

## BWA Women's Prayer Day in Hungary



More than 200 Baptist Women gathered together in our church to pray and to connect with the prayer chain held all over the world.

First we heard some information about the beginning of the Prayer Day. We also had a description of the sisters of Latin America about their continent and the message of Dorothy Selebano, the

President of BWA Woman's Department.

Then the President of the Hungarian Women's Department, Mrs. Kovács preached from Mathew 20.29/34. She talked about the blind men who knew Jesus. They understood that he could help them, so they insisted on crying on to him. They did not stop crying in spite of the rebuke of the crowd. They knew that now is the only chance to recover so they stretched out their arms and with their arms they stretched out their spiritual arms also to Jesus. And Jesus – as always – heard them, stopped by them and healed them.

There is time also in our lives when we go before God with prayers. He hears us, stops by us and helps us.

After this sermon a woman from Panama spoke. Eunice Escobar lives in Hungary with her Hungarian husband since four years and she has some information about her country and the Christian work in her church.

This summary of Eunice was followed by a testimony of Szilvia Papp who spent one year in Mozambic to help in the children ministry. She shared her experiences and pictures.

After the two live report we heard some data and some prayer request of the continents that followed by the prayers. The abundant service on that day was finished with offering and singing.

We had the special experience of the world wide prayer. It was in our mind and in our heart that women all over the world hold each other's hand and lift up in prayer to the Heavenly Father. Thank to the Lord who listens and answers us!

**Krisztina Puskas**  
*from Hungary, Budapest*

## *Dear sisters!*

This time I will tell you about Riga's Baptist churches Prayer day event on 6th of November.

A week before Prayer day Lîvija Lâme asked all the leaders of sister departments to come together to talk about arrangements for Prayer day. Each of leaders decided to prepare information about one of continents and present it in the day of Prayer.

On 6th of November sisters of Riga churches gathered in Baptist Union House. We had a special guest – missionary Linda Guy from New Zealand. On the table there was a candlestick with 7 candles in it and on the wall there was a world map.

The day started with praising, exalting the Lord. Then we listened to Linda Guy. She was speaking about importance and meaning of this day, about all the needs and her homeland. And we lighted the first candle.

Than sisters one after the other presented each continent: they showed them on the map, told about Christians' life there, persecutions and prayer needs. That way all the candles got lighted. Then we all split in several groups and we prayed of these needs. We did donation of Prayer day. In conclusion we sang the praise songs to the Lord and united in testimonial prayer.

That was unforgettable day! Blessed time.  
God keep us and hold together for your Kingdom!

Sincerely,  
**Anda Kostanda**  
*from Latvia*

## ***Trust the Lord and do good*** *EBWU mini conference in Prague*

This text from Psalm 37:3 was the theme for the Western European Conference held in Prague October 13–15.

Several of the committee members had arrived already



earlier that week at the beautiful buildings of the IBTS to dot the last it's and to finalise the preparations of the programme.

We also did some work in the cellars of one of the buildings, where the archive of the EBF is situated. Our women's work also can make use of this possibility. Several historical papers went through our hands and we tried to make some kind of order in them. We labelled them and left it to a volunteer from Great Britain who is working on this project to make it into a real archive.



It was good to have some time to work together before the participants came. Although a lot of preparations had been during our last committee meeting and by email, there are still items that come up the last minute, last changes have to be made and being on the spot helps to do this work

In our preparations prayer plays an important part. We know that our work needs the blessing of our God.

When the start of the conference on Friday is getting close and we're getting nervous we realise that now we have to start using the theme also for ourselves; We have to trust the Lord and do good.

60 Women from Europe arrived at the IBTS and one woman from South Africa, our world president Dorothy Selebano.

As usual it is a feast of recognition when we greet each other. I always consider this as one of the wonderful mysteries of women's work. Of course, through the years, you get to know several of the women you meet. But even in those who come for the first time we can see our sisters.

In the programme each union could share the joys and sorrows they face. What impressed me most is that in spite of the

fact many of the western European unions worry about whether there is a future for women's work it doesn't paralyse them in doing good. So many people and projects are being supported by prayer, help and finances. The support for mission work is still one of the biggest goals of women's work.

Maybe we should focus more on the "Trust the Lord". Dorothy Selebano led the workshop with this title. She also stressed this message in her Bible study, using many examples from her personal life. Her message and her personality worked very inspiring.

In her workshop, Dagmar Kersting, made us aware of the fact that in our busy and full lives we should take and make time to be quiet and listen to What God is telling us.

We have been creative too and made small boxes. Margun led this workshop. During the service on Sunday morning the words of encouragement which had been written earlier were divided to be put into those boxes. In due time we could collect more of those words and this box may become a real treasure box.



And it was not just these written words that made us feel encouraged by the time we returned home. Once again we have felt how valuable it is to meet each other, to share what is in our hearts, to sing and pray together and to pray for each other.

**Janny Kingma**

# **Dorothy Selebano's thoughts**

*October 2006. Prague*



- The appointment of my death only God knows.
  - God doesn't die.
  - God doesn't change.
  - "I am"– says God. Not I was, not I'll be, but I am.
  - God is everywhere where I am. God is not only a present, but a Trinity.
  - See Him in your everyday life. He is the Holy God by doing.
- 
- God is not as small as we are.
  - Remove your trust in people, remove your trust in education, remove your trust in money. Trust in Him.
  - It was God's choice that you'd borned where you are.
  - Tell him about things you don't tell about to another people.
  - He promises us individual care, love, concentration.
  - Holy Spirit is like balsam on our heart.
  - Right time, right person – He sends his angels.
  - When God asks you – do it!
- 
- You have to do your part and than left God the rest.
  - You cannot be healthy spiritually if you have no spiritual food. Give Him time in the morning.
  - God is very strict – don't play game with Him.
  - God will answer not the way you think but the way which is right for you.
  - Leave God to be God!
  - We are instruments in the hand of our living God.
  - He knows you more than you know yourselves. Nobody can stand before God and tell I don't have... You have you. I am a gift for myself from God. You with you can serve God. You can tell that Jesus is the Lord!

# What remains?

## *Reflection on the EBWU-Western European Conference in Prague*

"Trust in the Lord"!!! This imperative, emphasised over and over during these days by Dorothy Selebano, President of the BWA–Women's Department, will remain edged upon our hearts and minds. The deep meaning and implications of trusting in the Lord have come vividly alive through Dorothy's unique, colourful and often dramatic true stories from everyday life.

What remains is the task to put into action what we've learned.

What remains is the gratefulness for meeting wonderful, godly women from different countries, different cultures and different backgrounds. Jet, women, with whom we feel connected through the Love of Christ and our common desire to glorify our Lord by serving Him wholeheartedly in our own areas.

What remains is the realisation, that the changes and challenges we face in our women's unions as well as in society are much the same everywhere. We're in it together. However, we need not be discouraged. One strong message from God which came through in one of the workshops, was the call to be still and listen to the voice of the Lord. We need to look out for His agenda and be united in prayer.

What remains is the encouragement found in experiencing our unity in Christ, by sharing our joys and sorrows and by seeing the humble obedience to God's calling in the lives of our sisters all over Europe.

What remains is the joy radiating from the members of the committee, a joy in spite of often painful circumstances.

Joy comes by trusting in the Lord and doing good! Let's do it!

**Annegret Drucke**

So many women, so many sisters, so many characters and just ONE goal:

## ***Serving the Lord in their lives!***

Prague 12–15 October 2006

Therefore they came all the way to Prague to join the EBWU mini-conference for Western Europe.

This time to learn from each other, because we all are facing so many problems in our women's work.

I have asked several women to write down their impressions about this conference, and it is amazing what an agreement of thoughts came out of those letters.

First of all everybody felt the loving presence of the Holy Spirit, and not only during prayer time..

The strong feeling of sisterhood was an unexpected experience for some women who came for the first time to a conference like this.

(For the veterans among us that was something we were longing for since the announcement of this conference!)

The tie that binds us becomes a reality and you will never forget that. We are really sisters in the Lord. Sisters who are working hard in their own countries in their organisations.

The presentations of the countries showed us the excellent quality of Baptist women's work. Like one sister wrote: I have been struck by that work with regard to collecting funds for poor people and their activities in their own countries.

Problems were recognized although not every country meets the same difficulties. Even within one country you are experiencing different problems: in the large cities it is not the same as in the small villages.

Most women were thinking it was very important to share our experiences and to know we are not alone: that similar problems and joys exist even in other places.

The answers to our problems will not be equal, but we can pray for each other and the Lord will understand and bless our work.

We are not struggling alone: the Lord is in our company and He will not fail!

So remember the theme of the conference: Trust in the Lord and do good.

The workshop with Dagmar Kersting on "doing good" (WHAT to do), that second part of our conference theme, took an unexpected and interesting turn. Somebody asked: "How are you doing that: listening to God's voice?? I am always speaking with Him and doing a lot for Him, but listening? I can't hear His voice!" Some experiences were exchanged about how to learn to listen and then the sisters agreed: "Let's try right now – this is our chance!"

So there was a time of silence and we asked the Holy Spirit to talk to us. And He did! We really have a living God! Trust in the Lord!

That 's what all the sisters have learned : remember and share with the people around you: Trust in the Lord !! AND do good!!

Dorothy Selebano, our world president told us about the theme in her opening speech in a very vivid way. She made the words very clear. The Lord needs us. So trust in Him and DO GOOD.

Our European president Ewa mentioned it in her closing speech: each one of you is unique, wonderful and very important to the world. God needs our hands, legs and our total life to work through us to change the world, our countries, churches, families.

That made a sister write: It hits me straight in my heart. I felt, hearing one sentence of Dorothy Selebano, that GOD spoke to me personally, while feeling not to be good enough to serve Him:

God makes no mistake in calling a person to serve HIM.

**Wies Dijkstra**  
from the Netherlands

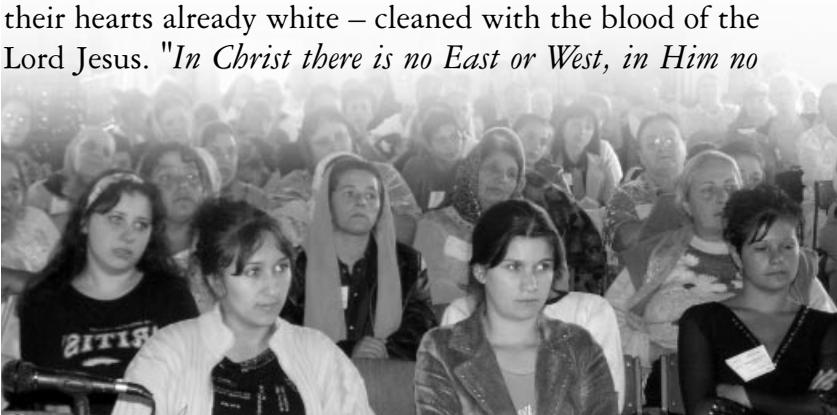
# Akos Baptist Roma Women Conference

*Akos is a village  
in north-western Romania*

It is God's special grace that sister Dorothy Selebano, president of BWA Women's Department has visited us, Hungarian Baptist Women of Romania. On 16 and 17 October she was meeting the Hungarian Baptist sisters in two different churches.

On 18 October we have held the third Baptist Roma Women Conference. Almost 200 Roma sisters coming from 8 localities were looking forward to meeting our special guest, Dorothy Selebano, who was with us the whole day. Her message was warming, encouraging the hearts of the often overlooked, despised Roma women.

It was a joy to look into the shining black eyes of the Roma women and girls having a darker skin colour, but their hearts already white – cleaned with the blood of the Lord Jesus. *"In Christ there is no East or West, in Him no*



*South or North...*" – I remember to the words of the song. We were really experiencing that. The women that have become free of the bondage of different sins (occultism, sexual immorality, etc...), were speaking with joy about their new freedom in Christ. Though many of them live in very poor conditions, their prayers and songs are speaking about the riches of their hearts. We were singing a lot, and it was a special joy to listen to the songs coming from the hearts of our Roma sisters.

The essence of sister Dorothy's message was: "The love of God is so great, that cannot be expressed with words. He loves us, He gave himself for us, that those who believe may have eternal life. Trust in Him, you can say Him everything. He will listen and



help you." Our sister has experienced God's special providence in her own life, after her husband died and she had still three minor children to grow. "I was trusting my husband, but he died" – she continued - "***but God does not die!*** He is yesterday, today and tomorrow the same". Together with many Roma women we consented that we can trust God.

In the afternoon our sister Dorothy was speaking about the life of the African women who suffer a lot because of their cultural customs and colour of their skin. We cannot really imagine their difficult life in past times but also in our days. Their life is even more difficult than that of the Roma women in Eastern Europe. But we can do one thing: we can pray for them, that the Lord might give them grace to turn to Him, and live the Christian life in Him.

The conference was closed with an evangelism meeting, were also men from the loco church and village participated.

Erzsebet Vekas

*From 19th till 21st of October we had this great opportunity to have in Riga our president Dorothy Selebano. Now thinking of her visit we want to share it with you. And we will let you read one of our sister's opinion and personal experience.*

## **Don't sit on a fence!**

When in our church we got an invitation to conference and after we found out that the special guest is going to be the president of Baptist World Women Department and the theme is going to be: "Don't sit on a fence!" we got a little confused. Some of us made jokes about it, some made comments and others kept silent.

Some of us in our childhood have been shepherd. And there were times when we had to look for a shelter because of some mad cow that was coming straight to our direction. On a fence!! The only shelter.

And now the theme of conference: "Don't sit on a fence!" I won't tell you now how step by step was the program of conference but I'll let you know my personal impression. And I'll tell you straight away: at this conference I was caught by lightning.

When I was small I remember my mom telling me that lightning is something very powerful, effective and extremely beautiful. Being a child I was scared of it but at the same time I wanted to see it.

Finally! After our president had spoken for a while I realised - this is the lightning!

We were in Africa when the president was talking about her homeland. With all our hearts we felt sympathy for black women and their children who are begging for bread but there is no bread to give, when little babies' bodies are covered by purulent abscesses and unclean wounds but mothers don't have any medicine and bandages...

"Give yourself to the Lord... the president was reading from Psalms 37. "Turn away from evil and do good.."

And later she was talking about ourselves. About each of us. Of how special God created us thinking of us individually so that we could serve Him and our neighbour. I doubt if I will ever hear so heatedly spoken word told directly to me: "Don't sit on a fence when the Lord is asking you in His ministry!"

That was impressive! That was something special. Don't sit on a fence! Don't look at one side of a fence or at other. You might protect yourself more by sitting on a fence but God is asking you in His ministry.

How many different reflections. Did I catch this inviting word?"  
With sincere greetings, **Anda**

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**For we are God's workmanship,  
created in Christ Jesus to do  
good works, which God prepared  
in advance for us to do.**

*Ef 2:10*



# Window to the World

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## *Echoes of the meetings in Mexico*

The early meeting of the Women's Department (WD) of the BWA and Annual gathering of the BWA took place in Mexico City on 27.06.06 – 2.07.06 and 3.07.06 – 8.07.06. As the president of the EBWU I had privilege and a duty as well to participate at these two meetings.

At the WD meeting director of the WD – Patsy Davis participated, secretary/treasurer – Donna Grover and all continental presidents apart from the president of the Africa. The president of the WD Dorothy Selebano arrived later and joined us during Annual Gathering.

Every day of our meeting we started and close by short Bible Study and prayer. Reports presented by Continental presidents brought us nearer women's ministry on different continents. We could hear and see that God works through women dedicated to Him on every continent. He works in answer for prayer especially in Africa, Asia and Latin America. At these continents every day many people come to Christ in spite of persecution and natural disaster which took place and still can happen. In Africa additionally Aids, HIV, other diseases, misery and famine are collecting victims.

In Asia over 70% of population live for less than 1\$ per day. And in such situation Holy Spirit works with unusual power. He works because thousands of women persist in unceasing, inter-

cessory prayer. Last year in November in Nigeria over 5000 women participated at the Day of Prayer

The meeting with the leaders of the Mexican Baptist Women's Union has been special experience for us. Generally women's situation in Mexico is not easy. Fathers decide about life of young girls. They get married at the age 15 frequently. These young women-children became mothers very soon. When they have a few children their husbands leave them very often. So they have no sources to live.

All burden of responsibility for upbringing and livelihood fell down for woman. So this is normal that on the streets in Mexico City there are a lot of bagging mothers with children. Some of them migrate. Their family or neighbours take care for children. They do every kind work to help children. Very often they work 14 hours per day and receive a little money. They have not education, two among three are not able to read. There is not duty to go to school but recently government works in direction to change it. In Mexico woman can be killed without any reasons.

So such situation is big challenge to brothers and sisters in Christ. There are over 150 000 members of the Baptist Union in Mexico. They do a lot of mission work. The sisters work at the elderly houses. They organized Christian camps for women, summer Bible school for children. They take care for children from the street and help people who live thanks to waste food from the baskets on the street. Women organized different training



seminars for women's leaders and once a year conference for women. The needs of this country are big. There are only to small number of "workers" and finances. Let's join in prayer for this country where many people do not know Jesus as personal Saviour.

At the second meeting, Annual Gathering of the BWA over 300 brothers and sisters from all continents and many countries around the world took part. The theme of this meeting was: "So



*you may overflow with hope, by the power of the Holy Spirit.*" (Rom.15:13). We need hope but the people who are in darkness and do not know Jesus Christ need much more. Holy Spirit works just through brothers and sisters from all over the world under guidance of a new leadership of the BWA with its new president David Coffey.

Every day we started with the plenary Worship Session, when our hearts were well prepared to worship God by the Scripture and devotional time, singing together. The short testimonies and reports from different continents inspired us to pray for different needs and to thank God for His amazing work around the world.

It is important to add that Implementation Task Force (ITF), committee recommended by General Council in Birmingham pro-

posed some changes of the meeting and put emphasis on five areas:

1. **Worship and fellowship**
2. **Nurture mission and evangelism**
3. **Defend religious liberty and human rights**
4. **Respond through relief and sustainable community development**
5. **Promote relevant theological reflection.**

There was the change of the name of the meeting, Annual Gathering instead of General Council.

ITF brought in Annual Gathering Forums and Affinity groups. Forums are meetings where the most important topics can be discussed i.g. The church respond to migration; HIV/Aids ministry; Violence against women and children. Affinity groups is a gathering of individuals working in the same field of ministry i.g. secretaries, presidents.

Our BWA family became bigger. The Membership committee introduced applications for membership and three of them received full membership. There are: Baptist General Convention of Missouri, the India Baptist Convention and the Ethiopian Addis Kidan Baptist Church.

This year Gustavo Parajon, a layman and doctor from Nicaragua received an Annual BWA Human Rights Award. He worked and served to the poor through CEPAD. His defence of the human rights of the poor are examples of how Christ can work through Baptists to witness Christ love.

The World Baptist Aid in last year helped the victims of Tsunami, Hurricane Katrina, earthquakes in Indonesia and others. There were millions of dollars which helped people to start a new life. We are the family and we have to help each other. Everybody can have part at this big task. God expects it from own children and He wants to listen through us people who are hungry, suffer, who are in prisons. He wants his people “*may overflow with hope, by the power of the Holy Spirit*”, to bring it to those who are lost and are in darkness.

**Ewa Gutkowska**

## ***CUBA 2006.***

In 1998 a Cuban music group, Kairos, visited Europe, touring several European countries, giving concerts in many Baptist churches. They also visited Norway, including my local Baptist



church. The leader of the group together with two of the members stayed in our home. That was the beginning of a warm friendship via e-mail that resulted in my husband and I visiting Cuba last summer 2006, for our holidays.

We did not know what to expect. We had heard a lot about Cuba, but now we were going to find out by ourselves.

The first week we spent in Havana, the capital. We stayed in a private home with very friendly and nice people. Havana is a very interesting city, with Old Havana on UNESCO's World Heritage list. On our first Sunday in Havana, we went to service in one of the Baptist churches in the city, a very big one. We were met by smiling people and joyful song and music. The pastor preached about peace, the absence of war, the importance of peace in society, between people. But above all he preached about peace of heart, which only God can give, and which is not dependant on the world around. (John 14, 27)

The next week we went to Santa Clara to visit our friends. Again we were welcomed in the most cordial way, and at once we became members of the family. We spent the week visiting many historical and interesting places in the region. But above all we

spent time meeting with the people of God. We travelled in the region together with our friends, a missionary family, visiting Baptist churches and groups meeting in private homes. We felt strengthened by their testimonies about what God is doing in their lives and in Cuba. We also gave our testimonies, feeling the community that only God can give people with such different backgrounds. We prayed together, and even if we didn't understand each other's words, we felt the presence of God very strongly.

On Sunday morning we took part in the service. During the service they announced a prayer meeting on Capiro Hill, which is a hill (small mountain) in the middle of the city, with a memorial of Che Guevara on the top. At six o'clock in the afternoon 100–150 people met on top of the hill. There were music and singing and dancing, praising the Lord. We prayed a lot. Finally we joined hands in a circle. Everybody stood with faces turned to the city, and we prayed for the city. We had a lot of strong and wonderful experiences and blessings with our brothers and sisters in God during our stay in Cuba.



Our last week in the country my husband and I spent at the beach in Varadero, also there meeting with the people of God. I thank the Lord for our brothers and sisters in Cuba, this beautiful island. I pray the Lord to bless the expanding church of Cuba, enabling them to meet the future, whatever it will be. (Ef 1,15-16)

**Margun Warem**

*Norway*

## *Women's conferences in Tajikistan*

Last year in November in St.Petersburg during the "Living Water Conference" I met for the first time Natalia Filatova, full of energy sister from Tajikistan. And just there together with Olga Mocan we received an invitation to Tajikistan also from the president



of the Union of Evangelical Christian Baptist Churches of Tajikistan, brother Alexander Vervai for women's conferences which have been planned in September this year.

For me personally it sounded like exotic country of Central

Asia and it is so. Let me give you very general, short information. Tajikistan is beautiful, mountainous country with the capitol Dushanbe. There are over 7 mln people and children are majority, 53% of the population. The main religion is Muslim – 94%, the rest are Christian and non believers. The people use Tajik and Russian language. In years 1992–1997 there was terrible home war with many victims of that, therefore people are appreciating peace and they accept very poor economical situation. Warm climate of this country allow to cultivate soil three times per year but it is important to know proper plants to protect soil before sterilization. One of the source of national income are cotton plantations where work mainly women and children. In some areas are problems with water, also in the city, therefore every evening women and children carry water from wells and springs. It reminded me

pictures from the Bible when women carried water for people and animals. Women wear nice loose dresses.

After some problems with visa and baggage with one day delay I arrived to Khudzhand. In this city there is the Baptist Church with about 60 members. In this church took place one day conference for women and at this meeting participated over 30 sisters and a few brothers. They were very happy about the time together and what they could listen by Olga's and mine lectures and testimonies. Sisters from this church work with children and also brothers work with poor people from the street. They offer them one meal a day and just during the conference we had dinner together. It was nice possibility to talk with this people, also about Jesus.

At this conference participated one special women, mother of Sergiej Bassarab, pastor who has been killed by Muslims two years ago after the service in the church in Isfara. This old woman touched my heart by her peace when she related this tragic story.

From Khudzhand we went to Dushanbe. There is the biggest Baptist Church of the Union with over 250 members and about 160 children. Before the home war there were about 800 members but because of difficult situation many of them migrated mainly to Russia and to Germany. The church members, also women involve in different mission projects. They work with children



from the street, children in orphanages, handicap children, women in prison and after prison. We had possibility to visit two centres: for children from the street and for women who left the prisons. This is very concrete ministry and help for those who are in need.

The visit in orphanage where are 86 handicap kids has been very moving, especially the rooms where are children in beds. With almost all of them there is not any contact. Each child this is separate, very sad story. This orphanage is governmental but there work very dedicated sisters from the church. Believe me they are like heroines because this work is very difficult.

During the summer time the church organize camp for children, also for some from this orphanage. This is for them always wonderful time. When we visited this place kids asked our leader Madamin – when we will go??? or just some of them could say only one word – camp, camp repeated a few times.

At two days women's conference participated about 100 sisters (among them nice number of young women) and also some brothers. The theme of this meeting was: We are the members of God's family. The lectures presented by Olga and me have been accepted with big joy. They expressed very openly gratitude for our coming. Some of them individually talked about their problems and burdens.

We could also listen to their testimonies concerning women's ministry: ministry for children and people in need. They also take care for older members of the church, women and men. Every Friday they decided to have prayer meetings

During the conference first time has been elected a new committee. Natalia Filatova is the president and 5 additional sisters work together with her. Please pray for new elected committee that they could serve the Lord with a heart full of devotion.

**Ewa Gutkowska**



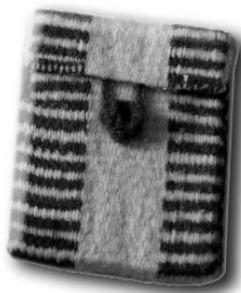
# Prayer requests

*"Those who wept as they went out carrying the seed will come back singing for joy, as they bring in the harvest."  
(Ps.126:6)*

## SERBIA

Please, pray for us in our willingness helping unemployed women in our living area with the following project!

In our new church we created a program for unemployed women to take part in our weaver training. After the training we can employ them through our weaver-program.



1. they would have a job
2. they would learn a traditional trade or work
3. they would hear the Gospel
4. the Christian fellowship would have a positive effect on them.

Through the 8 months we earned good experiences in this project. There is an interest in this folk art work among the women. Especially our guests are happy for the original bags and blankets what made from wool.

## LEBANON

"Still, our country and people have grown used to times of crisis and difficulty so while our hearts are burdened with sorrow, we are not afraid knowing that our God is in control. Pray for Lebanon and the Lebanese; for wisdom at all levels and the avoidance of reactions that lead to further strife in the country. May God have mercy on our people and country".

## TAJIKISTAN

Our sisters from Tajikistan asked us to pray:

- ◆ for their ministry, in which they could use the gifts of the Holy Spirit
- ◆ for different projects to help people in need
- ◆ for youth of the church that they could be protected from bad world's influences and that they would want to grow in grace and knowledge of God's Word.



- ◆ Please pray for new elected committee that they could serve the Lord with a heart full of devotion.



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