

News & Views
Summer Edition 2014



European Baptist Women's Union



Photo Report National Conference of the Baptist Women in Belgium, Brussels, April 2013





News & Views

Summer Edition 2014



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When you open your heart and somebody spits into it, do not hurry to close it and lock it. When you want to share your heart, but hear only cynical laughter or just silence, do not hurry to turn away and build high walls around yourself.

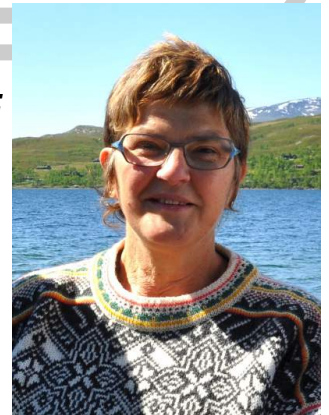
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Synnøve G. Angen: Kuwah's story

My name is Kuwah Paw Htoeleh and I am originally from Burma (Myanmar) and I belong to the Karen ethnic group. Since there has been for many years a civil war in Burma between the different ethnic groups, my parents could not live permanently in one place.

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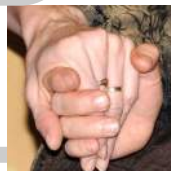
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2015 Baptist Women's Leadership Conference "Arise, Shine"

July 18-21, 2015

"Arise, shine; for your light has come!" Isaiah 60:1



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EDITORIAL



By Margaret Brown

Welcome to our Summer edition of News and Views!

Writing this now, in a few weeks time, here in Scotland, Glasgow in particular, many competitors and spectators will come for the Commonwealth Games. I suspect that most of the athletes, whatever their particular sport, if not all, have their minds set on the gold medal. They will have been training hard for many months and perhaps years, and now it is time to determine how well that training will show in their performance. But there is more to life than winning gold. A number of churches and Christian agencies have come together in a programme ‘More Than Gold’ with a variety of events taking place to coincide with the Games, aimed at introducing the Lord Jesus to the athletes and visitors, for to know Him is something more than gold.

All of us are running in a race. We are encouraged in, ***“Forgetting what is behind and straining towards what is ahead, I press on towards the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenwards in Christ Jesus.”*** (Philippians 3:13/14). If we run well in this race we all will receive the prize – of being in the Lord’s presence for ever. Eric Liddell, the famous Scottish athlete, is reputed to have said, ‘*So where does the power come from to see the race to the end?.....From within. God made me for a purpose. He also made me fast. When I run I feel His pleasure.*’

I so like this quote. To me it means that when we are doing the thing God made us for, we can know and sense the pleasure of God! That’s amazing, yet true, because I have proved it in my own life.

In this edition of N&V you will read of many women who have struggles as they run their particular race. Yet they are staying the course; their eyes are fixed on Jesus. He runs the race with them, and all who have gone before them are spurring them on to finish the race, and to finish it well (Hebrews 12:1-3) and so have the victory and receive the prize.

Let us stand with those who are in difficult situations at present – Ukraine, Syria, Iran and other places you may know of. Let us remember them often in prayer to encourage them, to enable them to stay the course and to finish the race for the glory and honour of the One Who has already run His race and WON!

Margaret Brown



Borgund Stave Church

By Wies Dijkstra

In June 2014 my husband and I visited Norway for the first time. We were invited by Margun Warem, former EBWU Vice President, and her husband Arne. They took us for a wonderful trip along the Fjord coast of Norway, from Stavanger up to Trondheim, where we stayed with Synnøve Angen and her husband Eigil. We were very impressed by the beauty of this country! On our way we visited the old Stave Church in Borgund.



Conversion of Norway to Christianity

The conversion of Norway to Christianity began in 1000 AD. The raids on Ireland, Britain and the Frankish kingdoms had brought the Vikings in touch with Christianity. King Haakon I, who had grown up in England tried to introduce Christianity in the tenth century, but had met resistance from pagan leaders and soon abandoned the idea.

King Olaf II (later Saint Olaf) had more success in his efforts to convert the population, and he is credited with Christianising Norway.

The first Christian churches in Norway are called Stave Churches. They were built of wood without the use of nails.

In 1180 the Stave Church in Borgund was built. With the help of the local people, the great posts or ‘staves’ – were slotted into the ground frame and hauled upright to form the main structure. The consecration service was conducted by the bishop himself. He first went round the building three times, then knocked thrice on the closed door with his bishop’s crook before he entered and consecrated the building in the name of Christ, conqueror of all evil and Lord of the Church.

The nave was full, the men and boys standing to the south of the aisle, the women and girls to the north. The only benches were along the walls and these were reserved for the old and the crippled.

Source: <http://www.stavechurch.com/en/borgund/>



PRESIDENTIAL LETTER



By Aniko Ujvari

Dear Sisters,

I greet you in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ. A year has passed since you held in your hands the last News and Views. Through this time you could follow the Baptist women's life in Europe through the website and Facebook. Many things happened in these past months. Let us count the blessings!

First: The wonderful conference in Hannover still is a special memory for those who had the opportunity to attend. The new leadership began to work together. We learned to know each other better and better. We recognize the talents in each other and understand better and better how the Lord can use us in this special ministry. Of course it needs time, too, to learn to communicate and understand the cultural background where we come from and how to fit these experiences in to a common goal.

Secondly, I have had some invitations to visit different countries. Because of this I have not had great opportunity to get to know the new sisters. I had some blessed days with these unions. And do you know what I experienced!? Europe is a rich continent. Not because of the economy. Even not because of the rich nature. Not because of the well paid jobs. No, it is not so everywhere, because in Europe there are poor countries and hard circumstances. But in spite of these hardships still we may say, Europe is a rich continent. The richness of Europe is in the wonderful women, who are committed to the Lord, who are present everywhere, in every country, who want to love their neighbors with the love of God, who are ready to work hard, who are ready to share, who are ready to serve, to open their hearts and homes and purses. These are women who are the most important to fulfill the calling from the Lord, being obedient to His will. They are ready to be mothers, who are using their gifts in arts, in music, in business or in their homes, in their kitchen. They are women who are blessed to serve among the sick people, among the elderly in homes, orphans; women who help other women to heal their souls, their lives which are broken because of war, or because of death, mourning, or because of broken relations. Lots of variety, of pain, joy, struggle and help. But this is our life in the 21 century in Europe.

I was so happy to know how the Belarus Baptist women celebrate the Day of Prayer, how they take care for the women not just in church but in society, too.

Or in Latvia, where I experienced great commitment to serve and live Godly lives on behalf of the Baptist women. They serve in the congregation and work to reach out to the community.

The main project for us at the moment is the support of the women who suffer from long term war in their country, especially in Syria, from where big numbers of refugees are flood the neighboring countries. These families are in need, and especially the women feel lost. Coming from a different culture and loosing the safety of their daily routine, being powerless with their children, to help them to get to school, to get proper meals, and help the husband to get a job. The women who give the structure of the family life now are embarrassed. We have great co-workers in the Lebanese Baptist sisters, and the whole Lebanese Society for Educational and Social Development (LSESD).

From our visit to Lebanon I learned four meaningful experiences.

These are the following:

1. In Christ we may learn to love our enemies. Once they were against us, but now in need, we may do our best for them.
2. Even if we have but a small amount, yet with a pure heart, the Lord may multiply it. We may live the miracle, even today in the 21 century. What a blessing!
3. We, women always emphasize that Jesus Christ lifted up the value of the women. But talking with women who live today in the culture where women even may not talk in the presence of men, it became a special meaning for me, how Jesus Christ broke down this wall between men and women.
4. The power of prayer – what did I get new in it? We all know, that yes, there is power in prayer, but going through special periods in our life we may refresh our knowledge. Yes, the power of prayer is a living power which is present in our daily life.

In the spring we met wonderful committed sisters in a small island of the Mediterranean Sea, in Malta. They are in a minority as evangelical Christians, but they are strong in their calling. They serve among the women, children and as a congregation generally for the people in Malta.

Shortly afterwards I met wonderful Christian people in Sweden. They listen to God and do a lot to find the best ways how to serve, how to teach and reach the people of the modern society. It was a heart warming experience to explore how they take care of the history and how highly valued were and are the women in Sweden. (Photo as Ida ... is preaching)

It is wonderful to observe the unity in Christ as the Czech and Slovak sisters come together for their women's conference in every year in spite of living in a divided

country since twenty - twenty five years now. Great lecturers gifted with the words and thoughts of God. Good and very open conversations. These all are gifts of the time when the women come together. One more thing to share is a special experience to see grandmothers, mothers and daughters together. It is a bit unique, and does not often happen. And I really give thanks to the Lord for this special grace, having the generations together.

And the next special experience of the treasure of Europe was in the recent past when I attended at the meeting of the International Baptist Convention's representatives. A good number of women gathered together for a weekend in Hungary to celebrate their fellowship in Christ. Let me share with you something unique and a special experience from this weekend. We had a wonderful lecturer from the US, she was richly blessed and she has a special talent for teaching from the Bible. One evening we had communion. The Lord's Supper was prepared at the four corners of the hall, with candles on the table. After the moving teaching we had a time of silence in prayer, being prepared to receive the sacraments. And slowly one by one we went to the table, when somebody felt ready for that, they went to the table and received it. The silence, the word's of God, the fellowship – all special blessings when we are together in the Lord. I felt blessed being with so many sisters all around Europe and the whole world.

Now, going through these experiences you may understand me, why I told you, Europe is a rich continent – rich with blessed and committed women, men, congregations. Let us praise the Lord for His blessings in our relationship as we are bonded together in His love, in the salvation and mercy from our Heavenly Father.

"Oh sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth!

Sing to the Lord, bless his name; tell of his salvation from day to day.

Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples!

For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; he is to be feared above all gods.

For all the gods of the peoples are worthless idols, but the Lord made the heavens.

Splendor and majesty are before him; strength and beauty are in his sanctuary."

Psalm 96:1-6.

Aniko Ujvari, EBWU president



THANK YOU GERMANY !

The former and present EBWU committees again express their gratitude to the German Baptist Women's Union "Frauenwerk" for all the work they did, all the time they spent, all the thought they gave for the 5 Yearly Election Conference in Hannover 2013.

Also to all other people who were involved in any way whatsoever we say 'thank-you'. This was a big undertaking and the Frauenwerk took it on and carried it in such a dedicated and committed way. We express our thanks to you here, publicly. Great is the Lord, and most worthy of praise: the conference was wonderful and a great blessing, and we praise God for all who were involved.

Thank you so much for all your help. May you each continue to know the Lord's rich blessing in your lives.

"Your love has given (us) great joy and encouragement, because you, (sisters), have refreshed the hearts of the saints." Philemon:7.



HANOVER CONFERENCE



Report of the Quinquennial Election Conference of the European Baptist Women's Union held 29th May – 2nd June 2013 in Hanover, Germany.

Stand up and Live!

Be treated as a Princess? It happened to the approximately 140 participants of the quinquennial conference of the European Baptist Women's Union 2013 in Hanover, Germany. EBWU – president Livija Godina opened the Conference and welcomed all guests including from the USA: President of the BWA Women's Department Raquel Contreras, BWA Women's Department Director Patsy Davis, Joyce Wyatt, author of the book "I'm a Woman.... Created in the Image of God" and Evelyn Tully, also from the USA.

The representatives of the 38 countries present, walked the aisle during the creative roll call on the opening night led by Wies Dijkstra, EBWU committee member. The red carpet was rolled out for all those ladies showing the flags of their countries and they were welcomed like Royal Highnesses.



The audience had to guess which country the ladies came from, seeing on screen some highlights of her country. Standing in front, all the representatives turned their flags and then the theme of the Conference was revealed: “Stand up and Live!” based on 1 Samuel 1: the life of Hannah.

Our main speaker was Raquel Contreras, President of the BWA Women’s Department, who encouraged and challenged us during her three sessions of Bible study: Hannah & Peninah; Hannah & Elkanah; Hannah & her “church”. She spoke

about their encounters and relationships: Suffering under the bullying by Peninah, not understood by her husband and in the last Bible study - “My own way with only God”; the depressive Hannah who turned into a courageous woman! She took her life into her own hands, made her way to the temple and resigned all her sorrows,



Elisabeth Kapsreiter and Raquel Contreras

her distress, her frustration with God. She negotiated with Him, her heavenly Father. And God accepted it, because she was a daughter of the King and worthy to **Stand up and Live!** Hannah stood up with the help of God and lived!



We learned ‘Hannah’s Song’, specially written for the conference by Cornelia Spagl and composed by Birgit Heichel, who together with Claudia Sokolis lead us in singing in a splendid way during the whole conference. The CD with this song was a farewell gift reminding all the participants that -like Hannah- they ought to take their



troubles to the Lord in prayer, knowing that He is well able to help them. It's encouraging to trust in the Lord, "to rise up and go" knowing that He is with us.

As part of the programme on Friday 6 interesting workshops were offered and the women took active part in them: **1.** Social Ministry in Hannover, Michael Borkowski; **2.** Creative

workshop My Life Dream, Irmgard Neese; **3.** With All My Soul, Body and Spirit, Claudia Sokolis and Tuula Bockemül; **4.** Fair Trade, Micah Challenge and More, Nicole Witzemann and Heike Heider; **5.** Bibliodrama, Margaret Lincoln; **6.** Spirituality and the Gift of Humour, Lina Andronoviene.

In the evening, mainly the women from the former Soviet Republics and women from the countries of the Middle East and Balkan regions gave testimony and reported difficult situations in their countries; for example the problem of human trafficking. Their testimonies and reports touched our hearts.

An important part of the conference was the Business Meeting on Saturday morning.

The main item of which was the election of a new EBWU Committee, led by the Nominating Committee. The new officers are: Hungary **Aniko Ujvari** – President, The Netherlands **Wies Dijkstra** – Vice President, Scotland **Margaret Brown** – Secretary, France **Fabienne Seguin** – Treasurer, Norway **Synnøve Angen** – Additional Member, Bulgaria **Dimitrina Oprenova** – Additional Member.



These women were elected for the term 2013 – 2018, all being well.

There was a grateful goodbye for the former EBWU-officers: President Livija Godina, Vice President Margun Warem and Treasurer Elisabeth Vekas, who all had served several terms.

Saturday after the election of the new EBWU committee, the women could go on different excursions to explore Hanover.

After coming back, with several enriched impressions, the National Evening in Stephansstift started. This took the form of a festival with a colorful program. A very big courtyard party opened by the German President 1e Elisabeth Kapsreiter and her husband, both dressed in national costume.



Invited were additional guests from the communities in Hanover. After a delicious buffet the children's circus "Mustard Seed" showed us their skills.

A barrel-organ player in costume played with his nostalgic instrument many beautiful German songs and then Brigitte Will invited us to take part in Israeli and Greek dances.

During the evening one could buy tickets and if you were lucky you could get a nice gift at the many beautiful stalls at the indoor market. The money was raised for "Maison Dorcas " - an EBM international training project for women.



There were times to sit and chat, pray together, and to learn from one another. Old friendships were renewed and new ones formed.

This fantastic evening was closed with a time of worship in the church in the grounds of Stephansstift. The wonderful acoustics in the church



invited us to sing á capella canons, and choirs were formed spontaneously by women singing in Russian and Romanian and English. The closing song was the well known and impressive "Dona nobis pacem". A truly fitting end to a lovely evening.

In the same beautiful church the women experienced as a special highlight on Sunday the final service. Regina

Claas, General Secretary of Germany, spoke from Luke 13:10-13 about the woman who was bent over and couldn't straighten up, until Jesus came and healed her, "Woman, you are set free from your infirmity." She was healed, she was able to 'Stand up and Live'. Raquel Contreras came on stage and acted like such a woman, while Regina told us what bends us in life, what burdens and restricts our lives, and encouraged us to unload our burdens on to Jesus. And like that woman and Hannah, we all may come to Him with all our sorrows and if we are trusting Him, He will



help us straighten up and enable us to **Stand up and Live.**

In this service the Lord's Supper was celebrated and the newly elected members of the EBWU Committee were dedicated by the BWA Women's Department President Raquel Contreras and EBF General Secretary Tony Peck. At the end of the service the new elected EBWU committee stood together in a circle and prayed for guidance and blessings. It was a touching moment and everybody in church felt the presence of the Lord : Our Father among the daughters of the King: His Royal children!

Compiled from the reports of EBWU Secretary Margaret Brown, 2e President Germany Gisela Bullermann and German Women's Work Officer Nicole Witzemann.



EBWU Committee from June 1, 2013 - 2018:

President – Aniko Ujvari, Hungary; (3rd from left)
Vice-president -- Wies Dijkstra, The Netherlands; (2nd from left)
Secretary - Margaret Brown, Scotland; (1st from right)
Treasurer – Fabienne Seguin, France; (2nd from right)

Additional members:

Dimitrina Oprenova, Bulgaria (1st from left)
 Synnøve Gasver Angen, Norway (3rd from right)

President Aniko Ujvari email:
ebwu.president@gmail.com



PREPARING A CONFERENCE



Preparing a conference: many people are involved!

The EBWU – committee already has expressed their gratitude to all who have made it possible to make a success of the 5 Yearly Election Conference in Hanover 2013, but there is one lady who had a tremendous job: Lina Rahbarnia. She was involved in everything, right from the beginning, and has been a “spindoctor” from the highest ranks. Months before she travelled by train with her baby son to meetings with the German and EBWU committees.

We cannot describe how much Lina has done for this conference. The EBWU committee wants to say again to her: “Thank you SO much, Lina Rahbarnia, we love you!”

Livija, Margun, Elisabeth V, Aniko, Margaret, Wies, Synnøve, Fabienne and Didi.

Review from Lina Rahbarnia, the woman who probably had the most work with the Hanover conference 2013 ...

On the Monday before the conference, I thought: "In one week, thank God, everything will be over and we did it!" And then the last Sunday of the conference came! And while almost all women said goodbye to me with tears in their eyes and Katryn and I waved out the taxis taking the women to the airport, I thought: "Now it's almost over!" But I felt no relief, to my own surprise, much more sadness. Because in just four days the names on my list had faces to the names. With many I was in contact in advance not knowing them. But now ...

I had spoken with these women in different languages - sometimes with hands and feet - speaking, joking, crying, singing, and praying. They had come to me with their little worries ("Where can I find a hair dryer?") and with their major concerns ("My flight was rebooked - where can I print the ticket?").

The night before we had laughed together and celebrated. And I knew by then it has been worth it!

The many phone calls, emails, hours at the computer, on many days even when the whole family was asleep at night – it had been worth it. To listen to the laughter on the landings of the conference center, to see how happy and deeply enriched by this conference these women went home was the most beautiful ‘Thank You’ for me.



Many women, both the guests and the German and EBWU Committee, have repeatedly and warmly thanked me. I would now like to thank here all the helpers; without their faithful help the good organization would not have been possible. I know that if you mention names, you always forget someone. So I try it in this way:

Thank you all, who have helped in any way to make a success of the organization of this Conference.

And there were MANY people behind the scenes, I tell you!

Its beyond imagination how much help you need with such an event. Think about hosting people for a week or longer, finding lost people on their way from airport to conference center, people baking pastries for the celebration evening, rehearsal for the children's' circus, and not to speak about all the other events on the National Evening, the excursions, the technical people, translators, helpers to get visas, musicians, speakers, decorators, workshop leaders, the team of the Conference Center Stephansstift, etc, etc. **THANK YOU EVERYBODY!**

I said I would not mention names, but I want to say here a big thank you from the bottom of my heart to my family. Without the help of my husband, my parents and my sisters I could have done nothing. They took over my household and my parents even came to Hanover with me because of my baby son.

As I said, all the effort and time and worries, it has been worth it to do this for the glory of the Lord.

Blessings for all of you,
Lina Rahbarnia

CROATIA CONFERENCE



**EBWU is planning a special time of prayer, discussion, brainstorming, seeking vision this autumn in Crikvenica, Croatia.
30th October - 2nd November, 2014.**

We wish to re-assess the role of EBWU and determine the way forward for the future of women's work in Europe. The main facilitators will be Dr. Ksenja Magda, of Croatia, lecturer in New Testament Theology at the Croatian Baptist Seminary and Aniko Ujvari, President of EBWU.

Each union is encouraged to send their women's leader to join with us; we value all our members and want to hear your thoughts and opinions on the ministry of women and of how EBWU can assist in this. We would like to have a good representation from across Europe.

The cost is 90 Euros per person for three nights stay. Unfortunately there is no scholarship available for this event; each woman is responsible for her own expenses. As spaces are limited, to be sure of a place, please register preferably before 30th June, through our online registration form at www.ebwu.org.

We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible!

We encourage you to pay for the conference through Bank transfer:
"EBWU Conference Croatia"

Account number: 272728.

Spar- und Kreditbank Evangelisch-Freikirchlicher Gemeinden eG.

Postfach 1262,

61282 Bad Homburg

BIC: GENODE51BH2

IBAN: DE45 5009 2100 0000 2727 28



BRATISLAVA MEETING

Report of EBWU Committee Meeting in Bratislava

As some of our number were attending the EBF Council Meetings in Bratislava, Slovakia (2013), it was decided that we hold our meetings there also. So last year the newly elected Committee met in Bratislava, from 28th-30th September (Friday – Sunday) for our first time together.

The Slovakian women were very helpful in arranging our accommodation which was ideal for us, as two of our number had a large room and we used the lounge area for our meetings. As is normal when we come together we dealt with the business in hand, but we also got to know each other a little better which was good as we will be working and interacting together for the next five years. We did have a good time, as we shared, discussed, prayed and planned, and duties allocated.

On the Saturday evening we were hosted by the Slovak and Czech women in a house belonging to the Bratislava Baptist Church. They prepared a lovely meal for us and we sat down and ate together and enjoyed fellowship with each other. Afterwards we all shared some personal things and then about our national situation after which we had a time of prayer for what was shared.

Aniko, our President, then brought a short epilogue from the Psalms. The evening went in all too quickly.



MALTA MEETING

Sunday morning saw us worshipping with the congregation of the Baptist Church, which was another wonderful experience to share in worship and to meet the people. It so happened that Otniel Bunaciu, the EBF president was the preacher, and also in the congregation was Tony & Alison Peck and Neville Callam, General Secretaries of EBF and BWA respectively.

In the afternoon Ludmilla and another couple took us on a walking short sightseeing tour of Bratislava which we enjoyed so much. It was a lovely end to our time in Bratislava. We were so blessed and returned home excited and enthused about the work before us.

EBWU Committee meeting in Malta, March 18-23, 2014

By Synnøve G. Angen

The EBWU committee members came from different places in Europe to meet for their annual gathering on the island of Malta in the Mediterranean Sea.

Malta has a long Christian legacy, according to tradition it was brought to the island by the Apostle Paul himself because he shipwrecked. Nowadays still the site of the wreck is known as St. Paul's Bay.

In Acts. 28.1- 2 we can read: Once safely on shore, we found out that the island was called Malta. The islanders showed us unusual kindness... We had the same experience of kindness! Our Maltese friends arranged it so that we could live and have our board meeting in a church/ fellowship-place in the midst of Mosta, nearby their church.

Saturday we had the privilege of meeting some of the local Christian women. We were welcomed into a room decorated in spring colours of green and yellow. One of the youths in the church, had made and put cards with Bible verses on every table in



the room. Another table was decorated with a beautiful bouquet of yellow lilies and it was set up with cakes and goodies that we ate while we small talked with the local women. We exchanged personal information and several of us got new Facebook-friends during the meeting.

After a time of small talk we sang praises to the Lord and our president Aniko Ujvari held a devotional from Acts 16 where she spoke about Lydia, the first woman convert to Christianity in Europe.

We are pleased and grateful for having this opportunity to meet the local Christian women, in different age groups, experiencing that God is working amongst the Maltese people and learning about some of the work they are doing.

We thank Sylvia Caruana and her husband reverend Edwin (in The Evangelical Baptist Church of Malta) for planning our stay, helping us with practical matters and giving us a sight-seeing tour around the island. May God richly bless their work amongst the Maltese people.

For full report and more pictures see website www.ebwu.org



EBWU Committee at Malta, March 18-23, 2014

LETTER FROM LAURAN



Dear EBWU Sisters!

It was SO wonderful to be with you in Germany and to be inspired and humbled by your stories of courage and expressions of love! I have just returned from being with nearly a thousand of your sisters in the Latin American Baptist Women's Union (UFBAL), meeting together in Foz de Iguazu, Brazil—and feel like God is blessing me SO much this year in giving me the opportunity to be with great women of faith in Europe AND Latin America!

The Latin American Baptist women invited me to present some workshops about human trafficking. My favorite time was during the question and answer session when the women enthusiastically asked questions about starting new ministries or told about the ministries they had participated in. One dear woman who immigrated to a new country in Central America and works as a secretary there, told about seeing women working in prostitution from her home country, standing in front of her office building. She started greeting them each day, with a smile and a hello. Soon, she was carrying on conversations with them—and then one day she invited some of them home to lunch! They were so very happy to be able to talk with someone who spoke with the same accent, who served them familiar food, who knew of their hometowns. In the privacy of her home, they began sharing their stories of being trafficked into this country. Their passports were taken away from them, and they could not go home. What they wanted most was simply to go home.

She didn't know what else to do but to go to her embassy and try her best to get travel documents for them to go home. And she was successful!!! It was so exciting for her to see them happily get on the plane headed home!

As she was telling this story, I knew that some of the people in the audience were thinking that she was crazy to risk inviting the women into her home! They could have robbed her! They could have taken advantage of her hospitality! Wasn't she also crazy for intervening with the authorities on their behalf, to get their travel documents? Wouldn't the authorities be corrupt and



cause her problems in the future? Wouldn't the traffickers follow her movements and threaten her?

I know that in some situations, these are real risks that could have real consequences. But this woman felt God calling her to **do what she could**, no matter what the risks. God protected her, and the risks she took brought **freedom** from prostitution for the women she served.

She was an example of an ordinary person acting in an extraordinary way. She didn't see it that way. She was doing what she thought was normal and necessary if she was to "risk it all" and follow Jesus.

One thing I know for sure: If every church community had 1 or 2 or 3 women willing to **do what they could** on behalf of victims of human trafficking and prostitution, then I know that this evil would soon disappear! We would have an army of people who were willing to "risk it all" for Jesus, who didn't just "risk" - but gave His Life for us.

I'd love to hear your stories of "**doing what you can**" for the sake of "the least of these" who are trapped in prostitution and human trafficking. Please do write and let me know!

With Love From Your Sister On the Journey 2013 / 2014 ,

Lauran Bethell - lauran@pobox.com

Face Book friend me! (Lauran Bethell)



TESTIMONY

Testimony of Ľubica Hovorková, Bratislava, Slovakia



Attending the Sunday morning service in the Baptist Church in Bratislava, where the EBWU-committee was gathering in October 2013 for the very first time with the newly elected members, our attention was drawn to the beautiful sculptured wooden cross in that church.

Instead of asking the artist, Juraj Hovorka himself, we were thinking it would be nice to hear the story of the wife of the artist. She answered very openly the questions our President Aniko Ujvari presented to her. Read her emotional life story!

1 How did you become Christian?

I grew up in a family, where the Holy Bible wasn't only a decoration, it was read daily and in this way my young Christian character was formed.

When I was 15, I accepted Jesus Christ into my heart. To prove my faith, I was immersed into water and was baptized. My childhood was formed and influenced by my Christian family and by the religious community, which we attended regularly. My adolescence was not painless. My younger brother suffered from an incurable disease and was bedridden for many years. Shortly after he had gone to his heavenly home, my healthy 13 year old sister died after becoming ill with Asian flu. At that time my fellowship community supported and strengthened my faith very much.

2 What is your profession?

I am a retired teacher. It was not only my job, but my love as well. I loved going to work. I was happy to see children coming to the 1st class and knowing practically nothing; and then, ending their first school year I admired their knowledge, which enabled them with their further education. I could bring love, truth, and understanding into their pure souls. I loved my job, however I retired when I had to take care of my seriously ill mother. Also at that time I gave up my leadership of the women's work in our church, as well as being involved in the Committee of the Evangelical Alliance of the Slovak Republic.



Hanover Conference



Hanover Conference



Hanover Conference



3 What was your relationship with the arts before meeting your husband?

Thanks to my professors at the Pedagogical School, art – especially music and poetry – influenced my poetic spirit very much and thanks to the contact with my future husband I started to appreciate fine arts. I admired his ability to present beauty. I thought originally, that figuration represented the sense of art. Later, when married, I observed his struggle for idea and shape and I started to understand the essence of art. Concerning his work, I was sometimes allowed to express my own opinion. The relation with the sculptor opened new horizons to me. Thanks to him I got an opportunity to learn more about the environment of fine arts, of music and literature. Due to these contacts my aesthetic feeling deepened very much.

4 How did you meet your husband?

When my future husband came to Bratislava to study at the College of Fine Arts, he also worked in our church with the youth group. I was very young then and at first I did not pay much attention to him. Later, after I had been invited to work with the juniors, (teenagers), we worked together and we learned more about each other. The juniors were educated in smaller groups during the week and in summer we organized camps in open countryside for them. I and my future husband, we used to meet relatively often and we had common interests. Our friendship and affections for each other became stronger. However, the age difference between us was bigger and thus our relationship was becoming deeper only very slowly. To be honest, I have to say I appreciated him very much but I sometimes refused to accept his presents, as for example, wrought jewellery with a portrait of me. This made him sad, and of course later I was sorry about it. By the way, today this piece is my most treasured of all.

5 Can you tell us some stories from your married life?

We married on the day of his graduation. Till that day I had known him only as a college student wearing a white coat and with a spatula in his hand. He looked like a doctor, not only from the visual aspect, but by his mindset too. He was clever, attentive, helpful, resolute and decisive. Entry into the common, everyday life was hard for both of us. We lived in one basement room furnished only with a sofa, table and wardrobe. We did not have any finances. The first Christmas together my husband gave his blood at transfusion point to get some money for my Christmas present. We lived in very difficult conditions, however we were happy because we were in love.

After finishing his studies at the University, Juraj got the possibility to spend one more “honorary year” in his Alma Mater. Even although he had an academic degree, he was not famous enough to get an appropriate job. He needed his own atelier, tools and money to be able to buy some material. So this time at University was a perfect opportunity for him to co-work with famous sculptors on their monumental projects. He got more experience, contacts, and salary as well.

After one year, our first child was born. Later two more children came into our family. My husband was working very hard from early morning till late evening, the housekeeping was mostly on me. This period of time was a difficult test for both of us; I had not much experience, I felt helpless, and during that time I cried a lot. I became accustomed to the position of sculptor's wife which I found very hard. Later Juraj obtained his atelier, and we were able to get our flat very close to it, so we could spend more time together. It was interesting for me to observe him working, to learn more about the process of sculpting, and about art in general. I understood that creating comes about by very hard and precise work. At the beginning of every project there exists only the idea. This idea is then changed into something tangible. The artist adds more mass, then he takes something off. The final realization of the idea is transformed into permanent material like stone or bronze. I remember well how our nerves were on the edge when he was setting the large-sized fountain on the Square of Freedom/Námestie Slobody in Bratislava. I noticed how his appearance was changing. Setting up of a master piece of art into its space is difficult not only from the safety point of view, but also whether its size will fit into the space. Each work is different, each needs special skills, new tools, new approach, new experience. This was difficult for me and it took me some time to understand that Juraj needed calm and a still environment around him, he needed home as a place to relax. It wasn't easy for me to realize this. I sometimes could not understand, why he did not help me at home. Thankfully, my parents helped me from time to time. I am very thankful to our God that He has given us power and health, that our children and our grand children are true believers and that they are valuable members of our Christian community, and their faith is very strong!

6 Is it true that artists have a special sensitivity for “what is going on” around them?

General opinion is that artists have unconventional lives, they are alcohol abusers, extroverts or the opposite. Some of them perhaps are like this. But my husband, as a true believer, beside his artistic activities was fully involved in the work for our Church. For many years he was in the management of the community as an elder, he was also a choir member and a leader of the youth group. Our household was always open for guests, for spiritual discussions. We prayed a lot, we supported everyone who needed help. Our children grew up in such an environment.

7 What was most challenging in your marriage?

When one is married, there exist many opinions on how to face different problems. Even some of our problems were petty, but we had to solve them. Understanding is the most essential for everyday life. If you are in love, you are always able to forgive.

8 Write something of what you have been thankful for in your life.

Firstly, I am thankful for my believing parents who brought me up in a Christian way. My faith had always been strengthened in our Church fellowship. Sisterhood and brotherhood – those are the relations that have been preserving up till now. Thank God for people with whom I can share pleasure and grief.

Secondly, my daughter became widowed very young with two little children. After eight years she remarried and moved to Canada. However, her life there was not without problems. My daughter fell into unconsciousness, she had a brain tumor. This was a horrible message for us and for our Christian community. We met together in an unusual time to pray. We pleaded with God very sincerely in prayer during her operation. What do you think, could there exist something

more powerful than a common prayer to the Lord for her healing?

Thirdly, thank God for my husband. He didn't fail during the years of communism. We both worked with young people and we were persecuted. During that time every official artistic piece had to be authorized ideologically by the supreme political authorities. It happened sometimes, his work was not authorized or stopped, or in media another artist was mentioned as the author of my husband's work. That was the price we paid for public profession of our faith. In those difficult years Juraj made many pieces with biblical themes: Lot's wife, Goliath's skull, Golgotha /the Skull, Archangel Gabriel, Angel with the broken wing, and many crosses. The cross "Pure victim" decorates the face of our chapel. These were hard years, however our family became closer, we were together; we supported and encouraged one another. And I am thankful for some special people who appeared in my life at the right time.



L'ubica and Juraj Hovorka

9 Have you any experiences you would rather have avoided?

Horrors of World War II were permanently etched in my childlike soul – plane attacks, bombs, evacuation, killing, torture in P.O.W. camps. I was worried about my own life and about the lives of my beloved.

We organized the summer camps without any approval of the communist authorities and I was always worried that the police would find us, as we did not have any permission for such camps (that time it was necessary).

Camping in free countryside with young people was sometimes limited by bad weather, injuries, lack of responsibility. One day we went to the forest to pick up mushrooms and two girls, including our daughter, did not return to the camp. My husband as chief of the camp, went looking for them at night. I was worried about both of them. We all were praying all through the night. Finally, Juraj found them and brought them back miraculously to the camp in the morning.

But there were many ordinary situations. Once, my husband was abroad so I decided to tidy up his atelier. Doing it, I mistakenly threw away a large amount of money designed for the reconstruction of our chapel. After coming back home, Juraj could not find the money, of course not, – it was somewhere on the rubbish tip! He didn't say a word, but he was desperate. Seeing him was, for me, more painful than the duty to pay our own money for the reconstruction, when, at that time, our financial situation was not very good.

10 What message would you like to send to women in Europe?

Well, it is difficult to say what to do more, what to recommend. To be Christian only to have some advantages – God's protection and blessing, seeking for prosperity, is not a real trust in God. On the other hand, showing Christians as good people without any problems is also a modified reality and not the truth.

We had hard time in the years of communism. We were suffering. To be able to exist, we had to adapt to the system, even though we hated it. I believe, this would not be repeated. I am very glad that many changes have been done concerning this. On the other hand it looks like we have become too satisfied with the situation. We do not pay much attention to consumer lifestyle, which is becoming more and more dangerous and we can be trapped, also there are other things which can ensnare us.

Many theological streams have entered into our lives and they are leading us away from the real essence of life. Young people leave Christian communities and are searching for new ways. Any limits are considered not valid. Freedom and individuality have become the overwhelming issues. Appreciation of older people is diminished. These all are the facts I am afraid of and which I would take care to avoid. How to change it? To make the rules and principles more strict? The gospel is neither science, nor institution. Christianity is belief, mercy, and love. It is a guiding and leading by the Holy Spirit, it is a voluntary community – seeking and finding. Upbringing and education are very important, but they are not the power of salvation. Even when we are trying to do our best in our Christian fellowship, we cannot substitute God's love and mercy.

Everyone can read about the Lord, and can learn much about Jesus Christ, however not everyone meets God and comes to faith. I wish all the sisters all over the world to have the opportunity to meet the Lord and to feel His never ending healing love.

Translation by Ludmila Englerova.

THE LAW OF LOVE

Revelation of the Cross - The Law of Love and Sacrifice.

By Svetlana Svishchova, Ukraine

When you open your heart and somebody spits into it, do not hurry to close it and lock it. When you want to share your heart, but hear only cynical laughter or just silence, do not hurry to turn away and build high walls around yourself. When you offer pearls to people, but hear only pigs grunting, do not curse your pearls swearing that you will never show anything to anyone again.



To hide is a natural response. It is an instinct of self preserving. It is a human desire to protect ourselves from cutting with human words and looks, again and again. But there is another law that is stronger than the instincts. It is the law of love and sacrifice.

He was beaten. He suffered. He was humiliated, but He was silent. He was hurt, but He did not complain.

Why? Why did He not leave the cross? Why did He ask the Father to forgive His murderers?

When the nails were hammered into His kind hands, He opened them even wider.... Here we can find the answer to our countless “whys”...

When you bless those who insult you, when you give your warmth and love to those who coldly hate and ignore you, the whole spiritual world is amazed – they see another hero, who changes the existing order of things with his or her sacrifice.

This is the law of sacrifice that breaks the rules, softens hard hearts, turns laughter of sinners into tears of repentance. That’s the love that puts Roman centurions on their knees making them cry out “Truly, this was the Son of God!”

This is the standard of His children, the standard of the Mountain sermon. And if you are facing the decision “to love or not to love”, listen to the quiet and tender voice: “Love. Keep loving. If you give out this sacrifice, I will give out so much grace, that even your enemies will change. For they are also people, and they have souls...”

The stronger the pain, the more valuable the sacrifice. The more sacrifice, the bigger the fire. The bigger the fire, the faster melts the ice... somebody is to begin to LOVE!!! Christ was the first to love us, so love the people around you!

Christ is risen – He is alive and He can do His mighty work for us, in us and through us! Praise Him!!!

May the Lord bless you! Christ is risen!

THE STORY OF KUWAH



By Synnøve G. Angen

In October I had the pleasure of spending one weekend together with the members of the Committee of the Norwegian Baptist Womens Union. We were invited to Signhild Storlien Lund's home at beautiful Ørlandet in Trøndelag, Norway. Signhild is the vice president of NBWU.

During this weekend I made a new acquaintance, she is a deputy / alternate member in the Committee and she is originally from Burma.

Saturday she took the morning devotion and she talked about the team **LOVE** from **1 Corinthians 13**.

"If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ²And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. ³If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, ⁴but do not have love, I gain nothing. ⁵Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant ⁶or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; ⁷it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. ⁸It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. ⁹Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. ¹⁰For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; ¹¹but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. ¹²When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. ¹³For now we see in a mirror, dimly, ¹⁴but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. ¹⁵And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love".

We live in a society with a high standard of living. A lot of people in the world today are living in war areas, experiencing hatred and extermination of people. In Burma there has been a lot of hatred and war for many years and ethnic extermination. Only love wins! It is not easy loving your enemy, but Jesus has taught us to love. He has been living on this earth Himself!

We pray: "Take away our enemies". The Bible tells us to love our enemies. We shall pray for them! We shall pray for peace to come, that the earth shall be a peaceful place to live, for all of us!!

This is Kuwah's story:

My name is Kuwah Paw Htoeleh and I am originally from Burma (Myanmar) and I belong to the Karen ethnic group. Since there has been for many years a civil war in Burma between the different ethnic groups, my parents could not live permanently in one place. All the time they had to flee and they lived in the jungle where I was born, before we were officially refugees in Thailand. I had to grow up in a village on the Thai-Burma border as a refugee. In 1995 we were sent to a camp which brought together all those who had fled, to get good protection. I grew up in a refugee camp and married my husband there. We could not go back to our villages while the war was still going on there.



I came to Norway in the year 2006. We received news that ten rich countries would take in Karen refugees. The refugee camp that I stayed in was selected by Norway. All had to apply to come here. I thought about my future and my children and wrote an application. It has been a tough process, but we did arrive in Norway in the end! We could not go out of the camp while we stayed in Thailand. Therefore I thought it would be nice to get out of camp. It is God's blessing that we did come to Norway.

I am engaged in many contexts because I like meeting people, sharing my experiences and especially showing love and showing others that there are people who care. For example, many Karen women need someone to talk to and I want to support them and care about their thoughts and difficulties. And most of all I would like to encourage them with the Word of God as best I can. It's not that I know a lot or that I am perfect, but I will help others with the little gift I have received from God. To believe in Jesus as our Savior and show love as Jesus has taught us, is an important message for me to give to those who have no faith at all.

I have three beautiful children under the age of 18. It was not always easy when the kids were younger and I wanted to be engaged in many things outside home. But I have to be grateful that God has created a wonderful man, a big hearted and good mother and helpful siblings. They have supported me all the way. Without them I could not do the job that I do now! And when I have time, I try to be with them as

much as possible, having a good time together. I thank God for the life I have had up till today.

I have been a member of the same church for 7 years, since I came to Norway. I still enjoy being in the church and now I am sitting on the church council. For me it is very important, when I am healthy and have time, to participate on Sunday worship service. Prayer Meeting on Tuesday is also important for me, being part of the Christian fellowship. I help with the Sunday meetings for youth, I am a member of the church café team and the church cleaning team, such as the others do.

I like serving God and all in all, I thank God for He has made my life a blessing.

Thanks to Kuwah for sharing her story.





Window to the World

Greetings from Denmark

By Susanne Andersen

I'm still in Hannover in my mind, and what I learned there! Very often I go back in my memories thinking of the great women I met at the conference and the sharing of stories from different places and situations all over Europe and The Middle East. I wonder, why we here in Denmark are so privileged in material stuff, in freedom, in peace, in women's liberation, in every topic, I can imagine. Our problems and challenges seem so small and insignificant in contrast to what we heard from especially the southern and the eastern part of Europe.

But when I think it over and over again, I can see the danger for our women in our part of the world. Women today have two – or even more - jobs! Most women work 37 hours per week and afterwards they have to take care of the household: cleaning, cooking, washing and taking care of the family's social life, bringing up the children, be an attractive wife and friend, and if you are a Christian: be active in church: singing, preparing meals and coffee, preaching, organizing etc.....When does a woman in Denmark have time for herself, relaxing and sharing a good conversation with other women. Many women have money of their own, have freedom, have the same job at work and in the church as the men do. But what about taking care of herself?



In my small and only eight years old church we try to reach out to women; to give them a break from everyday life, to treat them well.

At first we thought that it would be women in their thirties and forties, who would respond to our invitation, but soon we realized, that also women in their seventies and eighties would like to come.

We meet on a Saturday – four or five times a year – for two and a half hours. The first hour we share a well-cooked and homemade brunch with lots of new and exciting things. We really want the women to feel in good company. We set the table with candles, napkins, flowers and nice cookware to make the church cosy and welcoming.

Each time we invite a special guest, who will share a special topic with us. Some have told us about pilgrimage, another about Francis of Assisi, another about visiting a children's home in India, another about visiting our mission in Burundi, one told us about being an alcoholic....and so on.

Our goal is to give the women a short time of rest from their daily lives, have a good talk while we eat, tell them something about church, Christian life and the issue of being a woman. And we succeed. Both women from the neighborhood of the church, our friends and women from other churches want to join us. We have contact with about 50 women (our church only has 27 members). We use more than a day's work, three of us, women working together, but we think it is worth it!

For your interest, I can tell, that the name of our gathering is "Café Mandfred". We have no café in our town, therefore this part of the name is appropriate, and the "Mandfred" is a pun in the Danish language, because it is both a man's name and it also means "peace from the men".

Relief Fund for Syrian Women

President Aniko Ujvari and committee-member

Synnøve Gåsvær Angen visit to Lebanon 4 - 6 February 2014.

By Synnøve Gåsvær Angen

PRAYERS ARE THE KEY

President *Saada Malky* in the Lebanese Baptist Women's Union greeted all the participants in a women's meeting in a local Baptist church with the words from *Isaiah 6. 1-9*. Isaiah prayed when he was facing problems, he prayed! He knew that prayers made things happen, that prayer was the KEY to changes. Prayer opens the door so we can be close to the Lord our God. Prayer is fellowship with God. Prayer changes things, prayers are the key.

Instead of complaining over everything bad happening around us, we must use the key, our prayer, and say: "Here am I, send me!"

We really experienced that the Baptist women (and men) we met in Lebanon had used this key and said to the Lord "Here am I, send me". Their lives are committed to Christ and they show His love and care to people in need.

We lived in the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary during our stay in Lebanon and met several of the people working at The Lebanese Society for Educational and Social Development (LSESD) / Lebanese Baptist Society. *Rosette Mansour* and the other people at Relief & Community Development together with *Saada Malky* from the Lebanese Baptist Women's Union did an amazing job planning our stay and helping us fulfill our task, to encourage and show God's love to some of the Syrian refugee women living in Lebanon on behalf of EBWU.



Syria

We also had the pleasure of meeting *Pastor Mazen*, coming by car from Syria, and giving him money from “The Relief Fund” for his work among the people inside Syria. It is better and cheaper for him buying the products in Syria and it is not easy bringing things through the borderline because of the many checkpoints.

Pastor Mazen and his volunteers are planning to use “the Relief Fund” money to buy hygiene products, underwear and pajamas for about 400 women and have some Mothers’ day- / “women to women” events, making the women feel special and loved.

Pastor Mazen started his work in Syria by ministering to the women and children because they are the most vulnerable. The women are often the victims because the men take advantage of them (and the children). Many men are away at war or have died during the war and the women and children are left alone without anyone taking care of them, without security. The children need food and clothes and the women often have to go knocking on doors asking for help. Sometimes they are given help, but very often they are chased away.

Pastor Mazen and his volunteers are having contact with about 1600 families giving them support every month. I asked Pastor Mazen: Are you not afraid of using your collar walking around in the society? He told us that in times of war it gives a positive message; he is bringing the message of peace. The inhabitants find the Christians trustworthy because they are serving, and showing love to the people in need, while the different Muslim groups are fighting against and killing each other. In the beginning of the ministry the inhabitants kept distance, but they continued serving the community and the people saw their love and started trusting. At Christmastime they gathered Shia, Sunni, Catholics, Protestants and Baptists in the Church at the same time! They also arrange parties for the children because they want them to feel that the churches are places of joy.



Lebanon - The regular Lebanese are suffering because of the Syrian crisis. The Lebanese population has increased from 4 million to 5 million in the space of a few years because of the Syrians escaping civil war in their own country. The Syrian refugees are living all over the country. Those who can afford it, rent apartments, but most of the refugees move into existing buildings, occupy the nooks and crannies of buildings under construction or live in shacks or tents. Abandoned buildings, including universities and shopping malls, have been taken over in their entirety by refugees.

Rosette and the other people at Relief & Community Development made a big effort buying hygiene products and underwear in advance, made packing a sisterly fellowship and letting us take part in the distribution of hygiene kits to Syrian women both in Beirut and the countryside, one and a half hour drive from Beirut. We met some devoted volunteers trying to make life easier for the Syrian refugees by showing them God's love through caring and good deeds. **For me and Aniko it made an indelible impression to meet Syrian refugee women, speaking to them, hearing their stories and to see the hopelessness in some of the women's eyes.**

The executive director Nabil K. Costa summed up what LSESD is all about using Martin Luther King Jr's word: **Darkness cannot drive out darkness, only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate, only love can do that.** We experienced that the people we met in Lebanon, both Pastor Mazen from Syria, the people at LSESD, the volunteers working in the field and the women in the Lebanese Baptist Women's Union are bringing light and love to the people in need.

We, the EBWU Committee, ask you to continue showing love to the Syrian women by giving donations to "The Relief Fund for Syrian Women".

We cannot help everyone, but you can bring hope and love to someone by giving!!

Synnøve put a message on her Facebook page before going to Lebanon, asking her Norwegian friends to make socks and other knitted items for Syrians in Lebanon. Within 14 days she received about 20 kg! She received packages by mail, from colleagues at work, from her local church and from friends wanting to show their love to the Syrian people by giving something made by their hands. An 85 year old woman from Gyland made 10 pairs of socks! Synnøve almost filled her suitcase with this "spontaneous" gifts from the Norwegian women.



Report of the National Baptist *Women's* Conference in Moldova, November 8, 9, 2013

By Elisabeth Kapsreiter, 1st President of the Baptist Women's Work in Germany.

Can we imagine in Germany attending a conference and concentrating for a long period of 9 hours with only a single break of 40 minutes? And doing this for two days in a row without the obligatory coffee to stay fresh and alert! The women in Moldova can do it and do it well. So precious to them is this time of being together. That was one of the strong impressions that I took with me from my trip to Moldova from 7 to 10 November 2013.



Moldova is a small country of the former Soviet Union between Romania and Ukraine, with about 3.6 million inhabitants. The official language is Romanian. In this small country live about 20,000 Baptists. This would correspond in relation to the population in Germany of a number of members of our Baptist Union of approximately 451,000 people! The Baptist church in the capital Chisinau has 1,500 members. However, many members are living abroad to earn there the needed income for the family at home. A constant prayer concern is therefore to find work for the people in their own country.



There is a very active and rapidly growing Baptist Women's work in the country's nine districts. Annual highlights include three conferences together for all the districts; specially for young women training in leadership, a meeting exclusively for widows and an annual conference for women in general. At this year's conference I was invited to speak at the conference by Eugenia Podoleanu, President of the Moldovan women's work.

The theme of the conference was: "God has woven my life so wonderfully."

To illustrate the theme, the large altar area of the church was converted into an adorable sewing room with the women bringing in lots and lots of wool. To say it straight away, all this wool is processed by the women for socks and distributed at Christmas to needy people.

It has long been discussed by the management team as to whether one could dare for the first time to charge a conference fee. They did it and demanded a contribution equivalent to € 1.60 per person. A lunch was prepared for an expected number of 400 women, but in fact 560 participants from all districts of the country travelled to Chisinau.

In addition to a Romanian pastoral couple, Peter and Gina Bulica, who were the keynote speakers on both days of the conference, Eugenia Podoleanu had invited six other women as speakers from other countries including myself. We were housed together in a Christian guest house and represented in this small group were Belgium, Brazil Sonea Tomaz, Germany Elisabeth Kapsreiter, England, France Fabienne Seguin and Vivienne Haton, and Romania Elisabeth Vekas. As friends we were set apart and have firmly resolved to stay connected to one another and thus to continue to deepen the European network. There were also other missionaries from Romania and guests from Ukraine and Belarus.

It is beyond the scope of a report to respond to the numerous sermons, lectures, discussion posts and song presentations. It is also common for women's conferences in Moldova that brothers make the content focus, start the day and end. So from the Baptist Union leadership the Bishop, and the Vice-bishop were invited and also some invited pastors for example to lead the Evening Prayer on Friday; this took an hour to complete. What has left a big impression on me is the responsibility each of the women feels and the visible outward desire to serve God with their whole lives. I noticed also the women of all ages writing eagerly and persistently. This hunger for learning has touched me deeply.



A brief insight into my presentation:

As an introduction to my lecture I had taken out of the many balls of wool, some balls to the desk with me. I talked about the fact that by history, kinship, our past or by grief, suffering and illness, often unintentionally threads are pressed in our hand which can make our life difficult until we are able to classify them or weave them into our lives. At each point, I had taken the end of a thread in the hand and the ball of yarn I

threw into the audience, so as to give awareness of disorder. As I have heard from

much feedback that was an illustration which left a deep impression on the women. When we come to faith, then our life is like a sewing box often full of clutter! This image I had then unfold in more detail with reference to a personal testimony. If we entrust our lives to God, then He begins very gently and lovingly to clean up in our lives. Not too much at once, because otherwise we can not tolerate that.

God does not allow the tangles of our past to spoil our lives, but He deals with each one at a time. Through His Spirit, He makes it clear to us what to deal with and to stick with it until it is processed and sorted in accordance with His will.

He wants our lives healed, that we are freed by forgiveness of sins and become like Him in His character. His goal is to bring out of all the entanglements and confusions of our lives a beautiful and meaningful pattern. Our life is about to change again and again and it is sometimes difficult to identify a common thread. But if we follow Jesus, we realize that God has woven in us a basic pattern that a human being cannot change anymore.

By the way, we guests have asked, why the conferences are carried out over such a long period of time without breaks. The answer was very pragmatic.

For one, the women cannot afford it; for so many women coffee or other drinks, let alone the offer of cakes is too much. And two, moreover, it takes far too long for all women to be served and then return to their seats. For them, the time is of value!

Also at this conference the first Bible Study Guide for women developed entirely by sisters in God from

our country was launched. This was a dream which was prayed for a lot and God helped to realize it. In 2014 the Women's Board of Moldova plans to organize seminars for young women where they will study the Word of God based on this guide.



During the conference we enjoyed high musical talent: girls' choir, musical groups, instrumentals, around 70 singers praised the Lord and created a nice atmosphere of worship. Thank God for all moments of grace that He offered us in those two days. Women were strengthened, encouraged and touched by the Word. Let us pray that the seed that was sown will bear much fruit.

DAY OF PRAYER REPORTS

Day of Prayer Report from the Czech Republic – Prague

Here in the Czech Republic the prayer meetings are organized differently at each place. In some churches ladies included the whole church and in some small churches gathered only a tiny group.

In Prague we have two Czech speaking churches. For several years we gather for The World Day of Prayer for Baptist Women together and we always have a blessed time.

The theme for this year was Love and it touches each of us. We have met the greatest Love and thanks to Him we could bring up all our sisters around the world; we were connected by “a red string of Love”, by our Lord Jesus Christ.

After each prayer we marked the particular continent we prayed for with a heart and it was awesome to see how beautifully it became covered with hearts.



One of the ladies expressed the Prayer Day by words: “Imagine you have an opportunity to see the world from above. During the day when Baptist women are praying thousands of little lights turn on according to the continent when the women start to pray. This light slowly grows and gradually covers the whole world.”

I wish we were persistent in our prayers as well as in this common day of prayers and cover the world with our prayers regularly. The love of God would flow to the disordered world which needs help so much.

Helena Včeláková, Baptist Church in Prague 3, Czech Republic

EBWU – President Aniko Ujvari visiting Belarus, November 2-4, 2013

“The Fruit of the Spirit Is Love...” Gal. 5:22

Each year the sisters in Belarus are more excited about celebrating World Day of Prayer.

On the 2nd of November 2013, 200 sisters came to Light of the Gospel Church in Minsk to celebrate the 65th anniversary of the World Day of Prayer and remember how it was established after the Second World War by European Baptist women.

The topic *Walk in the Spirit in Love*, which EBWU selected for this year, really spoke to our hearts. It was as dear to us as in those days when the sisters got together



for the first time to pray together. God’s love united them when they read John 3:16 and it reminded them of Jesus Christ’s commandment: “You love one another” John 13:34. The commandment challenged them to forgive each other, be reconciled, have fellowship and do the ministry together.

Such kind of love moved Aniko Ujvari, EBWU President, to come all the way from Hungary to Belarus. Aniko was involved in the prayer conference by greeting our

Belarusian sisters, doing her presentation *Window to the World* about 7 Baptist Women's Unions of BWA and she also had a lesson on "*What Is Love?*" In her talk she gave definitions of 3 kinds of love: eros, phileo and agape. Agape love is characteristic of God and not the people, since "God is love" 1 John 4:16. It is impossible to be faithful to the definition of love in 1 Cor. 13:4-10 without the Lord's guidance



and without Christ. "The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you." Philippians 2:1-11, 4:8-9. This is how Aniko expressed her wishes about walking in the Spirit in love.

Vera Tikhon, who is in charge of women's ministry in the Baptist Union of the Republic of Belarus, shared her thoughts on the topic *Let*

Us Love One Another. She wished the sisters to set the right priorities in life according to the Bible, and so provide the way for them to do their best with love in their family, church and society. The Lord pointed to some cases of broken lives ruined by alcohol, or drug addiction, and He stirred our ladies to pray about a rehabilitation center for women and to begin work in building the team and finding the location.

The brothers in ministry of our Baptist fellowship support the women's ministry in their prayers and they speak at all women's conferences. At the beginning of our prayer conference V. Krutko, the Chairman of the Baptist Union in Belarus, defined 4 ways of women's ministry according to the Scriptures:

1. Put the Word of God into our hearts, as Mary did. Luke 2:51
2. Win the family for Christ by our lives. 1 Peter 3:1-4
3. Teach young sisters to love their husbands and love their children. Titus 2
4. Help the brothers in spreading the Gospel and the works of mercy. Rom. 6:2, 6.

L. Mikhovich, the President of Minsk Theological Seminary, called the sisters to look for God in any kind of situation. God is closeby, He is only at a distance of one good deed. In the Book of Ruth we can find God in all situations. When there was famine in the land, it was God encouraging people to find Him. God wants us to find Him in any good work done for the good of our neighbour. Every Christian mother – Ruth, Naomi, and Mary – raises her child as a Christian and raises the child to be Christ-like. Our path of life can be tough and sometimes thorny but in the end our Lord is waiting for us to come with our children and grandchildren.

When it was time to pray for 7 continents of BWA, Aniko lead the prayer time. The sisters were divided into 7 prayer groups and each leading sister got an envelope with the prayer requests of a continent and our local needs. She took it from the table covered by a blue table cloth as a sign of our belonging to EBWU. Sister Aniko explained about the relationship between the two women's unions of Europe and Latin America as prayer partners. She also presented scarves with EBWU logo to the leaders of the prayer groups. The color of the ribbons and artificial flowers are going to remind the sisters about the Women's Union that they prayed about at the conference.



Aniko Ujvari and Vera Tikhon

In the conclusion A. Firisiuk, the Bishop of the Baptist Union of the Republic of Belarus had a word. "For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end" Heb. 3:14 and read the parable about the way of life "The end is better than the beginning". He wished the sisters to obey the commandment "You love one another" John 13:34 as well as follow Tabitha when she paid attention to people's needs and did kind things, then the Lord could perform His miracles.

On Sunday, 3rd November, Aniko Ujvari with a group of people visited Ark Church in Volkovysk, Grodno area. On Sunday morning she shared a word about women's ministry in Europe. Vera Tikhon shared about awful statistics on alcoholism in men and women in our country and she suggested opening a rehabilitation center for women on the premises of that church.

After the communion Aniko visited a rehabilitation center for men run by the church. Then Pastor A. Shchiglinsky took the group to a blockhouse 3 km away from the church where they hope to have a rehabilitation center for women. Vera Tikhon prayed with tears about an opportunity to complete the building and have it functioning. In Ark Church there are some ladies with addiction background willing to do the ministry for the addicted women.

On 4th November on the way to the airport Aniko and a group of sisters visited a rehabilitation center for men in Shemetovo. It is supervised by Salvation Church in Kolodishchy, Minsk region. It is planned to also have a rehabilitation center for women close to Minsk, it could be in Dzerzhinsk. The women are praying about it. It was the end of the visit of Aniko Ujvari as EBWU President. But it is only the beginning of the cooperation in one spirit with the Belarusian sisters.

Vera Tikhon



Through the Fruit of the Spirit FAITHFULNESS.

Faithfulness in the context of Paul's letter to the Galatians 5:22, specifically talks about faith, and refers to being faithful, loyal, firm and steadfast. Those who are In Step with the Spirit should manifest the fruit of the Spirit in their lives.

This fruit appears in the lives of those who abide in Christ which refers to what Jesus Christ says in John 15:4-5;

Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.

I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

See for DOP Programme:

<http://bwawd.org/day-of-prayer>



Sara Mendoza de Barrios, President UFBAL

You are invited to be



November 3, 2014

PRAYER REQUESTS

EVENTS

2014, Oct. 30 - Nov.2, EBWU Conference, Croatia, Crikvenica.

Seeking a vision for the future.

2015, July 18-21, Baptist Women Leadership Conference, South Africa, Johannesburg, Indaba hotel,

2015, July 22-26, 21st Baptist World Congress, South Africa, Durban.

Theme: Jesus Christ. The Door.

2015, September, 10 year Anniversary Celebration of the EBF Anti-Trafficking Network in Moldova.

PRAYER REQUESTS

Ukraine May there be peace. Let The Lord give vision, hope and solution.

Syria Pray for the ongoing civil war. So many women and children are vulnerable in this terrible situation. Pastor Mazen tries to help as much as he can. Pray for possibilities of help and donations.

Lebanon Pray for the people of the Lebanese Baptist Women's Union and the Lebanese Society for Educational and Social development and Relief & Community Development, who are doing an amazing job together with EBWU and others, to help the refugee women living in Lebanon. Pray for executive director Nabil Costa and Pastor Mazen who are looking for solutions.

Syrian refugees Pray for all those who were forced to leave their homes and homeland and live now in camps, old buildings, under miserable circumstances in other countries with no prospect of a better future.

Middle East Pray for wisdom for everybody in this ongoing situation.

Iran Pray for Saeed Abedini, an American pastor imprisoned in Iran on September 26, 2012 while working there to build an orphanage. Unwilling to renounce his Christian faith, he was sentenced to eight years in prison. Pray for his release.

Pray for people who want to be Christian but who are living in countries without freedom of religion.

Europe Pray for the Christian people, not just to be named Christian. Pray for the people who have lost hope, lost vision and inspiration for the future. For the lonely, those addicted to alcohol or drugs, homeless ones in society: young and old. For the people who are ministering to them. Pray for the Christian women to be living testimonies in their society.

Pray for **New leaders** in Baptist Women's boards in different European countries, in the 6 other continents, in the BWA – Women's Department Board, and for your own EBWU-committee. We need your prayers constantly. We pray for you every Monday. Please email us for your own requests.

Worldwide: For the unity of sisters around the Word of God, prayer and fellowship



PRAYER REQUESTS

with each other. Especially at our Day of Prayer meetings in November.

Personal - Shqiponja Lamce, leader of the Albanian Baptist sisters lost suddenly her husband in the week before Christmas 2013. Pray for her in her grief.

GIVE THANKS

Personal - Give Thanks for the recovering of the mother of Sara Mendoza de Barrios. President UFBAL, our Prayer Partner. Sara asked for prayer support on BWA Women's Department Facebook for her seriously ill mother.

For the worldwide blessing of being a member of the **Baptist Family**: Just a click away! Esther Barnes from Canada was in Czech Republic and wanted to attend the DOP 2013 overthere. One message on Facebook was enough! She found “her sisters”!

Syria and Lebanon and Bulgaria: For the possibility that EBWU committee members could distribute directly, goods and food to the refugees in those countries.

For the donations many countries and individuals have sent and still are sending for this Relief Fund.

For the safety and protection and health while EBWU president Aniko Ujvari and EBWU member Synnøve G. Angen were in Lebanon.

Ukraine For the EBF co working with the ecumenical Prayer Tent on Independence Square in Kiev during the unrest in February 2014.

For the Ukrainian Baptists and representatives of Hungarian Baptist Aid donating medical supplies at Mihailovsky Cathedral, the central makeshift hospital near Maidan Square in February 2014.

For the Facebook communication: 23-1-2014 Ksenia Magda wrote: Good news today in Croatia - a chain of traffickers arrested. I don't think I've heard of any such action in our country before. Bad news: The speakers at a popular radio station thought this to be a time to make jokes about trafficking! We have a long way to go...

For **all of you**, who are working hard for the Glory of God!

Nice idea: IBTS Dislocated Bookclub for everybody:

Join at <http://blog.ibts.eu/?p=2183#comments>

This grew out of a discussion following worship at the recent IBTS research colloquium in Amsterdam – some of us were excited about the possibility of having a forum where we could share our thoughts about good books to read and offer our feedback. This book club has very soft boundaries: everybody is welcome, and your comments don't need to be particularly sophisticated or artistic. Honest will do.

Please send in your reports, testimonies, questions, observations of young talent, book/film/music reviews, nice biblical quotes, creative (art) objects, changes in boards, prayer requests and events. We want to make of N&V more a magazine that you can use in your own meetings. More ideas? Email me: wiesdijkstra@gmail.com



THE LATEST NEWS



2015 Baptist Women's Leadership Conference "Arise, Shine"

July 18-21, 2015

"Arise, shine; for your light has come!" Isaiah 60:1



HOTEL, SPA & CONFERENCE CENTRE
FOURWAYS JOHANNESBURG



Register Now!

<http://bwawd.org/2015-leadership-conference>



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Photo back cover: **Jostedalsgreen** (English: Jostedal Glacier) is the largest glacier in continental Europe. It is situated in Sogn og Fjordane county in Western Norway.
Photo by Jaap Dijkstra.





**Pray for Ukraine
Matthew 5:9**



Oh Lord, my God, when I in awesome wonder
Consider all the worlds Thy hands have made ...
Then sings my soul, my Savior God to Thee
How great Thou art, How great Thou art!

