

News & Views

2022-2023

European Baptist Women United



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Don't Just Stand There, Do Something! Acts 1:1-11

Alexandra Anderson

EBWU Secretary

2018-2023



As I write this editorial we are fast approaching Ascension Sunday and I am aware that this will be the last time I write for News & Views as Secretary of the EBWU. Sadly, my term of office is also fast approaching its end. Acts 1:1-11 recounts how Jesus, after his resurrection, leaves his disciples a second time promising to send his followers the Holy Spirit so that they may continue his mission in the world.

It must have been a day of great joy that day when Jesus' disciples were reunited with their friend and leader walking along the familiar shores of Lake Galilee, listening to Jesus teaching them again. I imagine it was a beautiful day that day, wildflowers waving their heads in the gentle breeze blowing off the lake- everything looked so promising . . . surely that day was a day of renewal, of starting again, of getting back to the way things used to be before all the horror and darkness of the previous few weeks. The disciples had had a rough time. They had lived through political unrest, Jesus' arrest and torture, a violent, humiliating crucifixion, Jesus' death, burial and resurrection – all in the space of just a few days.

But this day was different. They exchanged their grief and hopelessness for renewed hope and promise. They must have felt as if they were living their best life. They had walked through a very dark valley and come out the other side where they found, just as he had said, that Jesus had risen from the dead.

How many of us began to hope again after the Global Pandemic and the lock down restrictions were lifted for a better world? One where we would have learned to be kind to each other, appreciate one another, celebrate freedom and the beautiful natural world God has given us? Only to learn the devastating news that there was a war beginning in the Ukraine which would effect the whole world. And if that was not bad enough there was a terrible earthquake in Turkey and Northern Syria with thousands of lives lost, economic collapse in Lebanon and other parts of the world and a humanitarian crisis in Sudan. When will God act? When will all this suffering end?

The disciples asked the same question.

'When?', they asked. 'When would God's kingdom come to be?'

It was a reasonable question. Jesus had conquered death so when was he going to overthrow the Roman occupiers and put the religious leaders in their place? How much longer would they have to wait for the Kingdom of Heaven Jesus had been telling them about to come? When, Jesus, when?

Jesus' answer? It's not for us to know the time but to wait for the Holy Spirit to enable us to be Jesus' witnesses in all the earth. At that moment Jesus does a surprising thing. He ascends into the sky covered by a cloud leaving the disciples behind.

I can imagine how confused and even angry the disciples must have felt after everything they had endured, after everything they had hoped and now Jesus just vanishes! Bewildered, they simply stand there looking up into the sky unsure what to do next.

How could Jesus leave us in this mess?

We also struggle with this same question, 2000 years later. We long for Jesus to stay with us and bring this Kingdom of Heaven he talked about into reality. We need to know when and how this Kingdom will break through. As we look around our broken world, we need reassurance because believing is so hard sometimes, and we can become so discouraged.

‘But’, says Jesus, ‘you are not alone. You will have the gift of the Holy Spirit to help you. So, if you want to see the Kingdom of Heaven you need to roll up your sleeves and do something!’.

We often talk about heaven as if it’s a luxury, all-inclusive holiday resort. We long for that world beyond our own where we are promised that there will be no more sorrow, no more pain, no more tears. So much so that some of us are ‘so heavenly minded that we are no earthly good’!

But when the disciples asked Jesus when the Kingdom of Heaven would come Jesus replies – ‘it’s already here! It’s now! And after I go, you will receive power from the Holy Spirit to be my witnesses in all the world.’ You see, the kingdom of God is not something far-away beyond our reach. It’s not other-worldly, it’s a reality that’s coming into being right here and now and God uses us to bring it into being.

Like the disciples many of us are still standing there gazing up at the sky, trying to understand.

For the first disciples it took two angels, to come down from the sky and shake them out of their day dreaming and tell them:

Why are you standing there looking up into heaven? Don’t just stand there . . . do something!

My question to us today is what will it take to shake us out of our day dreaming and accept Jesus’ invitation to change the world, little by little, starting where we are?

Does this seem like a strange way to begin the story of the early church? Maybe. But Jesus’ message was one of turning everything we expected upside down. He taught us to forgive those who wrong us, welcome strangers, feed the hungry, love our enemies. He said when this Kingdom was ushered in, those who were mourning would dance with joy, the prisoners would be free and those who lived without hope would begin to look forward to a brighter future.

Just as those disciples turned away from the empty sky, put aside their fears, and set to work to bring the Good News to the world, so Jesus asks us, dear sisters, to do the same.

The question for us then, is, the same question the disciples faced that day. Will we just stand there, gazing at an empty sky, waiting for some divine intervention? Or, will we turn around and head back down the mountain, carrying the message of new life and hope that Jesus taught us, ready to use our own lives however small we might think them, to make the Kingdom of Heaven a reality here on earth?

So dear sisters, what is it to be?

Amen.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Fabienne Seguin

EBWU president

2018-2023



Dear Sisters,

These past five years have been like one day (all right, maybe I exaggerate a little bit, so they were like five days). Probably because they were so busy and so unexpected. I do think that they have enriched each of us as we have grown in love and grace, individually and also as one body.

You are very dear to my heart and I do regret that I have had so few opportunities to visit you. But I'm very thankful to God who gave us the new technology which has kept us connected anyway. I will always encourage you to walk on water, not to hide your talent because you are afraid of your calling or of circumstances and to persevere even when you don't see the fruit of your effort. God sees. Nothing is more important to Him than the attitude of our heart.

The committee members will change, but God will remain the same. The creation of EBWU was inspired by the Holy Spirit and we do need his Spirit to keep us united. Love, peace, grace and harmony are not natural feelings for the human beings that we are, but the Spirit of God pours them into our hearts to enable us to overcome whatever could divide us. He binds us together. However, if we do not pay attention, this link can easily be broken. Over the years, less and less countries continue to have national women's unions. We still have Baptist sisters in every country of our EBWU region which covers Europe, the Middle East and Central Asia but more and more countries cannot find women who answer the calling of God for this ministry at national level and for various reasons. It is not about blaming because it can happen everywhere, but let us be concerned by this situation. When EBWU has no more contact in a country the link is broken and we become strangers. That is not what we want. So let us pray that God will prepare women everywhere to serve their sisters at national level and who will be the bridge that binds them to EBWU.

I will miss you, dear Ladies. You are strong, faithful and courageous. Serving you has deeply changed me and has strengthened my faith. I was honored to serve you from 2013 to 2018 as your treasurer and from 2018 to 2023 as your president. I will keep praying for you.

« Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.

Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.

Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord ». Romans 12 :9-11

With Him, everything is possible.

Every blessing,

Fabienne Seguin

NEWS FROM UKRAINE

HOPE ONLY IN CHRIST

War destroys not only the landscapes of our country Ukraine, but also the landscapes of our human lives, leaving behind ruin and suffering. But God and His church don't stand aside.



We realised that we would have to start new ministries that we had never done before. We are surrounded by broken-hearted, hurt, injured, widowed, orphaned, displaced people, without homes, belongings and even limbs! Only God is able to heal such souls and who but us, Christians, can give helping hands to the suffering?

One lady wrote a message to me saying: "So many blessings! People who are generous givers; more than that, people who are willing to minister to others even while living through their own horrors of war; and even more than that, our faithful God who will grant the increase!"

We are grateful to everyone who has helped us financially and who have been praying for us in such tragic times for our country! We always pray for you and ask God to give you a hundred times more of the blessings in your life, families, churches and countries.



Ukrainians have a saying: "Half of the people are fighting, and the other half are volunteering". It's a bit of an exaggeration but I want to confirm that in all Ukrainian regions Christians are united in helping others.

Sunday started at 2:30am with an air raid and drone/missile attack. Sundays often start like that. How quickly your church sanctuary can be turned into a humanitarian hub? Ours – in a matter of minutes. Watching the beehive of energetic activity, I think that serving/helping others is an important part of worship, too, and definitely a part of spiritual growth. It also bonds the community like nothing else!

I am glad that Ukrainian Baptist churches have many ways to live out faith, hope, and love!



At Christmas the church, where my husband is a pastor in Kharkiv, started feeding elderly and needy people 6 months ago. Since the kitchen is tiny, the brothers decided to make it bigger. It is difficult to find building materials in Kharkiv now due to the war. So they decided to put gray tiles and bright orange doors on the kitchen cabinets. I couldn't wait to see it. Unfortunately, Kharkiv is being bombed all the time! It's scary. Do you know what anxiety is every night? Even if you don't take into account explosions and deaths, this is constantly accumulating stress. We pray for the end of this madness and our good Lord gives us peace in our hearts and minds.

Kharkiv Baptist Churches agreed to raise money to support Kherson region. Within two weeks we collected about \$7k! Our superintendent

with a team went to the epicentre of the disaster after the explosion of Kahovka dam. That's what he told us: "There are few residents in the city. Shelling begins at night. The lower part of the city was flooded, many houses were destroyed, and those that survived were in a terrible condition. There are flooded cars in garages. There are large piles of washed-up sand and silt on the streets, and water is still standing in many places. Those who returned carry all their belongings from the house to the street, then the utility workers load them onto cars with a tractor and take them to the landfill."

We visited a brother who lives near the river, he said that when the water rose, there were many dead pets and people in the river.

It was painful to watch the evil that man does."

Kharkiv Women's department organized three retreats in the west of Ukraine, Transcarpathia, for hurting women and children from the eastern regions. "Springs in the Desert" the name of the retreat for mothers, wives and displaced women. All of them how the war has ruined their hearts are in great need of the many tired, exhausted, sick, found it precisely in the (Gospel of Mark 1-6). Today, just as real, strong, deepest wound.



Hope in Christ - the only ladies enjoyed

topic, they found a lot of answers to the hard questions given by life. "Seek Christ not like a medicine to help you only when you're feeling miserable, but let Christ be your daily Bread so that you can live the abundant life!" - was the main thought. Then handicraft and fellowship time! Most of the ladies

comfort in times of need! The "Disappointments in expectations"

were Christians but some of them- not yet. But we have already got the feedback from some ladies:
"This retreat inspires me to follow Jesus to the end of my life".
Such retreats are organized in many regions of Ukraine and abroad.



Lord, how long? - This is the only question that tearfully pulsates in the mind. On the one hand, I don't want to be silent, on the other - there are simply no words! Yes, any words lose their power before the abyss of villainy of the villains. What words can describe it? Especially since you, Lord, understand everything better than us. And you know better. What can we do? Just pray, believe and wait. How long, Lord?

I understand that hopeful forecasts should instill hope and endurance in Ukrainians. Faith in God and diligent work of everyone in their field and initiative in joint action related to the development of the community inspire me with hope and endurance.

Please keep us in your prayers!
Love, Nadia Morokhovets.

As we are praying for the end of the war in Ukraine, we, as European Baptist Women United, pray for those who are experiencing such a trauma, all the victims of this tragedy, all those who have been injured and/or who have lost loved ones and all their possessions, for broken families and those missing... And we remember that women and children are the great losers in wars, whatever the issue of the conflict is and wherever it is.



A Prayer for Ukraine: - *Baptists Together and Christian Aid*

God of all peoples and nations,
Who created all things alive and breathing,
United and whole,
Show us the way of peace that is your overwhelming presence.
We hold before you the peoples of Ukraine and Russia,
Every child and every adult.

We long for the time
When weapons of war are beaten into ploughshares
When nations no longer lift up sword against nation.
We cry out to you for peace;
Protect those who only desire and deserve to live in security and safety
Comfort those who fear for their lives and the lives of their loved ones
Be with those who are bereaved.

Change the hearts of those set on violence and aggression
And fill leaders with the wisdom that leads to peace.
Kindle again in us a love of our neighbour,
And a passion for justice to prevail
And a renewed recognition that we all play a part in peace.
Creator of all hear our prayer
And bring us peace. Make us whole.
Amen.

MINISTRY TO UKRAINIAN REFUGEES

Spring 2022

Many Baptist churches in countries around Ukraine have been actively involved in providing support and assistance to Ukrainian refugees affected by the ongoing conflict in Ukraine. From the very first day church volunteers distributed food and clothing to those in need right at the Ukrainian border welcoming those in despair and frightened, full of anxiety, women and kids. Churches and Christian families opened their doors to provide shelter for displaced families, welcoming them into their homes, helping to settle in their countries or to go further to the Western countries.

In addition to these basic necessities, churches have also been providing spiritual support to refugees, offering prayer services and counselling to help them cope with the trauma of displacement and loss.



One of the events partly supported by EBWU took place in Chisinau in May' 2022. About 50 Ukrainian women participated in a seminar 'Peace in the Storm' John 14:27 "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." This passage reminded us that the peace that Jesus offers is not like the peace of the world, which is often temporary and based on external

circumstances. Rather, it is a deep and abiding peace that comes from a relationship with God and an assurance of His love and care for us during the time of war. While the external peace is collapsing the internal peace is building up. The seminar followed by a joint lunch and close fellowship with emotional and spiritual support.

From our Sisters in Poland: "First is taking care of them as they come to our church - providing a place to stay, food, clothes, any first aid items and all necessary legal work [...] We also have a group of volunteers ready to go to border crossing and pick up refugees who are in contact with us and our church [...] We send some transportation to the border and Ukraine churches to help them survive their very difficult situation right out there. They send their vans/small semi-trucks and we do an exchange of the provided articles at the border [...] Many people in our church are engaged in this venture which makes us proud of our congregation and many Poles are responding to the currant disaster. Keep on praying - beside human action we urgently need God's intervention".





A massive aid monument quickly organized in Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Moldova etc. Thank you so much, Sisters, for your generosity and solidarity!

EBWU used its network of contacts to help refugees looking for churches outside Ukraine. From the beginning, it was a priority for EBWU to bring its support not only prayerfully but also financially. EBWU has also attended every prayer meeting on

Zoom organized by the EBF. From the beginning of the war till Easter 2022, the prayer meeting took place every Wednesday. From Easter 2022 on, it is every last Wednesday of the month. You can sign up to get the updates and the Zoom link:

<https://www.ebf.org/ukraine>

A PRAYER FROM OUR SISTERS IN RUSSIA

« **R**elying on God's promise and the power of prayers, we do believe that God is able to make a road to peace between our two countries. Russian women are praying and fasting in this critical situation and would like to share our commitment to pray in one spirit with European women and Baptist women worldwide:

Our Heavenly Father, we come to you with humble hearts as to the Lord of History who holds the destiny of Ukraine and Russia in His hands. Lord, we come to you in the name of your Son Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, who brought your Peace – *Shalom* – to the earth. Forgive us when we do not abide in your peace.

- We pray for people of the land of Ukraine whose dreams, hope, health, properties and life itself are damaged and destroyed. Be their hope, provider and healer.
- We pray for children and mothers who are vulnerable and have lived in fear for years. Protect them, comfort them, and embrace them with your love.
- We pray for wisdom for the leaders of Ukraine and Russia. Guide them toward the path of peace.
- We pray for the world leaders, politicians, and diplomats making efforts to solve the tension between Ukraine and Russia in Normandy and Minsk agreements formats.
- We pray for military forces - that your commandment "you shall not kill" will have a mighty power over their hearts and minds.
- We proclaim your victory over all principalities and evil powers.

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit – Amen! »

EBWU CONFERENCE IN SERBIA

Alexandra Anderson

EBWU Secretary

2018-2023

There were 38 participants at the conference from 15 different countries in Europe, the Middle East and Central Asia. Thanks to the excellent collaboration of President Melita Vidovic and the Serbian Baptist Women huge success. The EBWU Vice vision for the she shared during Committee last Spring, was , this 'from the Chapter 4: 14.



the conference was a theme inspired by president Ruth's conference which the EBWU planning meeting 'For such a time as Book of Esther

The main speaker Paynter, Director the Study of Bible

Coordinator of Theological Education at Bristol Baptist College, who, focusing on the character of Esther, talked about women in the Bible and women in the church touching on the theme of violence against women. In addition she illustrated how the Bible has often been 'weaponised' to keep women from achieving their God-ordained position in the church.

Helen encouraged the participants to 'dig deep 'into Scripture and not be afraid of difficult passages such as, '1 Timothy 2:12, on which Helen led a mini-workshop. She also encouraged the women who attended the conference to read widely and provided an extensive reading list for those interested to explore. So often we, as women, have been handed down 'interpretations on how women can or cannot minister as part of a believing community which are more to do with our own cultures rather than Biblical truth. I have attached a short reading list which Helen sent us with her notes on her lectures).

Nada Haddad from Lebanon also spoke on the theme of resilience, sharing from her own experience of post-natal depression.

There were also interesting workshops during the conference including one on domestic violence, photography and the launch of EBWU Additional Member Cristina's new Bible Study resource for women, '*The Fragrance of Christ*'.

On Saturday afternoon 8th October we had a guided tour of the beautiful city of Belgrade and in the evening the Serbian Baptist ladies treated us to a special Serbian evening with traditional dishes served. Afterwards we had fun taking part in light-hearted activities and games followed by Serbian folk dancing lessons.



Nada Haddad

The conference was brought to a close with a very moving communion service led by Rev Dr Helen Paynter before the ladies flew home.

The EBWU Committee arranged subsequently to meet via Zoom on Wednesday 12th October 2022 to discuss how the conference in Serbia, 'For Such a Time as This' had gone. What lessons we had learned from our experience and what we could do better next time. This has provided valuable feedback for the organisation of future conferences.

Books Helen Paynter mentioned for further reading and discussion, at the EBWU Annual Conference, 'For Such a Time as This', held in Belgrade 6th-9th October 2022:

1. Holding Up Half the Sky: A Biblical Case for Women Leading and Teaching in the Church Paperback – 30 April 2020
by Graham Joseph Hill
2. Blue Parakeet, 2nd Edition: Rethinking How You Read the Bible by Scott McKnight
3. I Suffer Not a Woman: Rethinking I Timothy 2:11-15 in Light of Ancient Evidence Paperback – 1 Jan. 1992
by Richard Clark Kroeger (Author)

There are also useful resources on the Campaign for Biblical Equality website:
<https://www.cbeinternational.org/>

A selection of books written by Rev Dr Helen Paynter:



1. The Bible Doesn't Tell Me So: Why you don't have to submit to domestic abuse and coercive control Paperback – 23 Oct. 2020 by Helen Paynter (Author)
2. Telling Terror in Judges 19: Rape and Reparation for the Levite's wife (Rape Culture, Religion and the Bible) Hardcover – 12 Feb. 2020 by Helen Paynter (Author)
3. God of Violence Yesterday, God of Love Today?: Wrestling honestly with the Old Testament Paperback – 24 May 2019 by Helen Paynter (Author)

DO NOT GIVE UP MEETING TOGETHER (Hebrews 10:25)

EBWU CONFERENCE 2022, BELGRADE, SERBIA

Melita Vidovic

president of Women ministry in Baptist Union Serbia

After few years of not seeing each other at our annual conference due to Covid19, the conference we had in Belgrade last year was a special celebration. It was the time when we met some known and some new faces. It was a time of pure joy as Baptist women from fourteen countries of Europe and Middle East gathered together to share, worship and learn from each other.



We had a special privilege to learn from Rev Helen Paynter PhD, Tutor in Biblical Studies and Coordinator of Theological Education, and Director of the Centre for the Study of Bible and Violence. The theme of the conference was: „**For Such a Time as This**“. Helen led us through the Book of Esther, showing us how God leads in challenging situations and hard times. Helen also addressed the issue of domestic abuse, a problem that is growing throughout the world. The Bible is not silent about it and Christians are called to address it as something God never approved.



Beside rich spiritual food we enjoyed our stay in the hotel in the centre of Belgrade, surrounded by welcoming hotel stuff. One thing that Serbia can be proud of is certainly fresh good food. For us, women, an additional blessing was that we didn't have to prepare it, a luxury we don't have often. Belgrade is also historically a very rich city so one afternoon a tourist guide helped us to see the old city and shared with us some of the most interesting things from the history of Belgrade.





In times such as this Christians should use every opportunity to gather together at conferences like this to encourage each other in our everyday walk with the Lord. That's why we are looking forward, God willing, to meeting each other again this year somewhere in another country in Europe.



DAY OF PRAYER 2022

Fabienne Seguin
EBWU president
2018-2023



In 2022, the official day to celebrate the World Day of Prayer of Baptist Women was November 7th and the topic was **VICTORIOUS LIFE**.

BWA WOMEN GLOBAL CELEBRATION :

For the first time the BWA Women recorded a global celebration which was broadcast in our EBWU region on October 15th 2022. If you missed it you can watch it again using this link : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U81ZAh3XkO8>

During this celebration led by Merritt Johnston, Executive Director of the BWA Women, the seven continental union presidents shared Bible verses and encouraged us to pray for various topics. Karen Wilson (BWA Women's President 2020-2025) reminded us in a devotional that we are the carriers of the fragrance of Christ to a world of great needs and that victory is found in bringing the aroma of Christ to every situation.

Merritt Johnston presented the various projects, in each continental union that were supported by the DOP offering. These projects are all related to the five core ministry areas of the BWA Women, which are : Strengthening, Leading, Responding, Defending and Advancing.

Our Sister Nadia Morokhovets explained in a video how God has been working in Ukraine since the beginning of the war there in February 2022.

EBWU ONLINE CELEBRATION :

To avoid any interference with national celebrations, the EBWU committee decided to organise a virtual celebration, like in 2020 and 2021, to gather the women of our large region together for this special time. It took place on October 31st 2022. We welcomed three special guests during this event. First, Karen Wilson, from Australia, who sent greetings and a devotional in a video because of the time zone difference. Then, Jane Mwangi from Kenya, who was elected in July 2022 President of the Baptist Women's Union of Africa (BWUA), introduced herself and her ministry. And as BWUA and EBWU are prayer partners from 2020 to 2025, she shared prayer requests. Lastly, Rvd Dr Helen Paynter from Bristol College in the UK, who was our main speaker during our conference in Belgrade, Serbia, October 6th to 9th 2022, shared on the topic of Victorious Life too.

We also had the opportunity to pray in small groups for every continental union.

This online celebration is always very much appreciated. We feel close to one another whatever the distance is. This is the power of the Holy Spirit!

DOP Celebration, Monday 31 October 2022

What does it look like to live a victorious life?

Rev Dr Helen Paynter

Ask someone on the street, and they might talk about supporting a winning football team, or succeeding in a job application. Press a little harder and they might suggest it means overcoming one's own character deficiencies, conquering a weight problem, being disciplined in exercising. Ask how we might achieve that, and you will probably be told – look inside. Dig deep and discover your inner strength.



But the problem with this is it is all to do with *me and my needs*. Essentially, it's a self-focussed action. Being victorious means succeeding for my own benefit. It's about *self-improvement*.

Ask the same questions in the church, and you might get a different set of answers. What does it look like to live a victorious life? You might be told about seeing answers to prayer, experiencing miraculous interventions, about signs and wonders, about evangelistic success.

The problem with this is that it is all about *me and my achievements*. It's about being successful, conquering, defeating, coming out on top. It's activist and triumphalist.

What does it mean to live a victorious life? Is it all about self-improvement? Is it all about activism and success? I don't think either of these is what the apostle Paul meant when he wrote these words: "thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ". Paul is borrowing an image from a Roman military triumph where the victorious general would parade through the streets with his conquered enemy in chains. In this letter to the Corinthians, Paul is again and again emphasising his weakness and his afflictions. There's nothing here about being successful, coming out on top, getting on in life. There's nothing about self-improvement or success.

In 1677, the Scottish theologian Henry Scougal wrote these words: *the worth and excellency of a soul can be measured by the object of its love*. In other words, whatever we most desire, whatever we set our deepest affection upon, that is the measure of our own quality.

Perhaps this gives us a clue about what a victorious life looks like.

If we set our affection on squalid, trivial, petty things, then we become squalid, trivial and petty. If we set our affection on what is noble, truthful and pure, then we become noble, truthful and pure. Now, I think, we're getting a little closer to the idea of living in Christ's victory. It's not about gazing inward, but about turning our eyes outwards and upwards, setting our affection – all our affection, the best of our affection – upon the highest object. It's about loving the Lord with all our heart, and soul, and mind, and strength. It's not about activism or triumphalism, it's about holistic, 360 degree love.

Heart. So what does it mean to love God with all of our heart? The heart is the seat of feeling so I think it means choosing to gaze upon God with love; choosing to contemplate him in ways which will nourish our affection.

Story of the French peasant. I look upon him, and he looks upon me, and we are content.

But in Greek thought, the heart was also the seat of all one's being, and in Luke, Jesus doesn't say to love God 'with 'your whole heart but 'out of 'your whole heart. Perhaps here the sense is more that our whole being is undividedly orientated towards God, that we are – quite literally – whole-hearted about our worship.

Soul. In some ways it's an artificial distinction to try to separate the 'heart 'from the 'soul 'from the 'mind 'and even from the 'body'. But perhaps it helps to remember that breath of God which he breathed into us at the garden. "The LORD God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being." (Gen 2:7).

And also the Spirit breathed into us by Jesus. After his resurrection, as the gospel writer tells us, "Jesus breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit"." (Jn 20:22).

It is the breath of God which makes us living beings rather than clay, which makes us human rather than animal, which makes us regenerate rather than unregenerate. Perhaps loving God with our souls, then, means attending to the breath of God, the Spirit of God, within us, and giving him space to cry out to God on our behalf.

Mind. Loving God with our minds means allowing them to be shaped by his word rather than the world; allowing our worldview to be constantly held under the authority of Scripture, and in so doing, to be transformed more into the likeness of Christ.

It is also to seek to understand God and his ways and his world, to labour with our minds to bring clarity and order, to understand and to explain, to develop and grow, to create and invent. Loving God with our minds means that our questioning, our creativity, and our ingenuity are all laid at the service of God.

Strength. We women know something about strength, don't we?

We know the strength of enduring and pushing through physical pain. Many of us have done this in pregnancy and labour, most of us have done this with period pains, and so many of the other physical stresses upon our body.

We also know the strength of physical labour. For many of us we have experienced this when carrying children, when caregiving to elders or the sick.

And we know the strength of emotional labour. Many of us bear the chief burden of emotional labour in our homes, our communities, our churches.

We are strong not in spite of being women but in our womanhood. We have practiced being gutsy, determined, patient, and persistent in our labour. Loving God with all our strength means laying all of this before God, and orientating our work towards him.

This is the strength with which we are to love God.

So the greatest commandment, our highest duty, and our greatest privilege is to love the Lord our God out of our whole heart – with our soul and mind and strength. And if *the worth and excellency of a soul can be measured by the object of its love* then as our affections are directed towards God, so we become more excellent, more noble, more gracious. This is victory.

And as we become imitators of the Saviour whose love was directed towards us while we were still his enemies, so our love becomes more like his – 360 degrees.

Love for a God whose love is shed abroad in our hearts, is poured out upon the undeserving, is given in abundance to the enemy, love for this God will not leave us unchanged. We, too, will find ourselves loving the undeserving, the enemy, the stranger, the needy, and the weak. In short, we will find ourselves loving our neighbour, putting him on our donkey, and binding up his wounds at our own expense.

This, I think, is the victorious Christian life. It is a life whose love, whose regard, and whose desire is directed wholly outward, and whose affection is wholly and habitually set upon God and his world.

Less of our own self-regard, and more of God. He must increase, and I must decrease. This is victory.

From Gloom to Zoom - Prayer Breakfast Blessing

Ruth Madarova
EBWU Vice President
2018-2023

The Bible, from beginning to end, offers many invitations for us to come and be with God, to draw close to Him, to praise and worship Him, to receive answers to our questions, guidance for our lives and comfort. The Lord makes it clear in His Word that He longs for us, He wants close, intimate conversation with us.

He is always near and always ready to listen as it is written in Jeremiah 33,3: „*Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.*“

In 2021 the Lord put it on our hearts to organize Zoom Prayer Breakfasts for women from all over Europe, the Middle East and Central Asia and spend a fellowship with one another in God's presence. Thanks to the Lord, these meetings are still going on. We meet via Zoom approximately one every two months and each time we experience a new encouragement and a new touch of Heaven.

It is a time of praying. We use divided into small urgent needs of Europe, the Asia, such as peace, revival, refugees, many others that lie

We often fight for of other people. the answer to

came to earth, His greatest desire was for us to learn to trust Him. To believe.



devotional, sharing and some time to be groups to pray for the concerning the region Middle East and Central healing, spiritual climate changes and on our sisters' hearts.

our lives or for the lives Fighting to take hold of prayers. When Jesus

In Matthew 9 we can read a story about a sick women whose faith was recorded in the Scripture. This woman reached out to the Lord believing that if she just „touched the hem of His garment“ she could be healed. Jesus told her that her faith had made her well, and she was healed at that very time (verses 20-22). She was imperfect but unwavering in her faith. She simply trusted in Jesus' power. After she touched Jesus and He turned around, Scripture says „she came trembling“. She was not the most courageous, but she did it, scared anyway. And we know from the Bible that God loves such prayers.

Praying increases our faith as well because it's how we reach and touch God. Every time we reach out and touch Him in prayer, our lives are healed in some way and our faith is increased.

Trusting God is simple, yet it is so difficult a lot of the tims. But if life isn't easy, then why would our faith journey be? That's why we have to stay on our knees.

God rewards those who stretch toward Him in faith. He responds. He is able and powerful to touch every area of our lives and step into every situation.

We encourage one another in faith. We pray for one another. We learn to be women of faith. To walk by faith, not by sight. To stand strong on His promises and believe His every word.

„Lord, create in us hearts that will seek Your presence. Help us to pray despite all the trials until victory and put all our trust in Your word. Amen.“

Ioana Ghilvaciu, from Italy, sent the following testimony :

“I attended this sisterhood communion meetings willingly and joyfully every time my pastoral commitments allowed me. Meeting my sisters in Christ from Europe and beyond gave me the opportunity to open my heart even more to our large Baptist family. Furthermore, I got to know more sisters even if only virtually and share with all of them sadness and happiness, fears and trust in our mighty Lord. I felt deep in my heart and I was able to share the sense of bitterness of some of us for the problems faced by their Unions. We prayed together with hope and gratitude to our Almighty God, the One who invites us through His beloved Son, Jesus Christ to go to Him for receiving the rest we need (Matthew 11:28).

The computer screen, in that blessed time together, was the bridge that gave us the possibility to share the Word of God, to pray together and to live our sorority intensely. Praised be the Lord for this opportunity he gave us and I hope that this kind of meeting could be organized in the future, as well”.

Raising up Godly Women Leaders

Mia Oglice

Romanian Baptist Women Department

This year’s meeting took place at the Surduc center, Romania. I taught the theme *"Lord, where are you when bad things happen?"* by Kay Arthur. One hundred women and young adults from 13 localities participated in person, but the meeting was also done virtually with the participation of others from 20 cities. The study *God Where Are You When Bad Things Happen?* addresses people with sufferings, trials and with questions like those of the prophet Habakkuk; *“Why do You let me see bad things? Why do You tolerate evil when You are a God of mercy yet do not give help? etc.*

These are questions that many people have, some are afraid to ask the questions, but others are afraid to hear the answers. Habakkuk, after hearing God's answer and God's plan, accepted it and understood that God wants to do justice. Habakkuk knew that no matter what, God is by his side and will not leave him without answers. After the Lord's answers, Habakkuk could exclaim, *"The Lord God is my strength, regardless of circumstances and trials."*

We studied how the people of Israel moved away from the Word of God, lost the book of the Law in the ruins of the Temple during the time of King Josiah, how the Law was found and received. The words

of the Law brought a change in the life of Josiah and the people of the Kingdom of Judah. Because the Word was lost and people of Israel followed nations, fell into idolatry of God. Thus they followed affected the moral endangered the lives of sacrificed to idolatrous



The lack of knowledge of according to the customs witchcraft, divination, for the true God.

neglected, the kings and the the teachings of the Gentile and had no true knowledge the pagan customs which principles of the people, their children who were gods.

the Word led to living of other nations, to idolatry, they had no relationship with

We live in times when people have moved away from the Word and there is no true knowledge of God in the land. The Word is not a priority in people's lives. We discussed the situations, the turmoil in the lives of our people, we asked that the Word be examined by each of us individually, to be honest and open before the Lord and not neglect the Word that can renew our thinking and give new direction to our lives.

When King Josiah heard God's word, he understood that God's righteous anger must be manifested in holy judgment. When people see the truth, they understand the delusions that come from philosophies, humanist traditions, idolatries, etc.

Psalms 119:18 says, "*Open my eyes to see the wonderful works of Your law.*" Looking through the perspective of God's word we understand true life, apply its truths, and thus make a difference in our lives and those around us. Even when we are pressed by circumstances and look at the sins of our nation, we ask the question *Lord, where are you?* God answers clearly and specifically: I am here, I see everything, I know everything, I am present!

We saw what King Josiah did when he understood the danger of being ignorant of the Law. The Word searched his heart, he was moved, he humbled himself before God and cried. (2 Kings 22:19.) Josiah did not excuse himself; he did not blame others; he had a heart with an attitude pleasing to God. In accordance with the Word of God the king took actions that led to the cleansing of the land from idolatry and damaging pagan customs. God honored Josiah's obedience and blessed Him with long life.

In all circumstances we learn to depend on God and run to Him for help. God is the fountain of life that quenches our thirst and heals our nation.

In the study we had practical questions to search our hearts; each person made a list of things that must be removed so that our heart beats for the Lord. Let us not feed ourselves with deceptive hopes that do not help us. When we let go of the things that control us and take us away from God it is important to return to Him. Write down the things He asks us to do and let the Word change us, direct us so we become a blessing for our families, and the society in which He has placed us.

Your circumstances may not change but He can strengthen you, banish your fears so that you can enjoy Him who is your strength in every circumstance.

The psalmist says, *"I sought the Lord, and he answered me. He freed me from all my fears. When you turn your eyes to Him, you will light up with joy, and your face will not be filled with shame"* (Psalm 34:4-6). God is always with us even when bad things happen. He is always in control and if we run to Him in faith, He delivers us from our fears.

The fellowship we had both with the sisters present and with those in virtually created an atmosphere of unity and desire to continue to encourage one another, to pray for one another and to remain united through the Word of the Lord and His presence in our lives.



BRING HOPE TO THE POOR

Rev Dimitrina Oprenova

To be born with the challenge to 'break the cycle of poverty' is not an easy task for a young child. It is a concept which is not grasped nor is it desired. Especially, when everything you know from a young age is the poor conditions you live in, the empty stomach you fall asleep with, the dirt and mud you are so used to that it is hard to see the colour of your skin, even your fingerprints no longer leave marks as each tiny hall is full of layers and layers of grime. When was the last time you had a long, hot shower, have you ever had a long, hot shower?

How can you grasp how important education and hard work are!? When even your own parents, grandparents, your whole community think that going to school is pointless. How can you appreciate the results of good scores if you still go to bed hungry? Why bother!? Live for the moment and make the most of that! This is all you have got!



This is the mentality one has to break through in the minds of beneficiaries both children and parents before any sensible and productive work is done. For kindness to be understood and embraced a sense of trust and a loving relationship has to be developed. Bringing those walls down is where literacy classes begin. It is not done once and for all, but with every other generation that comes to be taught, the story repeats itself.

However, faithful and committed teachers within the First Baptist Church in Sofia for nearly two decades have now given time, effort, skills, kind-heartedness and patience to teach illiterate poor Roma children in the attempt to bring them and their families to the point of believing in education as a source and hope for a better future. The goal is to encourage children and parents to believe in themselves so they make a conscious decision of going successfully through the education system, so they can get as far ahead in their education as they themselves manage to push ahead. Along with that the love of God in Jesus is being practically lived out, as the children are given a place where they can have a hot, long shower, a warm meal, clothes, they can even take aid home.

It is a rewarding experience to look back in time and count the people who have gone through the system. Though not everyone succeeds, some only finish primary school, others manage to get to the end of secondary school, thus others make it to the end of high school. The kids grow up, get married, have children and many of them although they themselves may have to managed to walk the road to the end they send their children in the faith and conviction that it is good for them, that it is a place of acceptance and motivation for hope.

Youtube link here <https://youtu.be/ulFrinuqnkY>)

THE BEGINNING OF WOMEN'S MINISTRY IN RUSSIA

*Vera Izotova,
Head of the Women's ministry department of the RU ECB*



From the very beginning of the Evangelical Baptist movement in Russia, women have worked hand in hand with men, based on evangelical principles. The activities of women during this period did not have an organizational form, but it allowed them to accumulate a rich and varied experience of service both in the church and in society. Women achieved particular success in preaching the Gospel to the peoples of Russia and in serving their neighbors. Let us name

here one of the remarkable women of that time, Princess Elizaveta Ivanovna Chertkova (1834-1923). The death of her husband and two sons prompted her to seek comfort in God. Lord Redstock's talks

about salvation in Christ in the salons of the St. Petersburg nobility won her heart, and she repented. Filled with Christ's love for her neighbors, Elizaveta Chertkova, along with other believing noble women, cared for orphans, helped the dying people, visited prisons in the capital; donated large funds for the publication of Christian literature; beside she built a prayer house on Vasilevsky Island and opened sewing workshops for poor women with her savings.

In the 1930s, the ministry of women was forcibly interrupted by Stalin's repressions. In the years of hard times, when many ministers ended up in prisons and labor camps, and almost all churches were closed, women performed a special ministry of love, instructed children in the truth, prayed and believed that the Lord would preserve His Church.

Modern History. In the early nineties, during the “perestroika”, new ministries of women became possible: witnessing their faith in God with the word and deeds of mercy and charity. Many women began to visit hospitals, orphanages and shelters and nursing homes. The doors of the camps and prisons were opened for evangelism soon. "This is from the Lord and is marvelous in our eyes." Psalm 118:23.

In November 1990, women gathered for the first conference in the large hall of the hotel complex in Izmailovo, Moscow. In November 1992, with the active participation of the President of the Union of Evangelical Christian Baptists of Russia, Rev.Vasily Logvinenko, a preparatory committee for the founding sisters' conference was elected. In this regard, he addressed the women with the following encouraging words, “At the present time, many new opportunities have opened up for the sisters to work in evangelism, charity, in collecting material resources for the construction of prayer houses and in other areas. It is time to give an organized form to women's ministries in the churches.”

Organization of the women's department

In October 1993 in Moscow, during the congress of the Union of Evangelical Christian Baptists of Russia, a historic founding conference of women of the churches of the Evangelical Christian-Baptist of Russia was held, at which a Women's department headed by Vera Kadayeva (Izotova) was organized, and the Charter was approved. On behalf of the Union, the participants were greeted by the Union Vice-President Yuri Sipko, he wished the women “that the Lord be present in their work, sanctifying and uniting them.” The President of the Women's Department of the Baptist World Alliance, Catherine Allen, in her congratulations noted the importance of the organized work of women in the churches and the main goal of our ministry to preach the Gospel to those who do not yet know Christ as their personal Savior, especially to our unbelieving husbands, children and people around us. The organized woman's work helps to discuss problems together, develop effective programs, pray together and share the experience of working together. Women united for work can better serve the Lord and help those who have not yet reached this level. May the Lord guide you and give you the vision to work out a good program and win many souls for Christ.”

This event was evidenced by publication in the journal "Brotherly Herald", 1993. The brothers and sisters of our churches learned that the Union of Evangelical Christian Baptists of Russia has a Women's department now. By decision of the leading brothers of the Union, the woman were given the opportunity to elect women's committees /councils and to approve the responsible sisters in each

church and area to perform the ministry to the Lord. First of all, those were prayer groups, groups for studying the Word of God and reaching out to the unbelieving women and men.

EARTHQUAKE IN SYRIA AND TURKEY

« 7.8-magnitude earthquake struck the nations of Syria and Turkey, leaving massive destruction on both sides of the border [in the night of February 5th to 6th] .

Reports indicate that more than 50,000 people have died with countless others injured. Rescuers work[ed] diligently to locate survivors amidst the rubble.

Baptist church leaders in Turkey mobilis[ed] response efforts, and leaders in Lebanon work[ed] with Syrian Baptists to respond to needs in the communities impacted.

The Hungarian Baptist Aid Rescue24 team consisting of 19 specialists and 7 rescue dogs [was] in Turkey working tirelessly to rescue more people stuck in the rubble.

European Baptist Federation together with German Baptist Aid (GBA), the Lebanese Society for Educational and Social Development (LSESD/MERATH) and other BFAD partners are coordinating their response to best support our churches working on the ground and helping people affected by this disaster ». (<https://www.ebf.org/turkey-syria>)



On February 7th 2023, Hürrem Caroline Keskin from Izmir, Turkey, wrote : „We had the worst earthquake in Turkey since 1939. The first big earthquake was 7.7 and it happened at 4 am in the morning. The center of the earthquake was the southeastern city of Kahramanmaraş and 9 cities around were all affected. The second big earthquake was 7.4 and 145 earthquakes happened. 10 cities in southeast Turkey were

seriously affected. More than 4.000 people died and sadly it will highly increase. We can not foresee how many people will die. 20.000 people were injured. 9.500 buildings have collapsed. Our country is in great shock. Many buildings are damaged. People left their homes and their cities. There are a lot of traffic jams and it is very cold, it is snowing in most of the cities. This week the weather will be below 0 celcius. The roads are also seriously damaged. This makes the search and rescue more difficult. The next 72 hours only Professional search and rescue teams are allowed to go to the earthquake area.

Thanks to the Lord, our Baptist churches and the members are all well. Adana is among the affected cities. 15 buildings collapsed and many were damaged. It is not clear if the building where the church is meeting is damaged or not. Two neighbouring buildings collapsed to where the pastor of the Adana Baptist Church and General Secretary of our Union and his family is living. The church members of Adana Baptist Church are all fine. They are waiting in cars and parks ».

It took time for the rescue teams to arrive in Syria. The Syrian population, at first, had to organize by itself. Our Brothers and Sisters in Damascus were very reactive and brought assistance, food and water,

hygiene products to those who have lost everything, including their loved ones. Everyone was encouraged to bring their « fishes and loaves ». A tremendous effort was made.

EBWU was able to send financial support to the churches in Turkey and in Syria, answering to the EBF calling. We express our deep compassion to our sisters who faced such a tragedy and we keep on praying that God will heal them to recover from such a trauma.

COMMITTEE MEETING IN SOFIA

After two years of virtual meetings, the EBWU committee was able to meet in person February 16th to 19th 2023 in Sofia, Bulgaria. Meeting face to face is so much easier and more comfortable than online! We are grateful that we could use the new technology during the post Covid-19 period. However, it is a relief not to be separated by screens anymore and our service is so much more efficient.

We are very thankful to Didi Oprenova who prepared everything so nicely for our venue.

Right after the arrival some of us were able to attend a prayer meeting.

Our committee meeting was hosted by Sofia Baptist Church. We are very thankful for their hospitality.

We mainly focused on the preparation of the next conference and on the future of EBWU.



Gergina Kiriakova

We were also able to meet the Bulgarian women's committee. Gergina Kiriakova, president of the women's union led a Bible study and Siham Daoud, from the EBWU committee, shared about the situation in Lebanon. Each EBWU committee member explained about her position in the committee.

It was also a time for worshipping and praying together. After that we had lunch together.

On Sunday morning, we attended the service at church. Alexandra Anderson had been invited to preach.

May God bless our sisters in Bulgaria. We will treasure this beautiful time together.



The Bulgarian national committee



RELATIONSHIPS TO EBF

Fabienne Seguin was your voice at the European Baptist Federation (EBF) executive committee meeting in Lisbon, Portugal, April 1-2, 2022 and at the EBF general council meeting in Riga Latvia September 20-24, 2022, where she gave a report about the EBWU ministry.

In Lisbon, she was able to meet some Portuguese sisters.

It was a joy because we haven't been able to meet since 2013, Hannover, Germany.



Isabelle Pego, Esther Amorim, Fabienne Seguin



In 2023, the EBF executive committee meeting took place in Brussels, Belgium. It was a wonderful opportunity to connect again with our Belgian sisters. We had lost contact after our dear sister Annick Verhaeghe had passed away after a long and painful disease early 2021.



The EBF General Council meeting took place in Stavanger, Norway on July 5, 2023. It was a shortened council because of the SENT mission summit that followed. Siham Daoud, Cristina Pokidko and Fabienne Seguin attended.

2023 is a time of renewals within EBF: a new president and a new vice president for the next two years, a new chair for the commission on Mission and Evangelism and for the commission on Freedom of Religion or Belief. EBF thanked Fabienne Seguin for her five-year presidency within the EBWU and for having represented the Baptist women at the EBF meetings. She was presented with a glass light with the EBF logo.

RELATIONSHIPS TO THE BWA and BWA WOMEN



In 2022, it was possible to attend the Baptist World Alliance Women (BWA W) annual meeting July 7-10 and the Baptist World Alliance (BWA) annual gathering July 11-15, in person. It took place in Birmingham, Alabama, (USA).

The BWA Women had the opportunity to gather women in a leadership position from many countries together during one evening. This meeting was led by Karen Wilson, BWA Women president.



We also met with women at Mountain Brook Baptist Church during an afternoon. Every continental union president introduced her region and shared about her ministry.

It was a meaningful time. We prayed for specific situations such as the civil war in Myanmar after the 2021 coup, the war in Ukraine and the critical situation at the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan.





Besides the numerous business meetings over the week there, we visited the building of the Women's Missionary Union (WMU). The WMU and the Evelyn Tully Endowment have always supported prayerfully and financial women's gatherings such as the EBWU conferences. We want to express our deep gratitude to these faithful ladies for their generosity which has made a difference for generations of women in our region.

The topic of the BWA annual gathering was "A global Family Standing for Racial Justice". Because of the topic and the special location of the gathering (Birmingham, Alabama), it was very much influenced by the legacy of Rev. Martin Luther King and his fight against racial injustice. Participants experienced very emotional times and listened to very deep and powerful lectures. Regarding this topic, the legacy in the history of the great majority of countries is not glorious. We cannot erase what was done in the past, but as Christians it is our responsibility to make a difference in the present time to impact the future.

In **2023**, the BWA annual gathering took place in Stavanger, Norway, July 2-5, right before the SENT mission summit. The topic was "A Global Family on Mission". Siham Daoud, Cristina Pokidko and Fabienne Seguin attended. It was very difficult to choose between all the breakout sessions offered as all were of great interest. One of these, which is very important for the Baptist women, was the governance of the BWA renew session. The BWA is currently working on a new constitution and new bylaws which should lead to a better representation of its partners and among them are the female leaders, the young leaders etc. So next year, the new constitution and new bylaws will be voted during the annual gathering in Nigeria. The presidents of the continental women's unions (EBWU among others) will have to vote on that. Pray for a good understanding of these documents and for wisdom for those who will have the responsibility to vote.

One of the moving moments during that gathering was when our sister Mona Khaulil from Lebanon received the Denton & Janice Lotz Human Rights Award for her faithful service over years. Sister Mona reminded us humbly that through God's grace only we can make a difference. And not by our strength : *"During the first forty years of his life, Moses thought that he was someone important. The next forty years, he understood that he was nothing. And during the last forty years, he saw what God was able to do from nothing"*. Thank you, Sister Mona, for your testimony, your passion and joy in the service!



The BWA Women had also their annual business meeting in Stavanger, Norway. It was before the BWA annual gathering and they attended the BWA annual gathering to represent the Baptist Women of each continental union.



The BWA Women had an evening session with women in a leadership position. Every continental union president was invited to share about the ministry among women in her region and asked to say a word of encouragement and something that she had learnt in her ministry. Fabienne's one was *"Stand on your knees, stay on your knees and be ready to wash others' feet"*.

The Norwegian sisters organized a special lunch time for the women attending the BWA gathering.

Seventy-four women representing twenty-seven countries attended. We were welcomed by a great team!

We worshiped together, had lunch. Then Jenni Entrican (UK) and Valérie Duval-Poujol (France) shared about violence against women. The Norwegian ladies presented their ministry. Merritt Johnston, BWA Women Executive director presented the BWA Women's work. Fabienne promoted the EBWU quinquennial conference and encouraged the ladies to register.







Jenni Entrican



Valérie Duval-Poujol



We are very thankful to our Norwegian sisters who made everything so nice for this time together. We enjoyed the sisterhood and were filled with joy and strengthened.

FUTURE EVENTS IN BWA/BWA WOMEN'S LIVES

In 2024, the BWA annual gathering and the BWA Women's annual business meeting will take place in **Nigeria** July 2-12.



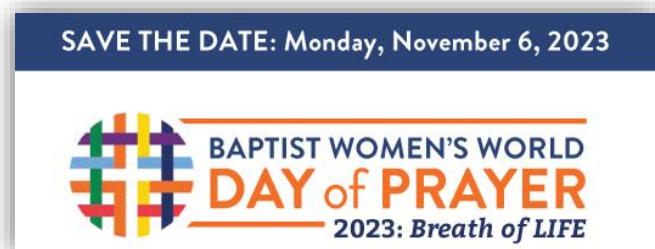
In 2025, the BWA five-year congress and the BWA Women five-year conference will take place in **Brisbane, Australia**, July 7-12. Save the date! Registration is open.



DAY OF PRAYER 2023

The Day of Prayer programme is online, on the BWA Women website.

It is an important event in the lives of Baptist women! Be creative and share with us how you live this special day.



Saturday, October 14, 2023

We invite you to join as Baptist World Alliance Women kicks off the 2023 Day of Prayer with an online global worship experience on Saturday, October 14. Be part of this worldwide prayer movement !

> **AFRICA, EUROPE & THE MIDDLE EAST • 12:00 PM CEST (Paris)**

SENT

The Mission summit initiated by EBF took place in Stavanger, Norway, July 5-8, 2023. Originally, it was planned to take place in 2021. Alexandra Anderson and Ligita Bodniece joined Siham Daoud, Cristina Pokidko and Fabienne Seguin to attend this event.

Emphasis was put on the youth and young leaders who were very well represented at this summit.



Elijah Brown, general secretary of the BWA, said that we are sent into the future and reminded us that 27% of the Baptist population live in countries where there is persecution. There are more vulnerable people and more vulnerable democracies. Are the new technology and the Artificial Intelligence a gain or a threat? The world is changing but Jesus' calling to go and make disciples is the same. Challenges have increased. We heard powerful testimonies, could attend various breakout sessions or

listen to panel discussions.

Two women from our EBF/EBWU region led morning Bible studies:

- Micheline Makkar (Lebanon) encouraged us not to be afraid (Matthew 10:10-31) and reminded us that Mission is to be in God's will.
- Valérie Duval-Poujol (France) reminded us that Jesus is the great teacher (Matthew 10:32-42) and a disciple is someone learning. It is a whole life process.



Micheline Makkar

We must remain teachable and learn to surrender everything to Jesus. Are we ready for that? When we become a believer, there is a separation process. What do we have to cut out in our lives?



It is very difficult to bring a fragrance of this summit, as it was so rich, so diverse and so inspiring!

Such an event opens our eyes and also strengthen us. We are so grateful and thankful to the Norwegian team. Thanks to the hard work of all the volunteers, everything went smoothly. It was a privilege to be there.

TO HIM THE GLORY!

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EBWU RULES

DREAM BIG

SAY PLEASE and THANK YOU

TRY YOUR BEST

BE GRATEFUL

CHOOSE to be HAPPY

SMILE

HUG OFTEN

OFFER to HELP

SING LAUGH DANCE

REMEMBER YOU ARE LOVED